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 Siy’t’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.

| a, e, i, o, u | short vowels of continental values. |
| d, ð, ð, ð, ð | long vowels of continental values. |
| ai, au, eu | short diphthongs. |
| ñ | long diphthong. |
| ð | as in German wählen. |
| ñ | obscure vowel. |
| s | whispered vowel. |
| ñ, ñ | nasaled vowels. |
| ñ | sonant stop. |
| l, t, l, t, l, ñ, ñ | unaspirated surds. |
| ñ | velar k. |
| k, l, k, k | palatalized surds. |
| ñ, ñ | aspirated l and ñ. |
| ñl, ñl, ñl, k, l, q | explosives. |
| ñ | like ñ in German Bach. |
| ñ | as in English. |
| ñ | like ñ in English she. |
| ñ | as in English. |
| ñ | like ñ in English lure. |
| ñ | vocalized ñ. |
| ñ | spirant lateral. |
| ñ | surd lateral. |
| ñ | glottal stop. |
| ñ | aspiration. |
| ñ, ñ, ñ | as in English. |
| ñ | stress accent. |

NUMERALS.

tsza’s, one
kæsä’ti’, two
tca’nä’ti’, three
tlava’s, four
tsi’su’s, five

TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP.

ta’di’s, mother
wàwà’s, father
ci’guts, older sister
sw’qìlés, elder brother
zeho’s, grandfather
qenad's, grandmother
lawunad's, son
iici's, daughter
lec'ya's, grandson
si'la's, granddaughter
swal's, grandchild
swa'd's, paternal uncle
qes'a's, maternal uncle
tcats, { paternal aunt
tmaternal aunt
nac'itsi, father-in-law
altac'itci, mother-in-law
latac'aitci, brother-in-law
sux'sita'six, sister-in-law
snac'itsi, { son-in-law
descendant-in-law
son of elder brother
descendant-in-law
descendant of elder brother
son of younger brother
descendant of younger brother
son of older sister
descendant of sister
son of younger sister
descendant of sister
descendant of younger sister
tasak'itsiks, relatives after death of person that caused a relationship

PARTS OF THE HUMAN BODY.
za'zal, head
wag'yn, hair
wa'gvin, nose
tinl'and's, ear
tie'na's, forehead
tse'cie's, saus, neck
kun'isiun, eyebrow
issi'si, lip
issi'ina, tooth
wil'yu, tongue
m/c'ts, leg
sac'itsalci, index-finger
ti'ce'i, middle finger
sac'itxus, little finger
yin'ka's, heart

ANIMALS.
asai'yqhat, coyote
at'a'c'ad, panther
sti'yu, grizzly bear
l'uni'sa'i, black bear
xqaz, cinnamon bear
sne'ha'd, wolf
lasiq'qai, fox
'uxadis'nun, coon
a's'ui, wildcat

NOUNS.
tsaa'l'eu', coals
tasna'win, house

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