Naming Cheakamus River

What does Cheakamus mean
the Archivist said to hai
last Chief of Kitsilano Beach.

Basket, the Chief replied,
basket to catch fish,
you put a basket in a ripple of the river
fish go inside
cannot get out.

It could be called Fish Trap River, then.

Why call it that when Cheakamus is a better name
it’s Cheakamus
that’s a basket to catch fish
Naming a chief

So,
the Archivist said to Chief Khahtsahlano,
Capilano is the chief of the Squamish tribe
and Khahtsahlano is the vice chief.

No, replied the Chief.
They did not make anyone
bigger than the others.

When they cut up meat in strips to dry
no part was wasted,
even the guts they filled with something
what you call sausage –

no part wasted
only the head.

Naming a mayor

His Worship Mayor McGeer –
the name we gave him
is pronounced Klayala
there is no such word
in the Squamish tongue
the Alert Bay Indians say
that's what they call a mink
the Pemberton Indians say
it means in their language 'cloud'
I don't know what it means
we had to name him something
Naming masks

The Archivist is seated at his desk:
What have you been doing to yourself,
he asks his last Chief of Skwa-yoos
now Kitsilano Beach
where Archivist’s porch surveys the waves.
You look pale, he says
you’ve been washing yourself with soap,
you’ve washed all the colour off,
your face is white.

I made a mask from memory
Chief Khahtsahlano replied.

Miss King, make out a cheque for fifteen dollars.
When I’ve got this mask on, am I chief?

Ha. Chief of Skwa-yoos maybe.

Come, Archivist cried, look at your mask in this glass case:

Memorandum
Two men, one white, one brown, sat on a verandah at Kitsilano
Beach; old friends, enjoying each other’s company, with a tray of
tea and cake between them, watching the blue sea beyond the
sand, shimmering
as golden sun fell on its wavelets.

Naming embroidery

Sahp-luk
that’s what the Indians called him
he was Chief Mathias’ father
the priest told him
you must go to Capilano Creek as post
not chief but post

you know what a post is
you put it in the ground
to mark a place by

Sahp-luk wanted to be chief
he went to see the agent at New Westminster
the agent asked him, You got a flag?
he borrowed the Indian flag from my aunty Khah-my

ARCHIVAL NOTE:
The flag measures seventy two by fifty-seven inches
The central white is fifty-five by twenty-eight and a half
In centre, an embroidered cross, reddish yellow
Above cross, embroidered word RELIGION
Below cross, embroidered word CIVILIZATION
Naming Stones

Provincial Board of Health, Division of Vital Statistics
Registering change of name of August Jack
to August Jack Khahtsahlano
This compliance with Section 13
of the Change of Name Act
has been given the file number N.C.N. 108
J.D. Scott, for Director

Dominion of Canada
Province of British Columbia
To wit:

) In the Matter of August Jack
) Khahtsahlano, heretofore known
) as August Jack (son of Khay-tulk
) who was also known as Supplejack
) and grandson of Khahtsahlano
) formerly of Chay-theos (now known
) as Prospect Point), Stanley Park

I, August Jack Khahtsahlano
of the Capilano Indian Reserve,
North Vancouver, British Columbia,
born in the Indian village of Snaaq
(formerly situate on False Creek)
heretofore known and called
by the name of August Jack,

Do hereby give notice

That I do
for myself and my descendants
formally and absolutely renounce,
relinquish and abandon
the use of my said surname Jack
and hereby assume, adopt, and determine
henceforth on all occasions whatsoever
to use and substitute the name of Khahtsahlano
as my surname.

This bit of rock is tumblth
it's been lying in the creek
where the red paint comes from
and got a coating of tumblth.

Naming truth

Sir,
In accordance with your orders
I proceeded to Burrard Inlet
arriving at 3 p.m.
and marking out Captain Stamp's Mill.
The N.W. corner
occurs in the centre of an Indian village
to clear which would only give the sawmill
about 90 acres.
The resident Indians seemed
very distrustful of my purpose.
By the appearance of the soil and debris
this camping ground
is one of the oldest in the inlet.
The sawmill claim does not in any way
interfere with the proposed site of the fort.

To The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary
(signed)
J.B. Launders
June 3, 1865

Sir,
I have the honour to state that a Squamish Indian called
Supple Jack has squatted for the last three years
on the land in question. There are two male relatives
now living near him. Capt. Stamp has no objection
to their remaining where they are.
They can at any time be removed,
the ground does not belong to their tribe.

To The Honourable
The Colonial Secretary
(signed)
C. Brew, J.P.
June 7, 1865
Sir,
they forget that Supplejack’s son
that’s me
is there.
Supplejack was living at Chaythoos
long before Captain Stamp’s Sawmill came.

To The Honourable Colonial
(signed)
Chief Khahtsahlano
April 20, 1939

Naming Jims

I found out that people were saying my dad was a killer
my aunt Polly, Mrs. Chief Harry
said, Your dad died at your home
he was no such thing as a killer
your father’s got nothing to do with that dying in jail
that Indian – his name’s Tender Jim, he died in jail
waiting for his trial

too many Jims
so they called him Tender Jim
Naming frames

Memorandum of archivist:
I explained to August that he had sworn to a place of birth under oath,
and it would take another oath to alter that, and that copies
would have to be lodged at the record office in Victoria
and that our frames would have to be undone and fixed up again,
and that I was not pleased with the prospect of proving
that a man who was, in fact if not in name, Chief Kitsilano,
was born in Stanley Park; it would be more in keeping
if he was born in Kitsilano.
Note on the text:
the snippets of conversation and archival documents rearranged into these poems are taken from *Conversations with Khahtsahlano 1932–1954*, compiled by the City Archivist Major Matthews who was recording his conversations with a Khahtsahlano man known as August Jack. One of the goals of Matthews’ project was to find out Squamish place names in the lower mainland of British Columbia.