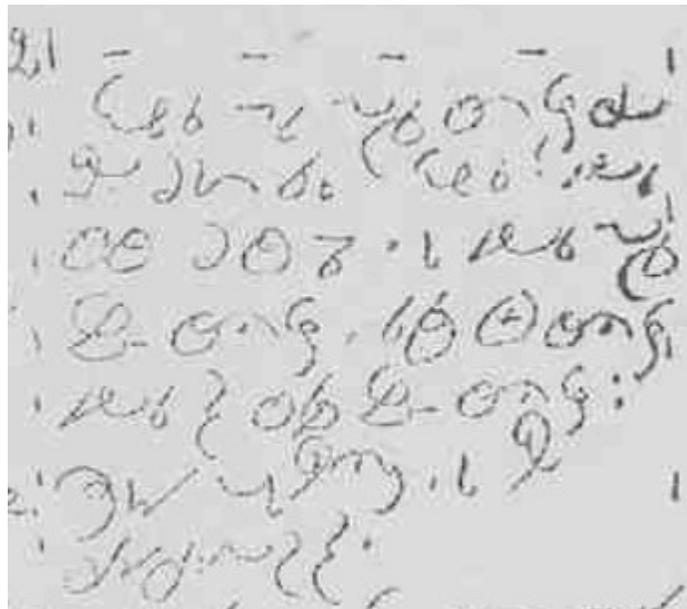


Elections in BC Chinook Wawa
Transcribed from *Chinook Peipa* alphabet and normalized by
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Preliminary note: in CW, 'to win' anything or 'to beat' someone in a competitive situation is **tolo**.
'To lose' in the northern/newer dialect including BC CW is **lost**.¹

#1



“Masaika tiki **iskum**² wach-man³ pos
“Do you folks want to elect watchmen to

tlloosh-nanich kopa masaika?” Tlaska
keep watch over you?” They

wawa nawiitka, pi tlaska **iskum**
said yes, and they elected

1 If I'm correctly understanding Dale McCreery's chat comments in our 11.07.2020 Zoom session, **lost** is borrowed into Nuxalk Salish. Similarly **tolo** is borrowed into some other BC Indigenous languages.
2 **Iskum**, literally 'to take; to accept', is also 'choose, pick, elect'.
3 **Wach-man** were village officials who acted as religious police. The word is found in both Protestant and Catholic BC First Nations communities. The term is based on a pretty old Chinook Wawa verb **wach** 'to stand guard, to keep watch', which as a synonym the **tlloosh-nanich** that we see in the same sentence. Note, the plural is not ***wach-tilikum*** (an expression I've never found), but **wach-man**.

mokst wach-man, kakwa lookalisti-wach-man.⁴
two watchmen, as eucharistic watchmen.

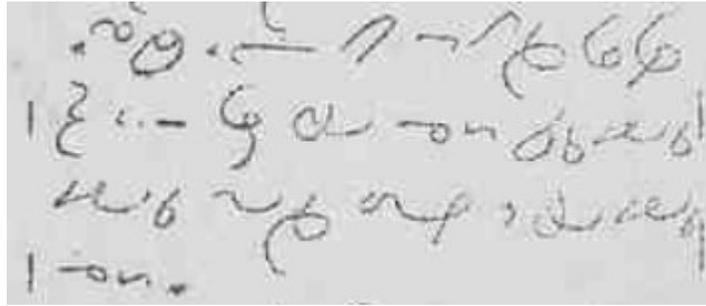
Tlaska neim okok mokst wach-man:
Their names, those two watchmen:

Jon Piter Spiloomchin, pi Looi
John Peter Spillumcheen, and Louis

Ok'ok'isumnum.
Ok'ok'isumnum.

– from [Kamloops Wawa #113\[b\], February 1894, page 21](#)

⁴ **Lookalisti**, from Canadian French *l'eucharistie*, is 'eucharist' – the Catholic ceremony of Communion. So each village's **lookalisti-wach-man** had as their main duty making sure that everyone participated in communal life by attending Mass and following the rules of personal conduct imposed by the missionaries. By the way, **lookalisti** is usually written in the *Chinook Peipa* writing system as a symbol ⊕, resembling the communion wafers I'm familiar with; you can see this in the visual clipping above.



Yawaa⁵ Hed Leik⁶ tilikum mamook-
Then the Head Lake people

neim⁷ iht man pos taiyi⁸ kopa tlaska.
named a certain man to be chief for them.

Tlaska iskum Aizik, pos tlaska
They elected Isaac, to be their

taiyi.
chief.

– from [Kamloops Wawa #118\[b\], July 1894, page 116](#)

5 **Yawaa** means literally 'there', but especially around Kamloops it's used a lot as 'and then' – equivalent to older/southern **alta**.

6 **Hed Leik** is the usual Chinook Wawa name of the Head of the Lake Indian Reserve, at the north end of Okanagan Lake in Vernon, BC.

7 **Mamook-neim** ('make-name(d)') = 'to name; to nominate', here a synonym for 'elect'.

8 **Pos taiyi** deserves a closer look. **Pos** means 'in order to; so that'. (Unlike the southern/older dialect of CW, northern dialect doesn't use this word to mean 'for'; it uses **kopa**, which happens to be the very next word in the sentence!) **Taiyi** 'chief' also means, by the usual rules of CW grammar, 'to be a chief'. So these two words together communicate 'in order to be chief'.