

Chinook Jargon

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**The Hidden Language of the
Pacific Northwest**

Jim Holton

Wawa Press

San Leandro, California

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Foreword

Klahawya tilikêm,

Hayash mersi, thanks very much for looking at this book.

This book didn't quite go the way I planned it. When I started researching Chinook Jargon about seven years ago I was hoping for a topic that I could deal with in about three months. I thought that the "trade language" was the perfect target. It was said to have only three hundred words, no grammar and was long time dead. Simple, right?

Well, the more I looked and researched, the more I saw that all my original ideas were wrong.

Not only is the language much more complex with a vocabulary of thousands of words and compounds, but it has a well developed grammar comparable to other languages despite assertions to the contrary. I found that the language, though not the *lingua franca* that it once was, is still very much alive. It is spoken by some people and it also remains alive in place names, slang and the culture of the Northwest.

As a simple introduction to Chinook Jargon, this book presents the language to the reader via the printed media. The orthography, or spelling system, used in this book has been chosen to minimize barriers to the language for speakers of western European languages. By minimizing these barriers, the reader can enjoy the discussion on Chinook Jargon's grammar, world view, culture, and history.

By making Chinook Jargon accessible, I hope to generate public interest and appreciation of Native American languages which, hopefully, will lead to general support of the many language revival and continuation programs. Native American languages are part of our heritage and it would be a tragedy to lose them.

I'd like to thank Tony Johnson for the all the hours in which he helped me with my Chinook Jargon, as well as giving me an appreciation of the culture behind it. I'd also like to thank Henry Zenk for the many days of instruction, as well as Barbara Harris, Duane Pasco, Tucker Childs, Jeffrey Kopp, my wife Karen and son Andy for all the help and encouragement they've given me. The mistakes are my own.

Klahawyêm, Jim Holton

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