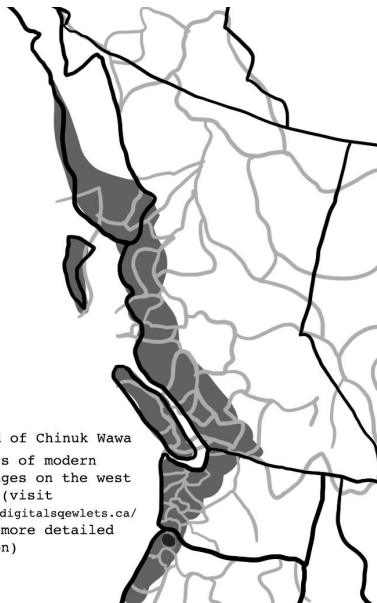


Chinook jargon, [Chinuk Wawa], is a mostly-dead pidgen language. Prior to contact, it was developed from the language Chinook from Oregon, and it spread up the coast as far north as Alaska. It was initially created as an intra-indigenous language to communicate across the many different language groups in the area.



Post-contact, it became a useful trade language for fur traders, and with the introduction of European influences, Chinook jargon began to include English and French words, as well as words with Polynesian and Asian origins.

Chinook Jargon had approximately 700 words in it at its height. The human brain is wired to learn and love languages. Our thoughts develop from our languages, and our modes of thinking develop based on how we speak. You can imagine how devastating the loss of language was for the philosophies, cultures, and stories of the peoples of the coast.



Check out the QR code above for more resources regarding Chinook Jargon as well as Indigenous Sovereignty.

máh-sie.

<https://riverkero.com/>

SKOOKUM

a brief history of local slang words in British Columbia.

Skookum is a word I grew up with.

In short, "skookum" means "big" or "great". It can also mean "able", "strong", or "genuine". It's an extremely versatile word, one that I used liberally, and one that was born and bred here, on the west coast.

My father used this word a great deal when I was growing up, and I find myself often having to explain its definition even to people here, in Vancouver. It's always a point of fun conversation about local languages and the lack thereof.

Skookum is one of the last words of Chinuk Wawa to exist in our common vocabulary after the not-so-skookum decline of indigenous language use due to oppressive genocidal tactics from the Canadian and US governments designed to eliminate First Nations cultural practices.

Fun Chinuk Wawa Words!

Skookum: Big, great, or large.

Potlatch: A traditional gathering that occurs in many different First Nations cultures on the Northwest Coast, during which family events are settled, wealth is distributed, dances are practiced, political matters are settled, and more. [Related to: *Potlatch Ban* 1884-1951, in which these practices were made a prosecutable offence by the Canadian government].

Máh-sie: Meaning "thank you". Borrowed from the French word "Merci".

Tillicum: Meaning "friend" or "family". This word is most famous for its association with the captive whale at Seaworld known for killing three people.



There are several locations in British Columbia bearing Chinook names



Examples:

Spuzzum - "basket, or making grass" [Fraser Canyon].

Hyas Lake - "important" [Shuswap]

Siwash Rock - Stanley Park, Vancouver.

Siwash is another word borrowed from French.

Siwash is borrowed from the French word *sauvage*.

Savage.

We stole the land, stripped away the name *Slh̓x̓í7lsh* and replaced it with *savage*. Another fun fact about the history of British Columbia.