

A SILETZ VOCABULARY

By LEO J. FRACHTENBERG

THE dialect spoken by the Indian tribe that lived on the Siletz River prior to the establishment of the Siletz Indian Reservation (1856) represents the most southern branch of the Salish linguistic family. The origin of the word "Siletz" was for a long time a puzzle to the students of Indian linguistics. The most frequent explanation that was put forth was, that it represented a corrupted form of the name "Saint Celestine." This explanation seemed quite plausible, in view of the fact that the earliest white people that came in contact with these Indians were Catholic missionaries. I myself considered this etymology correct up to the time of my recent trip to the Grande Ronde Reservation. While stopping at Devil's Lake (situated three miles north of the Siletz River), I was informed that this lake and also the Siletz River were known as Silet Lake and Silet River respectively. Further inquiries proved that the word "Silet" is of Athapascan origin, meaning "Black Bear" (compare Rogue River *Sili't* and Tütü'-tunne *Siyi's*). This explanation of the word "Siletz" is more correct than the former etymology, for two reasons,—first, because of the established fact that in a majority of cases the names for Indian tribes, localities, etc., are not native; and, secondly, because of the fact that to this day many black bears are found in the woods near the mouth of the Siletz River,—hence I have no hesitation in accepting the word "Siletz" as of Athapascan origin.

The following material was obtained in 1910 from Susan Fuller, an old Indian woman living on the Siletz Reservation. It is quite possible that many of the terms of relationship obtained from her include the possessive pronouns; but I had no means of verifying this suspicion, because of the fact that she

was the only Siletz Indian, and that she spoke very little English. I have therefore put down the words obtained from her without any changes, leaving the correct grammatical analysis to the students of Salishan linguistics.

SOUNDS.

<i>a, e, i, o, u</i>	. . .	short vowels of continental values.
<i>ā, ē, ī, ō, ū</i>	. . .	long vowels of continental values.
<i>ai, au, eu</i>	. . .	short diphthongs.
<i>āi</i>	. . .	long diphthong.
<i>ā</i>	. . .	as in German <i>wählen</i> .
<i>ɛ</i>	. . .	obscure vowel.
<i>ʷ</i>	. . .	whispered vowel.
<i>iⁿ, ūⁿ</i>	. . .	nasalized vowels.
<i>g</i>	. . .	sonant stop.
<i>t, k, ts, tc</i>	. . .	unaspirated surds.
<i>q</i>	. . .	velar <i>k</i> .
<i>k', ts'</i>	. . .	palatalized surds.
<i>t', q'</i>	. . .	aspirated <i>t</i> and <i>q</i> .
<i>tl, tsł, tcl, k'l, ql</i>	. . .	explosives.
<i>x</i>	. . .	like <i>ch</i> in German <i>Bach</i> .
<i>s</i>	. . .	as in English.
<i>c</i>	. . .	like <i>sh</i> in English <i>she</i> .
<i>l, n</i>	. . .	as in English.
<i>l'</i>	. . .	like <i>l</i> in English <i>lure</i> .
<i>ŋ</i>	. . .	vocalized <i>n</i> .
<i>ʃ</i>	. . .	spirant lateral.
<i>ʒ</i>	. . .	surd lateral.
<i>ʔ</i>	. . .	glottal stop.
<i>ʰ</i>	. . .	aspiration.
<i>h, y, w</i>	. . .	as in English.
<i>'</i>	. . .	stress accent.

NUMERALS.

<i>tsxai</i> , one	<i>yilhā'tci</i> , six
<i>hɛsā'li</i> , two	<i>t'tclo'ls</i> , seven
<i>tcā'na't</i> , three	<i>t'qā'tci</i> , eight
<i>kawū's</i> , four	<i>lɛyū'</i> , nine
<i>tsłxus</i> , five	<i>lahā'mtcis</i> , ten

TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP.

<i>tata's</i> , mother
<i>wawū'a's</i> , father
<i>ci'guls</i> , older sister
<i>su'qlēs</i> , elder brother
<i>xeha's</i> , grandfather

