

**Snass Sessions, Tuesday 05.13.2025:**  
**William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek BC, January 5, 1899<sup>1</sup>**  
David Douglas Robertson, PhD  
Consulting linguist, Spokane, WA, USA

**Notes:**

- Visit [Julie Baumler's webpage of "Chinuk Pipa"](#) (BC alphabet) resources.

***Background information on the writer(s):***

This writer is a major presence!

In *Kamloops Wawa* #118[c] (July 1894), William Waspulawh is on the subscriber list for Canoe Creek, a far northern Secwépemc community.

In issue #126 (March 1895), "Indian William" of that community is noted as a teacher of Chinuk Pipa to the people there.

Issue #129 (June 1895) has Father Le Jeune expressing appreciation for letters from him, among other Indigenous writers.

In September of that year (issue #132), he's again prominent in a list of Canoe Creek subscribers.

A letter from him is reproduced in issue #140 (May 1896). In #142 (July 1896), it's mentioned that a letter from him has gotten lost so that Le Jeune can't quote from it in that issue.

In December of 1897 (#159), William Waspulawh is in the list of accomplished Chinuk Pipa writers who have won prizes in a shorthand competition in France.

---

1 Notes:

- There's usually little or no punctuation in the Indigenous-written letters, so what you see here is pretty much my additions of commas, periods, and so on.
- If you see [SIC] in square brackets it shows possible mistakes in the writing; other material [in square brackets] is inferred and added by me.
- \*Asterisked\* material shows an uncertain reading of the Chinuk Pipa writing.
- Underlined material is in other languages than Chinook Jargon.
- Anything < in angled brackets > is non-Chinuk Pipa, i.e. written as standard English in the original document.
- The notation (Ø) shows that you can understand a clause to contain either "silent IT" or a "silent preposition".
  
- I have put line breaks between every clause-containing sentence, and added punctuation, to help the reader. (But I've preserved each writer's own idiosyncratic punctuation marks.)  
I'm sometimes experimenting with extra indentation to show the existence of subordinate clauses. (And to reflect the flow of the speaker's thoughts.)
- Many thanks to all of you who participated in this Snass Session!
- IN THE TRANSLATION OF THIS DOCUMENT, IF I'VE PUT IN A *LINE IN ITALICS*, IT'S TO SHOW THE LITERAL MEANING OF EACH "WORD".

In December of 1901 (#199[c]), another of his letters is quoted in full, as also happens in #200 (March 1902).

Today's letter is one of seven from him that we have found in archives so far.



**Page 1, transcribed:**

**Kanu-Krik(,) <5> Chanwari <1899>(.)**

*Canoe-Creek, 5 January 1899.*

‘Canoe Creek, 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 1899.’

**Pir Lshyun kopa Kamlups(,)**

*Père Le.Jeune in Kamloops:*

‘Père Le Jeune in Kamloops.’

**Lili naika ilo mamuk-cim kopa maika(,) pi lili naika ilo**

*long.time I not make-written to you, and long.time I not*

‘It’s a long time that I haven’t written you, and a long time that I haven’t’

**tlap cim kopa maika= Alta naika mash sitkom-tala kopa**

*receive writing from you. Now I send half-dollar to*

‘received a letter from you. Now I’m sending fifty cents to’

**maika= Ukuk sitkom-tala(,) Lui Astkwa iaka piii iaka Chinuk pipa=**

*you. this half-dollar, Louis Astkwa he pay.for his Chinook paper.*

‘you. This fifty cents is Louis Astkwa paying for his Chinook newspaper.’

**Pi wiht Siplia Tnanulih iaka piii kwata kopa iaka Kamlups-**

*and also Cyprien Tnanulih he pay quarter for his Kamloops-*

‘And also, Cyprien Tnanulih is paying a quarter for his Kamloops’

**Wawa pipa= Pi iaka wawa(, “)Taham mun naika ilo tlap pipa= kakwa naika**

*Wawa paper. and he say: “six month I not receive paper, so I*

‘Wawa newspaper. And he says, “I didn’t get any papers for six months, so I’ll’

**piii kwata=(”) Ukuk iaka wawa(,) Siplia(,) kopa maika= Alta naika(,)**

*pay quarter.” this he say, Cyprien, to you. now I,*

‘pay a quarter.’ That’s what Cyprien says to you. Now I,’

**Wiliam Waspulawh(,) wawa kopa maika(,) Pir Lshyun= Tlus maika kopit-**

*William Waspulawh, say to you, Père Le.Jeune: good you stop-*

‘William Waspulawh, tell you, Père Le Jeune: You should stop’

**mash pipa kopa Siplia= Nawitka(,) som taim-s lost pipa(,)**

*send paper to Cyprien. yes, some time-s be.lost paper,*

‘sending the paper to Cyprien. Yes, sometimes papers have gotten lost.’

**tataim\* Alan\* Kam\*<sup>2</sup> mitlait kopa iakwa(,) Kanu-Krik= Pi alta ukuk**

*some.time\* Allen\* Kamm\* be.located at here, Canoe-Creek. and now that*

‘the times\* Allen\* Kamm\* was over here at Canoe Creek. But now that that’

---

2 **Tataim Alan Kam:** this is a tentative reading of an unclear stretch of text. Other possible readings suggested by our Snass Sessions group include **tatlam** ‘10’ and **Aron** ‘Aaron’. It should be emphasized that we don’t yet know of anyone named Allen Kamm in the Canoe Creek area at the time of writing.

**pus [- əpas]\*<sup>3</sup> kopa kompani-haws<sup>4</sup> kopa iakwa(,) Kanu-Krik haws= iaka**  
*post\*[-office]\* at company-house at here, Canoe-Creek house, "it"*  
'post office is at the company building over here, the Canoe Creek building, it's'

**tlus(,) ilo kakwa Kam= Ilo wan taim alta lost pipa=**  
*good, not like Kamm\*. not one time now be.lost paper.*  
'good, not like Kamm. Not once has a paper been lost lately.'

**Kwansim Chon\* Rawta\*<sup>5</sup> iaka tlus-nanich nsaika Chinuk pipa=\***  
*always John Router\* he well-watch our Chinook paper.*  
'John Router\* always takes good care of our Chinook papers.'

**Pi wiht <5> sints naika mash kopa maika= Iht man iaka piii\***  
*and also 5 cents I send to you. a.certain man he pay.for*  
'And also, I'm sending you 5 cents. This one fella is paying what'

**ankati iaka cha-bon kopa pinstil= Alta naika ilo siisim mitlait(,)**  
*previously he jaw-bone for pencil. now I none story have.*  
'he borrowed a while back for pencils. Now, I don't have any news.'

**Ilo-ayu sik mitlait kopa iakwa= Alta nsaika trai pus mamuk Sondi-haws=**  
*not-much sickness be.located at here. now we try in.order.to build Sunday-house.*  
'There's not much sickness over here. Lately we're trying to get a church built.'

**Kopa ukuk kol(,) kopa March(,) iawa karpantir iaka start**  
*in this winter; in March, then carpenter he start*  
'This winter, in March, that's when the carpenter got started'

**mamuk kopa iakwa= Iaka tiki mamuk kopa <1200> tala=**  
*build at here. he want work for 1,200 dollar.*  
'building over here. He wanted to work for \$1,200.'

**Iaka wawa pus mamuk ilip-tlus kopa Knim-Lik Sondi-haws iakwa=**  
*he say supposedly build more-good than Canim-Lake Sunday-house here.*  
'He said how he'd build better than the Canim Lake church here.'

---

3 It is not definite that what's written here is meant as 'post office', although that loanword from English does show up elsewhere in Northern Chinook Jargon. The word corresponding to 'office' is inexpertly written, and is scratched out. The nearby community of Dog Creek did in fact have a post office as far back as 1873.

4 The referent of **kompani-haws** is not yet clear to us. It may mean the headquarters of a cattle ranching company.

5 Or possibly **Lawta**. Perhaps this is an Indigenous name.



**O(.) naika papa Pir Lshyun(.) tlus maika styuil kopa S[ahali-]T[aii]**  
*oh, my father Père Le Jeune, good you pray to sky-chief*  
'Oh, my father Père Le Jeune, please pray to God'

**pus aiak nsaika tlap chikmin pus pii ukuk nsaika Sondi-haws=**  
*so.that soon we find money in.order.to pay.for this our Sunday-house.*  
'that we'll soon find the money to pay for this church of ours.'

**Ukuk naika wawa kopa maika(:) pus maika mamuk-klahawiam**  
*this I say to you: so.that you make-poor*  
'What I ask you is, to do a favor'

**kopa nsaika kopa styuil= pus S[ahali-]T[aii] iaka mamuk-klahawiam**  
*to us with prayer so.that sky-chief he make-poor*  
'for us with prayers so God will take it easy'

**kopa nsaika= pus nsaika tlap kanawi-ikta(.) pus nsaika**  
*to us, so.that we find every-thing, so.that we*  
'on us, so we'll manage to get it all, so we'

**tlap chikmin= Kopit naika wawa kopa maika=**  
*find money. finished my words to you.*  
'manage to get the money. That's all I've got to tell you.'

**Hma potoha<sup>6</sup>(.) Pir Lshyun(.)**  
*well goodbye, Père Le Jeune.*  
'Well goodbye, Père Le Jeune.'

**Naika Wiliam Waspulawh**  
*I William Waspulawh*  
'It's me, William Waspulawh'

**kopa Kanu-Krik(.) Bisi(.)**  
*in Canoe-Creek, BC.*  
'in Canoe Creek, BC.'

**Naika(.) Wiliam Waspulawh(.) naika mash kwata kopa maika**  
*I, William Waspulawh, I send quarter to you*  
'I, William Waspulawh, am sending you a quarter'

**kopa naika Chinuk pipa.**  
*for my Chinook paper.*  
'for my Chinook newspaper.'

---

6 **Hma potoha** is in the Secwepemctsin (Shuswap Salish) language.