

Chinook Jargon

Chinook Jargon

**The Hidden Language of the
Pacific Northwest**

Jim Holton

Wawa Press

San Leandro, California

Copyright © 1999, 2004 by R. James Holton

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication
(Prepared by Quality Books Inc.)

Holton, Jim.

Chinook jargon : the hidden language of the
Pacific Northwest / Jim Holton. -- 1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

LCCN: 99-76708

ISBN: 0-9674897-1-7 (hbk.)

ISBN: 0-9674897-0-9 (pbk.)

1. Chinook jargon. I. Title.

PM846.H65 2000

497.41

QBI00-312

Front and back cover art by Duane Pasco
Photo enhancements and maps by Jeffrey Kopp
Printed and bound in the United States of America
First printing, 2004

Wawa Press is an imprint of *Adisoft, Inc.*, P.O. Box 2094, San Leandro, CA, 94577. Web site: www.adisoft-inc.com/chinookbook

Contents

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------|
| | FOREWORD | |
| 1 | HISTORY | 1 |
| 2 | PRONUNCIATION | 19 |
| 3 | GRAMMAR | 29 |
| 4 | CONVERSATION | 43 |
| 5 | 16 SKUKUM WORDS | 47 |
| 6 | PLACES | 55 |
| 7 | OUTSIDE | 61 |
| 8 | NUMBERS | 69 |
| 9 | SONGS AND STORIES | 75 |
| 10 | RESOURCES | 85 |
| | CHINOOK-ENGLISH | 89 |
| | ENGLISH-CHINOOK | 111 |
| | NOTES | 125 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 131 |
| | INDEX | 135 |

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

May 5, 2004