

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE G'PS GOLOX TOTEM POLE JOURNEY

*"From our ancestors to our children...  
...The journey of a hundred years, the journey of a thousand  
miles....."*

### 1872 Creation of Totem

Chief G'ps Golox (Paddy McDonald) of the Eagle Clan hired Hemzid (Johnny Paul) and Wakas (Solomon Robertson, who was Gordon Robertson's father, now Hereditary Chief) both of the Raven Clan, to carve the totem pole.

### 1924 Government interested in buying totems

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (of England) requested the preservation of totem poles in British Columbia. In a response letter to Doyle, Chas Stewart of the Dept. of Indian Affairs wrote that *"...the Government has been commissioned to take up the matter, perhaps to buy out the totem poles in the Skeena River."* File number: Public Archives Indian Affairs. (RG10, Volume 4086 file 507,787-2).

### 1927 Permission requested to buy Haisla totem

A letter from Iver Fougner (Bella Coola 'Indian Agent') to the Secretary Department of Indian Affairs (D.I.A) Ottawa requesting permission from D.I.A. for Mr. Olof Hanson, Swedish Consul for BC to purchase the Haisla Totem Pole.

The letter was written on December 16, 1927. In his letter Mr. Fougner states that, *"[The] reserve is uninhabited, and very isolated. The chances are that the pole, if not removed, after some time will fall down and be destroyed."* File Number: public Archives-Indian Affairs (RG10, Volume 4087 file 507,787-2B)

### 1928 Permission granted to buy Haisla totem

Deputy Superintendent General responded to Iver Fougner on January 11, 1928 giving permission to sell and export the Kitlope Totem Pole given that, *"the Indian reserve was uninhabited and very isolated"* and *"... provided that the Indian owners are willing to dispose of it."* File Number: Public Archives-Indian Affairs (RG10, Volume 4087 file 507,787 -2B)

### 1929 Totem leaves for Sweden

Mr. Olof Hanson, Swedish Consul stationed in Prince Rupert, B.C. stated how he negotiated for years with Xenaksiala people before he was able to secure the pole so he could give it to his country as a gift. The pole was transported to Sweden by boat. At the time the museum of Ethnography lay in the central part of



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Stockholm in Wallingatan close to Norra Bantorget, where the pole was erected in the open and exposed to wind and weather for approximately 6 months.

## 1929-75 Totem placed in storage for more than 40 years

In 1929 the museum started moving from Wallingatan to the former premises of the dragoon regiment in Djurgardsbrunnsgatan on Gardat in Sweden. There, the pole was placed horizontally in an unheated storeroom, in a place called the 'refectory building' where it remained for just over 40 years, since the museum lacked premises high enough to exhibit it.

## 1975 Totem moves again

In the fall of 1975 the museum moved to temporary premises while new specially designed museum buildings were being erected on the current site of the National Museum of Ethnography. At that time the pole was transported to the warship Wasa's conservation department at Beckholmen, Sweden for conservation since damage due to dry rot had been observed.

## 1978 Totem treated for deterioration

Wasa conservation department completed the treatment to preserve the old pole from damage from insects, rot and mould.

## 1980 Totem erected in new Swedish museum

The pole was stored at Beckholmen until 1980 when it was transported to the new, climate controlled building of the Museum of Ethnography where the old pole was erected on the 25th of March 1980. (The pole has been in its current home for 20 years as of the 25th of March 2000).

## 1991, Nov.22 First trip to Sweden

First trip to Sweden, by a Haisla delegation to request the pole's return. A dual purpose of the trip was to negotiate with Finland's Enso-Gutzeit, the parent company of Eurocan in Kitamaat, about Eurocan Forest Products Corporation who obtained an extensive cutting license for the Kitlope area. Members of the Haisla delegation who traveled to Finland and Sweden on this first trip were: Gerald Amos, John Pritchard, Louisa Smith and David Peerla.

## 1991, Dec. 1 Haisla delegation arrives in Sweden

## 1991, Dec. 2 Visit Totem Pole

Haisla delegation meets with Olof Johansson. A press conference was held where the Haisla delegation announced their wish to reclaim the totem pole and that it was taken without their consent during a time of European dominance.

## 1991, Dec. 3-4 Negotiations begin



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Haisla delegation negotiates with Par Kaks, then director of the Swedish Museum of Ethnography regarding the repatriation of the Haisla totem pole. The delegation also looked at other Haisla artifacts in storage in the museum.

## 1992, Oct. Declaration of ownership

Declaration signed between the Haisla and Xenaksiala people regarding the ownership of the Totem pole of G'ps Golox.

## 1993, Nov. 26 BC Premier shows support

Letter sent from Mike Harcourt, then British Columbia's Premier, to Mrs. Brigit Friggebo, Minister of Culture for Sweden: *"In our view, the return of the totem pole to the community would be a welcome and appropriate action on the part of the Swedish Government."*

## 1994, Feb. 24 Sweden grants permission for return of pole

The Swedish Government grants permission for the totem pole to be presented as a gift to Kitamaat Village.

## 1997, Oct. 25 Further negotiations

On a third trip to Sweden by Haisla delegation to negotiate the return of the pole, again, the delegation negotiated with Par Kaks for the repatriation of the old pole. The delay; despite the agreement by the Swedish Government to have the pole returned to its proper place and owners, resulted from the museum's insistence on state-of-the-art climate controlled facilities to house the totem. This was beyond the financial means of the Haisla. Members of the Haisla delegation, were: Gerald Amos, Gail Amos, Felix Grant, John Pritchard, Ken Hall, Shirley Hall, and Louisa Smith.

## 2000, May-Aug The two replacement poles being carved.

First chinks made into the two new replacement totem poles being carved by 4 Xenaksiala carvers in Kitamaat Village in front of the school. Haisla children are looking on with excitement and curiosity to learn an important form of art from their nation. One pole will be sent as a gift to Sweden to stand in place of the original old pole; and the second pole will be erected at Misk'usa, where the original old pole was first taken from in Haisla territory.

## 2000, Aug. 29 New pole to be erected

Ceremony to celebrate the erection of the new pole at Misk'usa. Family, friends and delegates gather from near and far to celebrate the spirit of the Pole.

## 2000, Sept. Carvers and second pole to travel to Sweden

Second pole, partially carved, will travel to Sweden accompanied by the Haisla carvers. The carvers remain in Sweden for one-two months to finish carving the pole inside the Swedish Museum of Ethnography to increase public awareness about the project, the art of totem carving, and Haisla culture.



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## 2001-2002

It's hoped, that with help, the original totem pole will return home to Kitamaat Village in the near future.

## 2003 TOTEM Documentary : Totem: The Return of the G'psgolox Pole

A documentary produced by Gil Cardinal and the National Film Board of Canada is released showcasing the history and the journey of a Xenaksiala/Haisla Totem Pole, a significant discovery that reflects the struggle of the repatriation of a Nation and a Culture.

## 2004 Cultural Centre to House the Pole

Discussions and feasibility studies commence for the cultural center, that will permanently house the totem

## 2005 Conditions on the G'ps Golox Pole Lifted

Museum of Ethnography notifies the Haisla, the pole is ready to come home.

## 2006 Haisla Delegation travels to Stockholm

13 members of the Haisla Nation including members of the Totem Pole Committee and Chiefs, Elders and leaders travel to Sweden to witness the raising of the replacement pole and the sending off of the original G'psgolox Totem to Vancouver, Canada. The pole is expected to arrive in Vancouver in mid to late April 2006, where it will be temporarily housed at the UBC Museum of Anthropology. In May 2006, the Haisla will host a fundraising gala in Vancouver, BC to assist with the required capital to build the pole's permanent home, Q'adilas. Also, the Haisla delegation has been invited to participate in the World Urban Forum June 18 & 19<sup>th</sup> 2006 in Vancouver, BC, where the pole will be on display for estimated 6-10,000 visitors to the Forum. The pole's final journey home is planned for July 1, 2006, when the community of Kitamaat will celebrate this Homecoming event.

