

Author: FP McManamon at NP-WASO-DCA
Date: 10/27/99 4:32 PM
Priority: Normal
CC: Jim Thomson at NP-PNRO, Fred York at NP-PNRO, Jason Roberts, FP McManamon
Subject: Re: Languages

Fred--Thanks for the info and thoughts. I also am passing along to Jason. FPM

Reply Separator

Subject: Languages
Author: Fred York at NP-PNRO
Date: 10/27/99 11:27 AM

Frank, I've been giving some thought to our conversation yesterday afternoon. I definitely recommend keeping linguistic studies and ethnographic/ethnohistorical studies, as a kind of information, separate from "traditional histories" in line with the 3 kinds of information you initially outlined.

With regard to languages of contemporary tribes and their ancestors in the mid-Columbia portion of the Plateau, two major language groupings are represented: the Interior Salish (Salishan Phylum; Interior Salish Branch; various localized languages and dialects); and, the Sahaptian (Penutian Phylum; Sahaptian Family; Sahaptin, Nez Perce, Cayuse and other languages and dialects). Please refer to a map on page 50 of in Volume 12 of the Handbook of North American Indians, the long awaited and recently published (1998) Plateau volume edited by Deward Walker. The map shows the Interior Salish language area extending north into Canada from Priest Rapids on the Columbia, and the Sahaptian/Sahaptin to the south.

The excellent article that is the source for the above is entitled "Languages" and was written by M. Dale Kinkade, William Elmendorf, Bruce Rigsby and Haruo Aoki (pp. 49--72). Aoki and Rigsby are already on your list of recommended experts. In addition to setting the stage for understanding the languages of the mid-Columbia area, the article addresses some points that are relevant to the proposed cultural affiliation study. For example, it makes reference to alternative perspectives on the origins of "Interior Salish languages." From one point of view, they "almost certainly expanded into the Plateau from the coast" (p.68). That is the dominant perspective, but the authors also make reference to an alternative that suggested that "Coast Salish originated in migrations from the Plateau interior . . ." (p. 68).

The issue of Salish language origins is also addressed in Volume 17 of the Handbook (Languages, published in 1996). In an article by Michael K. Foster entitled "Language and the Culture History of North America" (pp. 64-110) he notes "Summing up, in the late twentieth century it appeared that Salishan archeology and linguistics were converging around the idea of a coastal homeland, which acted as a staging area for expansions north and south, and east into the Plateau."

Obviously, that point raises questions on a decision to regard the contemporary Salish speaking tribes as descendants of long term residents of the mid-Columbia. With reference to the Sahaptin and Nez Perce speakers there is an interesting and relevant discussion of two different perspectives on their tenure in the mid-Columbia. In one, after James Teit (1928) and not held to by most contemporary scholars, the Sahaptin language "expanded its territory in the last 500-1,000 years . . . under pressure from expanding Numic peoples to the south,

there was some possible 'northward movement of Sahaptin-speaking peoples . . . from their postulated former habitat south of the Columbia river." The above view is criticized as based on "unsupported assertions of a Columbia Salish informant" and is considered dubious by a number of scholars (Ray, Jacobs, and Rigsby). Kincade, et. al. conclude that "Sahaptins have undoubtedly lived in the Plateau region for many centuries . . ." (p. 68 in Volume 12).

Frank, you may want to peruse both all of the Vol. 12 article by Kincade, et. al. (only 23 pages) and selected pages of the Vol. 17 article by Foster (pp. 64-70 - intro and methods, pp. 78-83 - on Salishan and other Northwestern families in the course of developing your scope of work.

One final comment. I'm a little concerned that the Warm Springs have not been involved in consultations, etc. thus far on Kennewick Man. Sahaptin speakers are prominent among the 3 language groups represented at Warm Springs (- the other two are Upper Chinookan and Paiute speakers) and Sahaptin speakers/descendants are prominent, if not exclusive in the tribes that have been involved thus far (Umatilla, Wanapum, Nez Perce, Yakama and Colville). Both Colville and Yakama confederacies contain constituent bands/groups who are Salish speakers or descendants. Do you know why the Warm Springs have not been involved? Was it a decision by them or others because of their location south of the Columbia? I hate to see a surprise from that quarter some time down the road. Based on linguistic and ethnographic information, not to mention extensive historic and prehistoric connections among Warm Spring Sahaptins and Sahaptins in other tribes already mentioned, a strong case could and perhaps should be made for including them in consultation.

Frank, while writing the above, I thought that I should contact Chuck James. He confirmed that the WS decided not to get involved because they didn't want to get mixed up in the litigation. The tribe certainly has the right to bow out of the fray, but our cultural affiliation study should not exclude them. Chuck suggested that even without tribal involvement, an adequate ethnographic study would have to include a review of Warm Springs/Sahaptin cosmology on the area of interest as well as the cosmology from the involved tribes.

I hope that some of this helps you to develop the scope. I think that it would be great to have at least one of the authors of the Vol. 12 article involved in the linguistic component of the CA study. Finally, I checked with an old friend (the office manager of the Journal of Anthropological Research at UNM in Albuquerque) on the Roberta Hall reference. We've narrowed the date down to the Fall or Winter issue of 1994. Unfortunately, she was missing that volume! I'll try to look for it at home tonight. It is in one of a thousand boxes that I've just moved to a new residence. Shouldn't be too hard to find - I think I know where most of my recent journals are located.

Fred