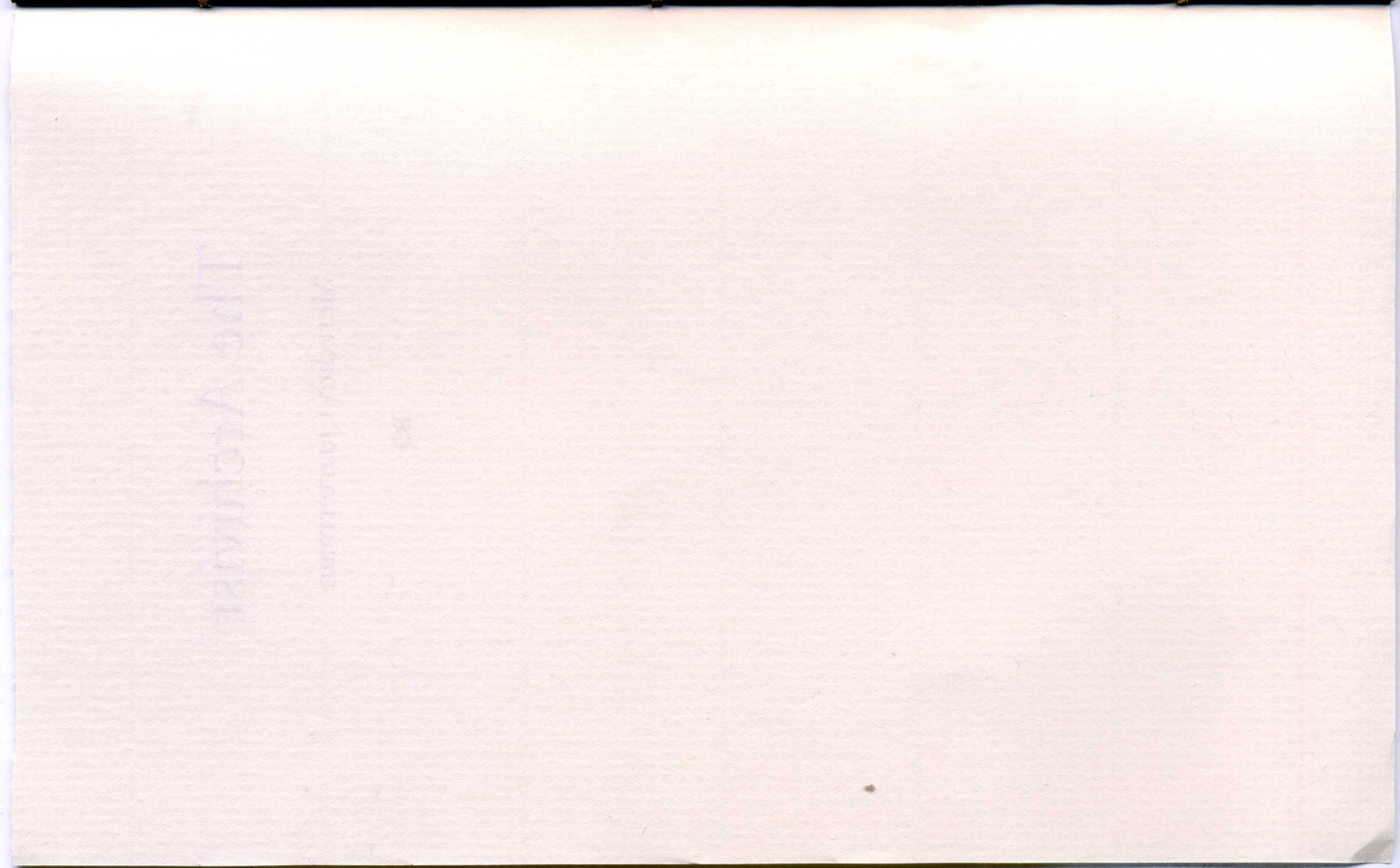


# The Archivist

Meredith Quartermain

82



The Archivist

Meredith Quartermain

2007

No. 1

## Naming Cheakamus River

What does Cheakamus mean  
the Archivist said to *his*  
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
- ) Khatsahlano, heretofore known
- ) as August Jack (son of Khay-tulk
- ) who was also known as Supplejack)
- ) and grandson of Khahtsahlano
- ) formerly of Chay-thoos (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 Snauc  
(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 tumbth

it's been lying in the creek

where the red paint comes from

and got a coating of tumbth.

## 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

## Naming Jims

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

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.

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