

“In the Blink of an Eye”: Collecting the Tsimshian Stone Masks

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The chain of events surrounding the collecting of the two nesting Tsimshian stone masks has eluded the net of history; much of the knowledge about them is lost or was never recorded. For years it was not known who the masks represented. Being the only stone Northwest Coast masks places them in a unique category. These masks are often called twins, which is not technically correct, as the masks are of the same face. The outer mask is the unseeing mask and the smaller inner one is the sighted mask. One mask wound up in Ottawa, Canada and the other in Paris, France. Their connection to each other was lost until their brief reunion in 1975.

This chapter addresses the mystery surrounding their origins and attempts to shed light on the history of their century-long separation, drawing upon various archival resources to document their history, use and meaning.

No one person in an oral culture has all the knowledge of the people, for knowledge is held by many people, in many different places. We will have to accommodate and adapt to [our] evolution as a culture, as we move forward and build into the future with materials given us by our ancestors. In the end, they will make us stronger as a people.

Nisga'a elder, Lucy Williams, Sigdimnak' Niysgankw' ajikw. [Nyce 2008:257]

Not only does one person not have all the ancestral knowledge, the reality for the ethnohistorian who seeks to meld the historical record with anthropological data faces large gaps in the existing corpus of published and unpublished material. For example, we are lacking the song that went with the masks and a visualization of the theatrical presentation in the Tsimshian Feast house.



Figure 1. Lateral profile of the masks “nested” one behind the other. The nesting stone masks create unity with the smaller Paris mask on the inside. This priority of “unseeing over seeing” disturbs some researchers. Holes in the ears of inner mask and two holes in top edge of outer mask (Duff 19751:166). Photo credit: Hilary Stewart

Among the Tsimshian, it was only chiefs who wore masks, as opposed to the Tlingit where they were worn by shamans. The human mask was common among the Tsimshian who can be studied in terms of their location and language differences. Ethnologist Viola Garfield published the classic study *Tsimshian Clan and Society* in 1939. She noted the Tsimshian emphasis “on the face” in the context of the funeral ceremony:

While the body lay in the house the successor was brought forward and made “to look on the face of his brother,” thus acquiring the predecessor’s power and making known his readiness to assume the position. [1939:240]

The Collectors

The paper trail of the stone masks begins in the museum records from the institutions where the masks still reside after 130 years. However, the museum catalogues at the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa, and the Trocadero Museum of Paris, now Musée du quai Branly, offer no insights as to how the masks became separated on two continents.

The unsighted mask was acquired by the Geological Survey of Canada (the forerunner of the Canadian Museum of History)¹ by Dr. Israel Wood Powell, a medical doctor and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia based in Victoria. He was assisted in collecting ethnographic material by, among others, the missionary William Duncan. Duncan had a long term relationship with Powell, who was the federal government source of funding for William Duncan's Christian community of Metlakatla in Northern B.C. The sighted mask in Paris was collected by Alphonse Pinart, a French ethnographer based in Paris who travelled regularly to North America. Pinart's link to the stone masks was likely arranged by the cannery operator William Neil, based in Victoria and San Francisco. Duncan and Neil were the key non-Indigenous figures in removing the masks from the North Coast.

The key Indigenous person involved in the story was Paul Sebassa (Ts'ibasaa), head chief of the Gitxaala.

Dr. I. W. Powell

The 1879 museum accession records of the Geological Survey of Canada in Ottawa catalogued 55 archaeological pieces and 355 ethnological pieces acquired from Israel Powell. The unsighted stone mask was one of the items. The collection was purchased for \$1,232.54 by the Department of the Interior. In 1881, when the collection was exhibited at the Geological Survey of Canada's new museum in Ottawa, it attracted an unprecedented number of visitors during its first month.

The large turnout impressed Alfred Selwyn, Director of the Geological Survey. He had attended World Fairs in both Philadelphia and Chicago, and viewed popular Canadian Indigenous exhibits presented there. Selwyn saw the need for Canada to have a national museum "unless Canada is to be forever dependent upon museums of the U.S. for information relating to the life history of her own Aboriginal races" (Vodden & Dyck 2006:16). The Geological Survey's museum was established in Ottawa that year.

The catalogue record indicates that Powell collected one piece from the village of "Kitkatla" (Gitxaala) or Lach Klan. It was listed as # 10 "stone mask" catalogued at VII-C-329, the VII standing for the British Columbia, and "C" for Tsimshian.

1 The current Canadian Museum of History has gone through several changes of name over its history: Geological Survey of Canada (1881), Victoria Memorial Museum, National Museum of Man, Canadian Museum of Civilization, and Canadian Museum of History.

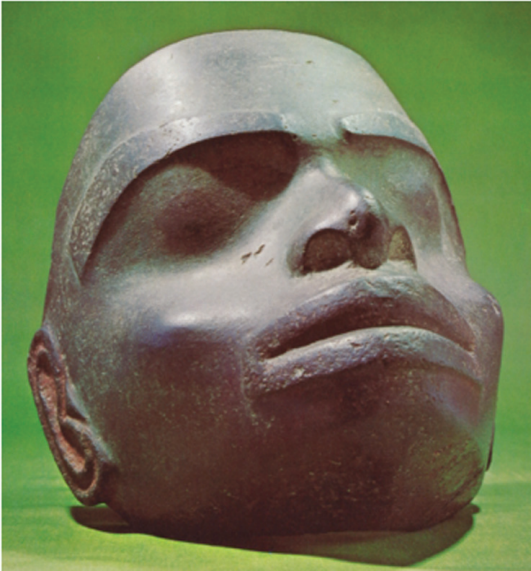


Figure 2: Ottawa mask V11-C-329, unsighted mask. Photo Credit: Hilary Stewart.

No dollar values were associated with the piece. Of the list of 339 pieces collected, most were ethnological items. However, the museum's cataloguer appears to have sorted out the stone objects first, numbers 1-77, catalogued "XII" for archaeology. The other stone objects collected included mauls, hammers, adzes from Metlakatla, Fort Simpson, (Lax Kwa'alaams), the Nass River (no village given), Haida Gwaii and, from the South Coast, Fort Rupert and Cowichan.

We have no comment from Powell about the stone mask he "collected." Powell, a trained Scottish medical doctor, combined his role of Indian Superintendent (from 1874 to 1889) with that of collecting First Nation's cultural materials much in demand by museums in Europe and America. In the museum field, Powell was a collector and vendor as opposed to a donor. Museum researchers have criticized Powell's record keeping, as the large volume of his collecting probably led to documentation errors. (See Halpin 1973:45.)

A review of Powell's Annual Report for the Department of Indian Affairs for 1879 indicates Powell did not visit Gitxaala that year. That suggests he did not acquire the stone mask directly from Gitxaala; it must have been acquired at another time, or through another avenue.

In 1881 Powell did visit Gitxaala, much to the chagrin of Johan Adrian Jacobsen, a collector for the Royal Berlin Ethnological Museum. Powell's collecting was driving up prices. Jacobsen stated:

Kitkatla was the first real Indian village I visited. It is rather remote from the usual line of travel visited. And therefore not influenced by modern culture. It

is a handsome town with a totem pole about fifty feet high beside every house.
[Jacobsen 1977:13]

While negotiating purchases, Jacobsen found the prices high as the community acted together. In addition, “Dr. Powell, the Indian Agent from Victoria who was eagerly collecting for the governments of Canada and Washington,² had paid high prices and had promised to come back” (Jacobsen 1977:14-15).

Dr. Powell was likely collecting for the American Museum of Natural History in New York City at that time. When he wrote from Victoria to Professor Bickmore, Superintendent of the American Museum of Natural History in New York on 5 October 1882 he was arranging the shipping via San Francisco “a most interesting and complete one so far as Brit [sic] Columbia is concerned.” Powell confessed to a guilty conscience: “I should not like to undertake another work of this kind, and when looking at them this morning I really felt guilty of a want of patriotism in sending the collection out of the country.”³

Powell displayed part of his collection, likely what was to be shipped to New York, in an eclectic Art Exhibition held in Victoria’s Philharmonic Hall and Pavilion Rink in November 1881. Amongst oil paintings, etchings and moss collections were a number of displays of Northwest Coast art. Mr. Innis of Esquimalt displayed some “admirable specimens of Indian carving from Fort Simpson,” and Capt. Warren had “a large case of west coast Indian curiosities.” The most outstanding display, however, was Powell’s collection. “In Indian curios the large case at the upper end of the room and completely filled, belonging to Dr. Powell, Supt. of Indian Affairs, must certainly be awarded the palm” (British Colonist, November 12 1881:3).

German collector Jacobsen was a visitor at the Exhibition, and noted more detail about Powell’s display:

A small exhibition opened that had, among other things, objects from the Haida and Tsimshian. The exhibitor was Dr. Powell who had bought and collected the pieces. There were many handsome pieces, especially several well-carved and well-painted house posts that support the roof beams, also some carved wooden heads of a man and a woman with a labret and some ethnographic pieces from Alaska.
[Jacobsen 1977:43]

2 Major John Wesley Powell was the founder of the Bureau of Ethnology in Washington. The author has found that his initials J.W. Powell are often confused with I.W. Powell.

3 A year later Powell sent a large canoe from Bella Bella and “The Totem poles are particularly fine and show the four great crests in the heraldry of the Tsimpshean [sic] Indians of the NW Coast” (correspondence AMNH).

William Duncan

In his role as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Powell worked closely with the missionary William Duncan who served in the Tsimshian communities of Fort Simpson (Lax Kw'alaams) and Metlakatla. Sponsored by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of England, Duncan arrived after a long sea voyage to Esquimalt Harbour, on July 17, 1857. Destined for Fort Simpson on the north coast, he quickly found a Tsimshian language teacher, "Wehawn," who was employed as a servant to some of the Hudson's Bay Company employees at Fort Victoria (Sir Henry Wellcome Collection, RG 200).

Arriving in Fort Simpson in October 1857, Duncan continued his language studies with a Tsimshian teacher Clah (later known as Arthur Wellington Clah). The Tsimshian living outside the Fort's palisade welcomed the novice speaker as he conducted a population survey combined with rudimentary preaching in Sm'algyax. He also set up a school outside the Fort. He asked the Tsimshian to contribute to its cost by contributing baskets, carved spoons, and native dishes (Arctander 1909:149). He presumably sold the pieces at either the Fort or kept them to take to Victoria where there was an early interest in curios.

Duncan was not the first person to acquire curios in Fort Simpson. In 1853, four years before Duncan arrived, the crew and officers of the ship *H.M.S. Virago* spent nearly a month (June 20 to July 13) in Fort Simpson while their paddle-wheel gunboat was repaired. The ship's officers William Henry Hills (acting paymaster), and William E. Gordon (masters mate) both kept detailed diaries. Hills explained: "Those of us who had no occupation with the repairs used to cruise all day long among the houses of the Indians" (Hills 1853:270-271). The Hudson's Bay Company's trading suffered according to Chief Factor, William McNeill who wrote "in fact *Virago* is getting all the martens from the Indians and everything they can lay their hands on in the shape of provisions and curiosities" (HBC Journal, June 22, 1853). Gordon's diary supported McNeill's impression. He commented on the variety of things in wood, stone and ivory ("whales teeth, are well carved"):

In exchange for soap, thread and company trade goods, you could get skins, hats, masks and many other Indian curiosities. This is the best place on the coast for witnessing feasts, dances and other customs of the Indians. [Gordon:230]

Duncan became a serious purveyor of curios for profit as opposed to a collector. During Duncan's initial sea voyage from England to Esquimalt he observed the naval officer's enthusiasm for collecting curios, and a number of these men later became clients for his curios.

After an initial three-year period residing in the officer's quarters at the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Simpson, Duncan went exploring in 1860 with the newly arrived Rev. Tugwell who conducted the first baptisms at Fort Simpson. Duncan

was aware of many of the Chiefs from their trading trips to the Fort. The Hudson's Bay Company Journals kept detailed trading notes on the arrival and departures of particular chiefs. At Gitxaala he met Chief Ts'ibasaa and was impressed by him. Ts'ibasaa recounted a *naxnox* performance he and his chiefs performed for the crew of James Colnett's ship where they appeared to lift off their heads. Duncan also introduced himself at villages on the lower and upper Nass River.

In 1862 Duncan and his Tsimshian followers established the Christian community at Metlakatla, one of the traditional village sites of the ten tribes of the Coast Tsimshian. Following his role as a mediator with a British naval ship and the First Nations at Fort Simpson, Duncan was rewarded with the appointment of Justice of the Peace for the northern area (Gough 1984). He was authorized to arrest people selling liquor and settle property disputes (between First Nations and/or outsiders). By reviewing requests for business permits he monitored First Nations involvement in any new industry such as a cannery planned in 1875 for the mouth of the Skeena River. Powell explicitly asked Duncan to assist William Neill with arrangements to establish a cannery proposed by the North West Commercial Company of San Francisco at the mouth of the Skeena River.

Duncan was a lay minister, not ordained and therefore could not conduct baptisms or marriages. In the early days of Metlakatla, Duncan relied on visits from the clergy in Victoria. Various Anglican ministers came to Metlakatla to compensate for Duncan's unwillingness to become ordained. Bishop George Hills came north in May 1863 and was followed in October 1863 by his assistant Rev. Robert J. Dundas with Captain Verney. Dundas was an avid collector, and his collection was the first missionary-acquired collection of artifacts on the north coast (Harris 1985).⁴ Bishop Hills returned again May 1866 and was "engaged the whole day in examining candidates for baptism." In 1867 Rev. Cridge from Victoria visited the Nass and assisted his friend Duncan with baptisms at Metlakatla. Eventually Duncan was reprimanded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) for his resistance to ordination.

He drew converts from a wide area of the Northwest Coast and into Alaska. As Metlakatla became established Duncan required further help, particularly in developing a mission field on the Nass River. In 1876, Reverend Robert Tomlinson

4 On October 5, 2006 Sotheby's (New York) held the auction of "The Dundas Collection of Northwest Coast Indian Art." It featured 57 lots of sacred, ceremonial and utilitarian objects collected by Rev. Dundas. They were put up for auction by Rev. Dundas's great grandson Simon Carey. These pieces were likely given to Mr. Duncan by those baptized by Bishop Hills and Rev. Dundas in 1863. The majority of the auction items were acquired by private collectors with museums a distant second due to the high prices at the auction. The descendants of Mr. Duncan's original converts were disappointed at the distribution. The Dundas collection travelled as an exhibition "Tsimshian Treasures" combining the private collection and public pieces. The exhibit was accompanied by Tsimshian elders and toured museums in Canada in 2007. The book *Tsimshian Treasures: The Remarkable Journey of the Dundas Collection*, Donald Ellis, editor, featured scholarly essays and photos of a selection of the pieces. As a footnote, the diaries of Rev. Robert James Dundas were expected to be published but have not appeared.

followed Rev. Doolan at Kincolith, the mission village near the mouth of the Nass River. Rev. Robert Tomlinson made regular trips from his Nass River posting at Kincolith to assist Duncan at Metlakatla by conducting baptisms for Duncan.

The Church Missionary Society removed Duncan from Metlakatla to Victoria, September 30, 1876, to be replaced by Rev. A. J. Hall. However he returned north on November 1, 1877 after reading in the newspaper that Metlakatla was the site of religious visions. Hall was sent to Fort Rupert after losing control of the Metlakatla congregation during Duncan's absence. In 1882 Duncan was dismissed by the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which eventually led to his departure with his supporters to Annette Island in Alaska in 1887.

Duncan was respected in Victoria's power circles and before he left maintained an active mail order "curio" business. His curio clients included politicians and the power figure Judge Matthew Begbie. Duncan offered mostly small personal items for sale, silver jewelry, stone bowls, and animal skins. A charge was later leveled against him "that – for a missionary – he is 'too much of a trader'" (Whymper 1869:60).

In order to augment his financial support from the CMS in London, Duncan developed a number of cottage industries, including spinning, soapmaking, and producing oolachen grease; he also established a saw mill and a salmon cannery at Metlakatla. Apparently none of Duncan's efforts achieved financial independence for the community (Hosmer 1999) even though Metlakatla became a clearinghouse for First Nations ceremonial regalia (MacDonald 1985, 1991).

The personal regalia sold was not associated with the crest system which divided the Tsimshian into four social groups with marriage partners chosen from outside ones own crest: Killerwhale, Raven, Eagle and Wolf. Interestingly, Duncan and the Tsimshian congregation installed interior totem poles in the Metlakatla church representing the four crests. Duncan found that the identification with a particular crest helped amalgamate his roster of converts to Christian community life at Metlakatla.

Chief Ts'ibasaa moves to Metlakatla

Another figure in the collecting of the stone masks is Chief Ts'ibasaa of Gitxaala. According to Garfield, Ts'ibasaa or Dzi'basa translates as 'Eyes Closed all Day' *tsip*, 'closed eyes'; *a-*, "to"; *sa*, 'day' (Garfield 1939:337).

Unlike most Metlakatla residents, Tsibassa did not voluntarily move to Metlakatla. In 1872 Judge Matthew Begbie in Victoria rendered judgment as approved by the Governor General of Canada in the case "Sebassa & Throcket."⁵ The case involved the murders of some white men a number of years earlier. In recognition of the delayed murder charge, Judge Begbie sentenced the four men involved, including Ts'ibasaa, to live with Duncan at Metlakatla under surveillance

⁵ Duncan was called to Victoria to assist in the trial. He wrote a complete description of the case for the CMS, and included a copy of the Charge of the Chief Justice. (Duncan 1873)

for five years. Duncan's Annual Letter to the CMS January 1874 cited part of the letter he wrote to the Lord Chief Justice at Victoria on 9th October 1873 regarding his assessment of Chief Ts'ibasaa:

He is now taking his place among the most industrious of our village and seems determined to earn himself and family an honest livelihood. [Duncan Archives]

Duncan received a signed letter from 'Sebasa' on the south coast at Bella Bella, March 30, 1875 reporting on his progress in selling grease. Even though Ts'ibasaa had not yet been baptized he concluded with reference to "our heavenly father" (Wellcome collection, RG 200, Box 108, 05/01/13 (5) Folder 1-3#284, Native correspondence).

On October 1, 1875 Duncan wrote to Dr. Ash, a member of the legislative Assembly in Victoria, Vancouver Island. Duncan sold him

a carved stone mortar and pestle which I bought on your account. ... The carved bowl belonged to the head chief of the Kithratla [Gitxaała] tribe. It was used for preparing the quid taken by the chiefs before retiring to bed. ... These stone bowls are now very scarce and hence dear. The twenty-three dollars you commissioned me to spend are given as follows: stone bowl \$10, 3 spoons \$3, one bracelet \$5, carved stick \$5. [Duncan Letterbook 1:515]

Chief Ts'ibasaa was baptized as Paul Sebassa on February 6, 1876. He was married to Emelia and had six children. All were baptized at Metlakatla, B.C. by Rev. Robert Tomlinson who travelled south from Kincolith at the mouth of the Nass River (Dioceses of Caledonia Records, Prince Rupert, B.C.).

Ts'ibasaa and his family continued to live at Metlakatla according to Powell's Annual Report of November 22, 1881. Powell described him as a devout Christian and "one of the most peaceful and respected citizens of Metlakatla." It appears that Paul Sebassa did not move to Alaska with Duncan and his followers in 1887. There was a grave recorded for "P. Zibasha" in the Metlakatla cemetery at Auriole Point on Digby Island. The headstone reads: P. Zibasha, 1893. The cemetery was recorded in the B.C. Archaeological Site Inventory (GbTo-21, grave 14) in 1996. It describes "a small stone plaque, pointed goblet top fallen from the adjacent square block."

Nass River Ts'ibasaa

There was a House of Ts'ibasaa on the Nass River at Gitwinksihlkw, also known as Canyon City. Taxaye was a chief of the House. The House originated in the Gitksan village of Gisgaga'as up the Skeena River at its junction with the Babine River (Nisga'a Tribal Council 1995:70).

There is a narrative describing when Chief Ts'ibasaa of Gitxaała came to visit

his “brother” Chief Saik⁶ and presented his *Dareu naxnox*⁷ to the Nisga’a. The *Dareu* (“to-speak-to”) was a large headdress resembling a big sea urchin. Night after night Ts’ibasaa danced this new dance to his Nisga’a relatives and soon all were dancing it together to the accompaniment of the songs and new steps. The people forgot to fish salmon. Ts’ibasaa returned to his Gitxaala village and the Nisga’a suffered from starvation. There is no date for this narrative, although the impact of Ts’ibasaa’s *Dareu naxnox* was never forgotten. Ts’ibasaa paid frequent visits to the village of Gitwinksihlkw⁸ where the Gispuwadweda was one of the head groups. It was associated at times with Ts’ibasaa of Gitxaala. (This narrative was recorded by William Beynon in 1949 from informant, Robert Stewart. CMC file B-F-441, vol QQ 1948-49, Box 235 f.16 (temporary) 347).

In 1881 Nisga’a Sim’oogit Ts’ibasaa spoke out against the over fishing of salmon: “Nisga’a Chiefs have no wish to interfere with the legitimate employment of their white friends, but they naturally ask that the white men should not be allowed to take all the salmon.”

The fishing issue is discussed later in this paper in the context of canneries with Ts’ibasaa’s Gitxaala namesake. We will also further explore Ts’ibasaa’s role in the collecting of these masks.

Alphonse Pinart

The sighted mask was accessioned at the Musee d’Ethnologie du Trocadero in Paris in 1881. It was the only piece in the museum collection recorded as being from the village of Metlakatla. The records of the Musee d’Ethnologie du Trocadero, on May 23, 1881 identified M. Pinart⁹ as the collector and donor of a “masque en pierre, sculpte & [unclear] Tsimshian de Meqtlakquatla. Riv. Naas.” In 1929 catalogueur Paul Rivet changed the original Paris catalogue number 81.22.1 to #8654.

Similar to Israel Powell, Pinart did not keep notes. Both collectors ignored the name of the person from whom they collected their mask although Pinart did identify the provenance as “a protestant pastor” at “Meqtlakquatla.” (Cole 1985:52.) The sighted stone mask was exhibited in Paris (Musee de l’Homme 1947:15). The Paris mask was described in 1965 in *Chefs-d-Oeuvre du Musee de l’Homme*, page 60,

6 The Church baptism records for the Nass River are incomplete. Marjorie Halpin(1973:309-310) listed Ts’ibasaa both at Kincolith and Gitwinksihlkw based on information from Charles Barton 1916 and Mercer 1916.

7 *Naxnox* names are owned by Houses, however, “there are a number of *naxnox*s that are claimed by several different, even unrelated Houses” (Anderson and Halpin 2000:27).

8 Gitwinksihlkw, an upriver Nisga’a village, did not have a missionary although Duncan was well received when he visited in 1860. Canyon City became a Salvation Army community in 1927, so no early records of baptisms exist. In the published literature no chiefly names from there were linked to Kincolith baptisms.

9 The Alphonse Pinart mask collection in the Musee du Trocadero Paris is predominantly Mesoamerican procured during from 1880-1887 when Pinart was married to Zelia Nuttall, a Mayan specialist.



Image 3: The Sighted Stone Mask (Paris). This mask has a hole under the chin which held a mouthpiece for the wearer. See comment by Museum Director Hamy who was told of the mouthpiece by his friend A. Pinart. Photo Credit: Hilary Stewart

Plate 54. Wilson Duff included a translation of the 1965 text in his book *Images Stone B.C* (1975).¹⁰

Mask in hard greenish stone, representing a human face. The outside and the periphery are very carefully polished; the eyes, not drawn, are simple holes, and two large flat bands have been left intentionally rough to represent eyebrows. The lips, the ears, and the eyebrows carry traces of red paint. A series of very regular perforations made by a drill, allow the attachment of the mask to the face. In spite of its considerable weight (4.17 kg), it was made to be worn, attached by straps or thongs, the wearer gripping between his teeth a loop of willow attached by two holes to the base. Hamy, who studied this piece in 1897, is said to have seen this loop still in place: “This handle, or loop of willow ... has been used often enough to carry the exact imprints of the wearer’s teeth.”¹¹ The use of these

¹⁰ The first line of the French original was not included in Duff’s translation. It states: “Colombie britannique, riviere Nass, Meqtlakqatla.”

¹¹ If the willow mouth piece still existed it could have been tested for a DNA sample. However the owner of the mask would hire someone to wear it, so we could not identify the owner.

masks is general in North America.¹² The Indians of the Northwest Coast believed in the existence of spirits that often had evil power.¹³ Through his mask, the initiate obtained help from these supernatural beings or became one himself. The style of this piece is similar to the wooden masks of the Tlingit Indians of Sitka. Donated by Alphonse Pinart, No. 81.22.1 [Duff 1975:188]

While Pinart did not write about the Paris mask he evidently shared information with his good friend, E. T. Hamy the Trocadero Museum director. Sixteen years after acquiring the Trocadero's stone mask, Hamy published an article (translated into English by the author) in 1897 reporting additional information from Pinart. "Note Sur Un Masque En Pierre Des Indiens de la Riviere Nass, Columbie Britannique" was presented to the Societe des Americanists de Paris, the Society founded by Hamy.

The mouthpiece with teeth marks was described by Hamy from observation noting the arrangement of three holes under the chin for cordage to hold the willow mouthpiece. Hamy declared that the mouthpiece was lost.

The article presented small prints of two masks, meant to show the similarity between what Hamy called the Nass stone mask and a wooden, painted mask from Sitka.¹⁴ Bill Holm, scholar and art historian in Northwest Coast art, declared that the Sitka mask is not stylistically related to the stone mask (personal communication). Hamy noted the masks of St. Petersburg were seen and sketched by Pinart while travelling in Europe 1873-1875.

Hamy suggests for the first time that Pinart acquired the stone mask during a trip to Metlakatla.

The mask was acquired from the Protestant minister at Meqtlakqatla [sic] who indicated that it was from the Indians who live to the north east of the town along the shore of the Nass River and are known as Nass Indians or "Nasses." [Hamy 1897; translation by Joanne MacDonald]

William Duncan comes to mind as he fits the description as the Protestant missionary who founded Metlakatla. Duncan visited the Nass twice, 1860 and 1864, although he never noted that he did any collecting. Hamy could also have been referring to the Church Missionary Society missionary, Rev. Robert Tomlinson stationed from 1867-1879 at the Christian village of Kincolith at the mouth of the

12 The stone masks are part of the Tsimshian *naxnox* system where the masks are owned by particular people in a special group called a 'House.' The tradition is considered to be older than the Secret Societies that spread north on the northwest coast in the 18th century.

13 The *naxnox* was not generally considered as an evil presence. It may be responsible for a 'murder' which would lead to a "restore to life" ritual. (See Halpin 1981)

14 The Sitka mask (#620/34) was collected by the prolific Russian collector Ilya Voznesenski in 1841-1842. It is in the Museum of Anthropology, Lomonosov State University of Moscow.

Nass River. Tomlinson regularly assisted Duncan by travelling south to conduct baptisms or assist in other ways at Metlakatla. As noted earlier, Tomlinson was known to Chief Ts'ibasaa of Gitxaala and his family when he baptized them at Metlakatla in February 1876.

The author has found no documentary evidence to support Pinart's presence at either Metlakatla or the Nass River. The possible Nass River connection of the Paris stone mask was noted by scholar Stephen McNery (1976) while discussing Nisga'a material culture. McNery cited Hamy's link to the Nass River:

Mastery of the pecking and grinding technique is also shown in a rare stone mask, "laboriously polished," which is said to come from the Nass River (Hamy 1897:167-170), though there is no proof that it was locally produced.¹⁵ [McNery 1976:67]

Lacking more evidence it seems there is likely an unidentified intermediary involved in the collection of the sighted stone mask from the Nass River.

Pinart was an independently wealthy amateur with the qualities of a "savant." He focused his time and money on his various roles as "Explorer, Linguist and Ethnologist" as characterised by his biographer Ross Parmenter (1966). Pinart is best known for his first trip to Alaska as a young man in April 1871. He caught a salmon schooner from San Francisco to Alaska (Parmenter 1966:6). Pinart's extensive travels in Alaska may have been facilitated by catching a ride with one of the trading boats of the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC)¹⁶ (Sally McLendon email, February 15, 2010). The ACC was based in San Francisco on Sansome Street with a museum of specimens and curios on its second floor. The ACC traded for furs but in scarce times their representatives were encouraged to collect curios as well. A catalogue of the Alaska Commercial Company Collection has been published (Graburn et al. 1996).

After his kayak tour of Kodiak Island and mask collecting there, Pinart returned to San Francisco and made a second trip north as far as Sitka. The records contain no mention of Metlakatla.¹⁷ There is no reference to travel to British Columbia when Pinart described his trip in *Notes sur Les Koloches* (Tlingit) which was published

¹⁵ Identification of the type of stone in the two masks would provide useful evidence to the masks origins. The Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa identified the material in the Ottawa mask as a type of soapstone.

¹⁶ The Alaska Commercial Company was founded by a consortium of San Francisco merchants. In 1868 it acquired the holdings of the Russian-American Company which ruled Alaska for three-quarters of a century. Now owned and controlled by native Alaskans. (Graburn et al. 1996.)

¹⁷ There are two books dedicated to Alphonse Pinart's mask collection from Kodiak Island, "Two Journeys: A Companion to the Giiinaquq to the "Like a Face Exhibition" (2008). There are three publications by Alphonse Pinart; 1872 *Catalog des Collections Rapporteées de L'Amérique Russe, Aujourd'hui Territoire d'Alaska*. J. Claye, Paris. Also publication by Pinart in 1873 "Eskimaux et Koloches: Idées Religieuses des Kaniagmioutes. *Revue d'Anthropologie* 2:673-680. In 1875 *La Chasse aux Animaux, Marins et les Pêcheries Chez les Indigènes de la Côte Nord-Ouest d'Amérique*. Boulogne-Sue-Mer.

in 1873.¹⁸ Pinart then set out for Russia, to study Tartar languages. He created a sketchbook of Alaskan masks in the museums of Russia and Eastern Europe.¹⁹

In the fall of 1875 Pinart returned to North America. He immediately headed to the northeast and undertook linguistic work in Indigenous communities in Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island.²⁰

By May 1876 Pinart was on his way up the California coast from San Francisco on his first and only documented trip to British Columbia. It does not appear that Pinart met with I.W. Powell while in Victoria, although the local newspaper announced his arrival:

Professor Penard [sic] of Paris who has come over with the view of studying the Indian languages of this neighborhood, was brought to the Council Chamber by the Mayor yesterday evening and accommodated with a chair by the side of his worship. Whether he found the situations favorable to linguistic study is unknown; but doubtless he will find plenty of our citizens who will be ready and willing to assist him. [*Daily British Colonist*, May 26, 1876:3]

While the newspaper emphasized his linguistic interests Pinart devoted the bulk of his time to archaeology with local assistance from James Deans. They excavated burials in the Cadboro Bay area and further north on Vancouver Island. Pinart published an article on his archaeological work under the title “A French Scientist Explores the Indian Mounds of the Pacific Coast—Indian Remains on Vancouver’s Island.” It appeared first in the San Francisco *Daily Evening Bulletin* August 19, 1876, and several weeks later in the *Daily British Colonist*, Victoria September 1, 1876. Before leaving Vancouver Island Pinart undertook linguistic work with the Cowichan. He also executed a sketch of a Salish house front, possibly a grave house on Discovery Island at Cadboro Bay. It has not been published before; it portrays a figure dressed as a white man with eagles on either side.

Pinart’s Vancouver Island diary in French covered a variety of dates between 25 May 1876 to July 8, 1876. He described two visits to Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, former trader with the Hudson’s Bay Company, and his wife at their home “Cloverdale” in Victoria. Pinart admired particularly a stone raven mortar used to crush the leaves of native tobacco used by the rulers of the coast. This became part of the Tolmie Anthropological Collection which Tolmie’s daughter donated to the British Columbia Museum in 1927. It is item #30 “mortar—hard stone—bird carving of a raven; In possession of collector 50 years. It was said to have been in a former family

18 Erna Gunther (1956:footnote 281) was critical of Pinart for not crediting the work of the Russian Veniaminoff for his translation of the Raven tales.

19 The Pinart papers are stored at the Bancroft Library, University of California, San Francisco. Pinart was a friend of Bancroft and Pinart gave him all of his papers.

20 Pinart’s linguistic notes are in the Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

5 generations. Northern B.C.” Today this very fine stone raven mortar is one of the highlights of the Royal British Columbia Museum’s Northwest Coast collection.²¹

There is no evidence that Pinart returned to western Canada after July 1876.

Pinart’s Time in San Francisco

Next we can explore Pinart’s movements prior to donating the stone mask to the Paris Museum in 1881. We will also look for other links to San Francisco which was Pinart’s principal destination when on the west coast of California.

Pinart returned to Paris by October 1876 and a few months later was en route to Oceania and Easter Island aboard the French ship *Seignely*. Returning from Oceania, Pinart stopped briefly in California. Continuing his Alaska interests, he made a side trip to the site of Fort Ross, California, one of the forts established and abandoned by the Russians. While there he sketched the fort; the drawing is dated 27 November 1877. By February 1878 he was in France to sort out financial matters. Pinart gave his Alaskan collection to the Trocadero Museum in exchange for a five-year appointment from the French Ministry of Public Education to work in the Southwest USA, Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador (Marie Mauzé 2001). In July 1878 Pinart was in Santa Barbara with his partner Leon De Cessac. They had worked together in the southwest, doing both archaeology and linguistic work.

Pinart as noted above kept a sporadic diary while on Vancouver Island in 1876. He published a lengthy account of his archaeological work in Victoria in the San Francisco newspaper. In these, or any other of his publications, however, there was no mention of a stone mask.

The Salmon Fishing Connection

The purchase of both the sighted and unsighted masks is closely linked with the young commercial salmon fishing industry that was occurring around the Skeena River in the late 1870s. Most of the players in the story of the two stone masks were involved, including Paul Sebassa, I. W. Powell, William Duncan, and William Neill.

On May 30, 1876, Powell wrote to Duncan in Metlakatla asking him to welcome and provide information to William M. Neill, the President of the Northwestern Commercial Company (NWCC). The NWCC was incorporated on February 18, 1876 in San Francisco and established an office on Bastion Square in Victoria in October 1876.

In the fall of 1875 Duncan’s assistant Rev. William H. Collison met with Neill’s partner and co-director Col. C. C. Lane at Woodcocks Landing on the Skeena River. Woodcocks Landing was an early landing for coastal steamers at the mouth of the Skeena River, and at this time was a stopping place used by gold miners and others before heading up the river.

21 Wilson Duff (1975) described the tobacco mortar, Raven (#131) as Haida and as representing a diver (loon).”

Rev. Collison described the salmon canning potential of the area to Col Lane. The result was an immediate deal. It led to the establishment of Inverness Cannery in 1876 at Woodcocks Landing, the first cannery north of the Fraser River (Collison 1915:55).

A second canning company was established shortly after, farther up river at Aberdeen Creek. C. S. Windsor was the operator, and it was known as both Aberdeen and Windsor cannery. It opened in 1878, but Windsor had been making preparations the previous year. Presumably in order to ensure access to salmon, he entered into an agreement with Paul Sebassa “Chief of Kathlahta [sic]” in June 1877.

Whereas the said Paul Sebassah agrees to give to the said C.S. Windsor, the exclusive privilege to fish for salmon in the Kitsumalarn River from year to year for from one to four years, and not longer unless another agreement should be made between both parties, reserving the right only to himself and brother, and to allow the said C.S. Windsor to erect a cannery and any other buildings that he may think well to erect.

In consideration of which the said C. S. Windsor agrees to pay to the said Paul Sebassah, one hundred dollars per year, one half to be paid in cash and the other half in goods. [quoted in Harris 1985:69]

“Kitsumalarn River” refers to Ktism Laagn (Kitsemenlagen), Curtis Inlet on the west coast of Pitt Island. This is a key territory in the House of Ts’ibasaa. Windsor may have been considering putting up a cannery in one of the channels in Gitxaala territories, as suggested by Harris (1985:70) but it is most likely that Sebassa’s fishery was intended to supply the Aberdeen cannery.

The following year Paul Sebassa signed a similar contract with Neill of the Inverness cannery, also for a fishery in a specific watershed at “Kitsah.” This location is not known. He also reserved the right for his family to continue their food fisheries. This contract was signed at Metlakatla on June 14 1878 by Paul Sebassah and W. M. Neill. (Harris 1985:71]

Despite the accord suggested by these contracts, there was considerable tension between traditional fisheries and this new commercial fishery. As a Justice of the Peace for the district, William Duncan was directly involved with settling disputes. As Superintendent of Indian Affairs, I. W. Powell had authority to intervene at the provincial level.

As owner of Inverness cannery, W. M. Neill corresponded with Duncan to organize salmon fishing arrangements with Metlakatla residents including restriction that there would be “no working on the sabbath.” Some disputes occurred over fishing nets and Duncan was frustrated by the lack of Provincial Government fishing regulations. Duncan notified Powell of the difficulties over the use of native salmon streams.

By 1879 matters were reaching a dangerous point, and Powell, accompanied by Inspector of Fisheries Alexander Caulfield Anderson made a special trip of enquiry to the North Coast in July of that year. Their first stop in the region was at Lowe Inlet, a traditional fishing site of Ts'ibasaa. Powell "deemed it advisable" to visit Lowe Inlet, "the place claimed by 'Sabassa' or Thit-kath-la Indians, and where the canneries of the Skeena wished to fish." After touring the area, he wrote, "It does seem hard to me, however, that so small a place should be interfered with by canneries...and should be left for the exclusive use of the tribe claiming it" (Powell 1879a:114).²²

Next they stopped at the Skeena canneries, Aberdeen and Inverness, where the managers complained about Duncan's interference with their operations. These were mostly due to differences in moral viewpoints, particularly the issue of fishing on Sunday. Next the tour went on to Metlakatla, and two days later, to Fort Simpson. The tour continued to the Nass River and on to Haida Gwaii. However, Powell did not visit Gitxaala on this trip.

While the principal purpose of the tour was to address the issues of commercial fishers trespassing on traditional First Nations fishing sites, Powell also took the opportunity to collect the art and artifacts of the people he was interacting with. In many cases, the people presented him with ancient items, and in others, he purchased prospective additions to the collection.

Many of the chiefs present me with old stone implements, and articles of Indian workmanship, which are now becoming very scarce among them, owing to their adoption of christian customs. These, together with many more I was asked to purchase from those who could not afford to give them, will form the nucleus of a most interesting collection of great ethnological value. I trust my object, and the desire I had not to lose the opportunity present by my visit to these distant tribes, of making a collection, which, in time, will yield a highly prized and instructive return for comparatively a small outlay, may have your [i.e. the Government's] concurrence and approval. [Powell 1879a:122]

Powell kept a small diary of the trip, in which he noted many of the art pieces that he was gifted or purchased (Powell 1879b). These items likely appeared in the collection he sent to Ottawa. However, the notebook does not contain any items acquired at Metlakatla, nor does it include the stone mask.

Duncan's Account Books

To delve deeper into the acquisition of the stone masks, we need to investigate the records that William Duncan kept as part of his administration of the Metlakatla community. These include account books and correspondence.

²² A cannery was built at Lowe Inlet in 1890, running until 1934.

Sebassah, Paul Metlakahtla		Cr
1878		
Feb. 18	By cash	20
	Curiosities for Lieut. Crowe	
	Stone Face 15	20
	3 carved spoons 5	
Apr.	Herring spawn to Mr. Tomlinson	6
	Paper from [unclear]	10
	Cash	6
Oct 15	Sea Otter	60
	Order on Windsor Canry	29.50
	12 Bags Flour	

Figure 4. The credit side of Paul Sebassa's Metlakatla store account, 1878, includes the sale of a "stone face." Source: Duncan Ledgers:20553.

The store ledger gives us the first solid evidence on the trail of the stone masks. A review of the account books shows that Paul Sebassa sold a "stone face" to Duncan and was credited for \$15.00 in February 1878. Duncan noted it was part of a collection of "curiosities for Lieut. Crowe." (See figure 4.) Crowe was a Royal Naval officer stationed at Esquimalt who had contacted Duncan with an interest in acquiring some pieces.

However, the "stone face" also appears on another page of the store ledger, "Indian Curiosities for Dr. Powell." The account was begun on April 3, 1878, with eight items entered, including Sebassas stone face and three carved spoons. They have an "X" marked beside them, likely indicating they were also being considered on Lt. Crowe's list. Other pieces were listed through 1878. The second page of the account is titled "Bought on a/c of Dr. Powell [June or July]²³ 11 1879." Duncan must have stepped up his collecting once he learned Powell was going to visit Metlakatla. A number of other items from Paul Sebassah were purchased, including a "hat" valued at \$30 and a mortar and pestle worth \$10.00. (Duncan Ledgers:20621, 20622)

Duncan's store ledger isn't the only source of information about his business transactions. His letterbooks contain correspondence and invoices with J. Englehardt, his business agent in Victoria, and also the cannery managers at Inverness and Aberdeen. In July 1878 Duncan sent his list of items for sale to Crowe to Englehardt in Victoria with instructions to give the list to Crowe. The list included the stone

23 Duncan's writing is unclear, but it was likely July 11, as Powell was in Metlakatla July 10 to 12.

Indian Curiosities bought for Lieut. Crowe (August 1878) H.M.S. Shah	
<i>1 Carved stone face used in feasting and dancing by the Indian who personifies "The Thief"</i>	\$15
2 large, 4 small black horn carved spoons	\$8
1 Large carved Indian Chief's dish	\$7
1 Indian Chief's dancing rattle	\$1
1 pair Indian leggings used when dancing	\$1
1 stone weapon-good preservation	\$1
9 " " (very ancient) evidently dug out of the ground	\$4.50
Carved bone charm	.50
1 Indian "Hah-yets" made of native copper, carved, shaped something like a shield & representing rank, greatness & wealth of the possessor. Some of them in old times would fetch two or three hundred blankets.	\$20.00
 <i>Mr. Neill bought last year the fellow to the carved stone face (first item) & he was wanting to buy the one I have got but was too late.</i>	

Figure 5. List of items Duncan offered for sale to Lt. Crowe, sent to F. Englehardt July ? 1878. Source: Duncan Letterbook 2:189.

face for \$15.00. Remarkably, this list notes two critical pieces of information about the stone mask. (See Figure 5.)

First, Duncan states that the stone mask is used in “feasting and dancing” and gives it a name, “The Thief.” Second, we learn that Neill had purchased the “fellow” to Duncan’s mask in 1877.

It appears that Paul Sebassa had the two stone masks. If Duncan is correct, he sold one in 1877, perhaps at the time of the agreement he signed with the cannery regarding exclusive fishing areas.

Duncan notes that Neill was wanting to buy the stone mask that Duncan had bought but was too late. Because the two stone masks fit together, it is possible that Ts’ibasaa had told both Duncan and Neill that there were two masks that fit together. Duncan would not know what Neill paid for his mask, which would be the sighted mask.

There is no evidence that Lieut. Crowe ever purchased anything on Duncan’s list of items for sale, and he definitely did not purchase the unsighted mask. We know that in 1879 Powell arrived to visit with Duncan who then included the unsighted mask in the sale to the Powell and subsequently to the Ottawa museum.

The path of the sighted mask from Neill to Pinart is not quite as clear. We know

Pinart was not in British Columbia after July 1876, but he was in San Francisco, where the head office of Neill's company North West Commercial Company was located. Neill could well have been there at the same time as Pinart when he sketched Fort Ross near San Francisco on November 27, 1877.

The Northwest Commercial Company went out of business and sold Inverness Cannery. The closure of the business required Neill's presence in both San Francisco and Victoria to sign legal documents. On October 15, 1878, Neill appointed John Herbert Turner of Victoria to oversee the closing down of the NWCC. A series of legal documents were signed October 18, 1878 in San Francisco.

The link then has to be made to Pinart who was not in Victoria at the time. The North West Commercial Company's head office was on California Street, San Francisco. It was just blocks from the Alaska Commercial Company on Sansome St. Another possible link between Pinart and Neill (with the sighted mask) may be the Russian consulate that was based in San Francisco. Both men maintained a high interest in the northern B.C. coast adjoining Alaska. Neill's North West Commercial Company did open an Alaskan business with a slight name alteration.

However, none of these documents reconcile the data in the cataloguing information, which mentions a Protestant pastor at Metlakatla, and also the Nass River.

Did Neill get the mask directly from Ts'ibasaa at the time of signing the fishing agreement? The store records indicate that Duncan bought his mask directly from Ts'ibasaa. The question is, would Ts'ibasaa give one mask to Robert Tomlinson in recognition that Tomlinson actually conducted his family's baptism?. If Tomlinson is involved the link to the shores of the Nass and Kincolith fall in to place.

Whatever the route, Neill's fellow stone mask of 1877 was eventually sold to Pinart, most likely in San Francisco. Pinart had executed the drawing of Fort Ross 21 November 1877. As we know, Pinart did not travel north in Canada after 1876. We know it is the sighted mask that is acquired by the Musee du Trocadero in 1881 with catalogue reference to a Protestant missionary and the shores of the Nass River.

W. Neill may have accompanied J.J. Robertson a Victoria businessman from Victoria to Kincolith. In 1877 Robertson was planning on opening an oolachen processing plant at the mouth of the Nass. It is conceivable that Robertson would know and invite Neill, a fellow cannery operator to accompany him north. They may have met at Woodcock's Landing. If Tomlinson sold the mask to Neill, would then take the mask to the San Francisco and his headquarters of the NWCC? It is quite likely that the NWCC had a museum like its San Francisco neighbour the Alaska Commercial Company. Pinart then bought the stone face from Neill or from a commercial venue in San Francisco, and took the mask back to France prior to 1881. Bancroft's notes on Pinart indicate Pinart was well connected in San Francisco and kept in touch with the Russian Consul there, likely a community of collectors.

Did Neill buy his mask from Ts'ibasaa at the time of the sorting out of the

fishing issues prior to Powell's arrival? Neill did sign a fishing contract with Ts'ibasaa in 1878. However there is no obvious link to the Protestant missionary at Metlakatla or the shores of the Nass River.

It seems unlikely that the House of Ts'ibasaa of the Nass was the link to the masks. Since the baptisms took place in Metlakatla, or Kincolith there would be a reference to two Ts'ibasaa being baptized.

The Thief

Professor Wilson Duff²⁴ of the University of British Columbia described the unseeing, Kitkatla (Ottawa) mask as #53 in the 1969-1970 catalogue for the exhibit, "Masterpieces of Indian and Eskimo Art from Canada" organized by the Musee de l'Homme in Paris:

Only two stone masks, this one probably of basalt, have been located. Its function is unknown. The stone shows traces of blue, black and red paint (pale red is discernible on mouth, chin and ears). The features are clearly carved but not in detail.

Five years later Duff organized the exhibition and catalogue of "Images Stone B.C." in 1975. That was when he discovered that the masks fit one behind the other. There was speculation that the masks symbolized Raven myth stories, which was adopted by researchers on the stone mask. It is highly unlikely that is correct. As the mask is a *naxnox*, a physical representation of a super natural being, it would not represent such a mythic character as the Raven. I found another mask known as "The Thief" from the CC Perry collection in the Canadian Museum of History, collected from the Nass area in 1911. This mask also represented The Thief.

I have not found any record of these masks being presented in the Tsimshian feast house. We can date the masks on the basis of the ear forms, which can be interpreted as the signature of the artist (suggestion of Tlingit artist, Nathan Jackson). Scans are available that include four masks with the distinctive 'B' shaped ears, two Tsimshian and two Tlingit. Those with collection dates both Tlingit and Tsimshian indicate a creation date circa 1780.

Kisgagas Link to Ts'ibasaa

The village of Kisgagas is on the upper Skeena River near its junction with the Babine River. The John Cove Inventory of the Barbeau Northwest Coast files provides some information on the connection between Chief Ts'ibasaa and Kisgagas.

At Gitxaala, Ts'ibasaa had the very exclusive privilege of announcing the first initiation of winter and no other Chief could give a Power dance until Ts'ibasaa had

²⁴ The exhibition opened in the Musee de l'Homme, Paris and then moved to the National Gallery of Canada November, 1969-1970. Duff did not travel to Paris at this time or he may have recognized the stone mask collected by Pinart in the Musee de l'Homme collections.

blown his whistles. According to Garfield, no Chief among the Tsimshian had a similar privilege (Garfield 1939:316).

Ts'ibasaa, however did not possess the right to the cannibal spirit dance which belonged exclusively to the Gunax-nu'tk, a member of the chiefly house of He.l in the Gitxaala tribe. Henry Tait (Boas 1916:536) reported that Ts'ibasaa cites a story from Mark Luther whose father was a Gitxaala tribesman concerning Ts'ibasaa's failed attempt to secure the right to the Cannibal dance for his nephew.

Ts'ibasaa together with Chief Alle'm-laxha and Wiseks of the Ginax'angiik tribe, migrated from Prairie Town (Temlaxam) to the coast. He arrived at Gitxaala after the privilege had become established in the other house, and though he became the leading Chief, he was never able to acquire the right to the Cannibal Powers. Likewise it has never been in possession of the Ginaxangik Chiefly House, which is related to that of Chief Ts'ibasaa.

A stone mask was the privilege of a Kisgagas House named, Tsemqaq, "In Raven." It had special privileges and powers. According to Barbeau (in the Wilson Duff Fonds, UBC, Series 13:135) "In the old days, when this house was giving a feast, they removed a board from the house front, over the door, and a man sat there all day in a stone mask, saying qaq, qaq." People who heard him knew there was to be feast in the house. There were reported to be two houses one directly behind the other. The inner house was called *sqala'ant*, meaning "behind." The second house could only be reached by going through the first house.

The double house can be seen as a metaphor that includes the two stone masks. The sighted, or outer mask can only be accessed inside the blind second mask.

Conclusion

While this essay focuses on the documented life path of the stone masks, first separately and then together, it is only the after-image of the whole. There were many people involved and several missing links remain in the collecting and of the ceremonial use of these stone masks. There is always the nagging possibility that the researcher has not found all the relevant sources. The sighted mask was not featured in the recent 2006 catalogue of "Chefs-d-Oeuvre dans les Collections du Musee du quai Branly." Despite this I believe these masks deserve to be recognized as priceless treasures of Canadian art.

This essay has reviewed the history of the twin masks from the written record. Their ownership by Chief Ts'ibasaa and their subsequent sale by William Duncan and Neill to agents working for the museums in Ottawa and Paris is resolved. The ownership by Chief Ts'ibasaa narrows the range of relevant traditional narratives considerably. The *adawok* make it clear that Ts'ibasaa comes to the coast from the upper Skeena. Hence the link to the double house at Kisgagas provides a narrative that matches closely the essential features of the twin masks.

While we may never know the specific details of the masks' journeys from Gitxaala to Ottawa and Paris, we can say that they were the patrimony of the House of Ts'ibasaa.

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