

## Social Structure

Because the ownership of territories ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> vested in the social units within the tribe, it is necessary briefly to describe the social structure of the Kitwanoool. Like most of the Gtksan tribes, they ~~were~~<sup>are</sup> divided into three <sup>major</sup> units known as phratry: Wolf, Frog, and Foxweed (also called Grouse). These ~~were~~<sup>are</sup> ranked in the order given. The Foxweed group ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> very small, and owns ~~no~~<sup>none of the tribe's</sup> territories. The Wolves and Frogs are in about equal numbers. <sup>All the members of a phratry are felt to be related, almost as though in the same family. They must not marry within the phratry. ∴ husband and wife are always members of different phratry.</sup>

Membership in the phratry descends in the maternal line. This means that a person inherits his right to take ~~the important things~~ important names and use territories from his mother and her brothers, rather than from his father. The successor to a chief's name and "seat" (position) may be his younger brother, his sister's son or some other <sup>matrilineal</sup> descendant, but not his son, since his son is not in his phratry.

Trapping rights and other rights to territories are also passed on in the maternal line, contrary to some provisions of the legislation regarding traplines. In order to do this, the Kitwanoool have registered their whole trapping area as a single block rather than by individual traplines.

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The phratries are in turn made up of smaller units called "houses", which formerly consisted of the kinship group that owned a large communal house in the village. The houses are named from their head chief; eg. wilbslohon "house of Lohon". Each house owns a number of names for its chiefs, its own territories, and other rights. The houses in a phratry are ranked, <sup>and</sup> so are the chiefs. In the passage of time, ~~the~~ "houses" have split up to occupy two or even more communal dwellings. These offshoots retain for a time the fiction that they still belong to the original "house", but their chiefs also take certain rights with them and in the course of time they become completely separate "houses". In a similar way two or more "houses" may join together to occupy a single dwelling, <sup>or families might move in from elsewhere</sup> and for a time they retain their separate identities, but may eventually consider themselves as members of the same "house". Thus the social structure changed through time.

The important persons in each house and in the tribe ~~were~~ <sup>are arranged in order of rank</sup> ranked, and this ranking ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> expressed in the seating arrangement at important gatherings. Thus the rank ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> known as the 'seat'. A name and a seat go together as a <sup>single</sup> unit. The higher positions are much sought after by those who have any hereditary right to them. Usually too, there is a chosen successor to the seat, who sits in front of the chief at gatherings and has a special name. For example the bestowal of the name Gamakmaluk on a young man of the Wolf phratry was tantamount to assuring that he would succeed to the name and seat of Chief Gwaslam. However this system did not remain rigidly fixed through time. Conflicts over names and seats could cause adjustments in the system.

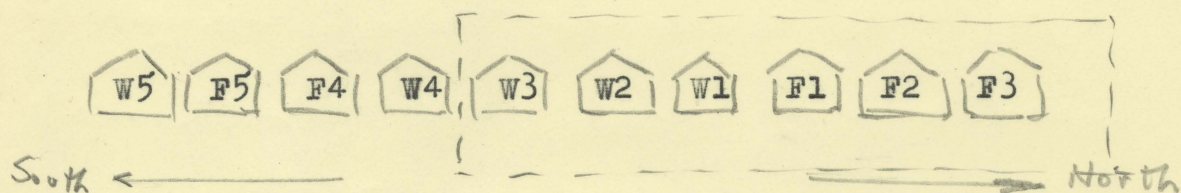
Present day <sup>Kitwancool</sup> ~~informants~~ elders describe the social structure of the village as it was about the turn of the century, when the last generation of old style communal houses was still occupied and the old system of ownership of territories still functioned smoothly. The following description of the photoais, "houses", "seats", and territories dates back to that time.

(Houses)

At that time there were 5 Wolf houses and 5 Frog houses in the village. There had also been two Fireweed houses somewhat removed from the others at the south end of the village, but their occupants had moved out to Kitegukla somewhat earlier. (There is no trace of the houses in photographs taken in 1910 and the last totem pole fell down in 1917). The houses were placed close together in a single line along the edge of a terrace of the river and separated from it by a small flat meadow. In theory the houses were arranged in the same order as the seats, with the top ranking Wolf and Frog houses side by side in the centre, the Frog houses in decreasing rank to the north, and the Wolf houses in decreasing rank to the south. Actually however, in the expansion of the village, two Frog houses had been built at the south end. The houses were placed

and ranked as in Figure 1, and the photograph shows the sixth leading houses as they were in 1910. These are the units which are shown as owning territory on Map 2.

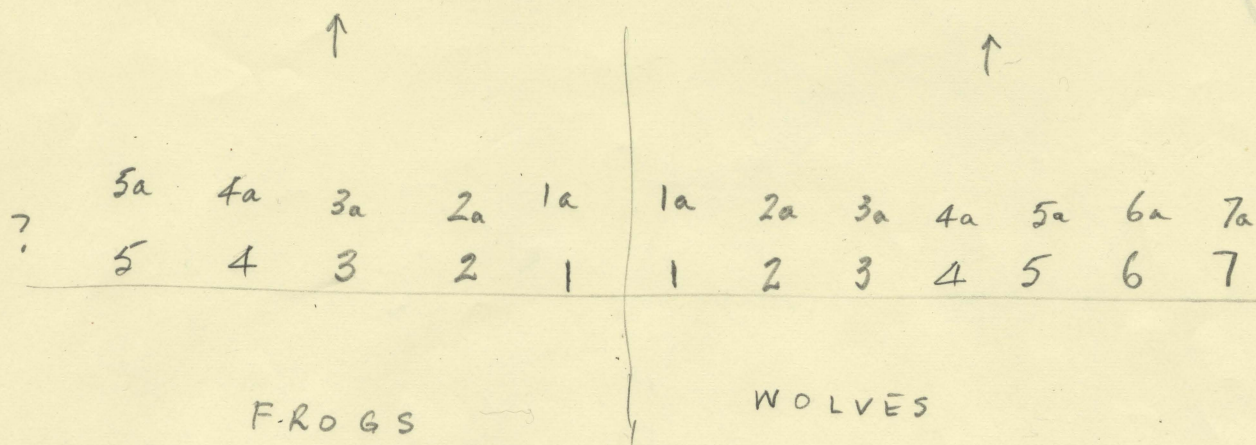
Fig. 1



The totem poles and sometimes the grave houses of the chiefs of the house stand in front of each dwelling. Some of the houses in each phratry considered themselves to be <sup>more</sup> closely related than others: F5 is regarded as an offshoot of F2, W3 and W4 remember that they formerly shared a single large <sup>dwelling</sup> ~~house~~ with W1. In cases where a house is shown as owning no territory on Map 2, it may share the territories owned by such a closely related house. By 1910 the dwellings F4 and W5 had disappeared (although <sup>some of</sup> their totem poles still stand today). ~~Their occupants probably moved~~ ~~into~~.

(Seats)

I did not learn the full details of the seats in the village, but I did learn enough to give the general picture. When the whole tribe met together the ~~seated~~ <sup>idealized</sup> seating arrangement was as follows:-



The chiefs are shown seated with their successors in front of them. My information on the Wolf seats was obtained from Walter Douse and is the more complete. There were seven Wolf seats in the village. Three belonged to chiefs in the house (the 1st, 3rd, and 7th) and W1, one each to W2, W3, W4, and W5. The following list gives the names of the chiefs who occupied each seat, the names of the successors, the rank of their seat and their house affiliation.





Wolf Chiefs (by seat and house)

<u>Seat</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>House</u>
1	Gwasldm "lend me your skin bone"	W1
1a (successor to 1)	or Wihai "great slave"	
1a (successor to 1)	Eamakmalmik	W1
No seat	Weeskimsem	W2 W1
2	Malee' "wild person"	W2
2a	Neeslagano's	W2
No seat	Akgwindéique "keep your hands off me"	W2
3	Andalaksembloks	W1
3a	Biósku "biggest mosquitoes"	W1
4	Haizimsku	W3
4a	Ligygyalwill (?)	W3
5	Wileetsku "great blue grouse"	W4
5a	Atsown	W4
No seat	Adagamye'	W4
6	Kawoku	W5
6a	?	W5
7	Bioks	W1
7a	Etneéjit	W1

The Frog chiefs, by seat and house, were roughly as follows :-

<u>Seat</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>House</u>
1	Samlakye'tku "pacing back and forth"	F1
1a	Hlámee	F1
2	Lohó'n "coming to eat salmon"	F2
2a	Wadahayé'tku	F2
3	Kuno'	F3
3a	?	F3
4	Yukyú'kw or Sáhansku (?)	F4
4a	?	F4
5	Iseewa' (?)	F5
5a	?	F5

It is of interest to note that all or virtually all of these names are still held, although some have passed to persons who live in other villages. The system of seats is still ~~preserved~~ virtually intact, and the persons holding the highest seats are, <sup>still</sup> the real rulers of the village.

## Ownership of Territories

The ownership of territories was vested in the chiefs, or probably more precisely, in the houses. The <sup>speakers</sup> informants did not seem to distinguish clearly on this point; in some cases they said "That creek belongs to ~~John~~<sup>Malie</sup>", and in others, "That was owned by Malie's house". In some cases a specific area was shared by all the chiefs of a house (or even of the phratry); in some cases the head chief assigned an area <sup>temporarily</sup> to another chief in his house (or even to his "children" in another phratry); in some cases two chiefs in the same house owned separate territories. Partly it depended upon the type of resource area concerned. A mountainside <sup>near the village</sup>, where beavers were picked ~~might be~~<sup>was</sup> shared by the whole village tribe. Another mountain where mous goats could be hunted was shared by all the Frogs. But streams with salmon weirs and traplines along the valleys were less frequently shared.

The Kitwancool considers that they own all of the territories shown within the boundaries on the map. The streams and lakes yielded their fish, the valleys and mountains were trapped and hunted for furs and food, and also yielded berries, shoots and roots.



## The Indian map

Map 1 is an <sup>exact</sup> tracing of Fred Good's map of Kitwanoocool territories. This is a most interesting document, apparently drawn ~~freehand~~ <sup>and not traced from</sup> without reference to an accurate base map.

As may be seen by comparing the tracing with Map 2, there are certain distortions in the scale and in directions, but it does represent an amazingly good conceptualization of the country. Every detail on the Indian map has been copied on the tracing, including the handwriting of the place names and the quality of the pencilled lines. The original is drawn in pencil on a sheet of heavy cardboard.