

"A *feud over this pole*. Old chief Mountain or Sakau'wan, some time before his death in 1928, gave an account of the rivalry between the Eagle-Raven clan and the Killer-Whales or Gispewudwades of Nass River, over the size of their new totems.¹ In summary here it is.

The Killer-Whale chief, Sispagut, who headed the faction of the earlier occupants on the river, announced his determination to put up the tallest pole ever seen in the country. Its name was to be Fin-of-the-Killer-Whale. However, instead of selecting for its carver Hladerh whose right it was to do the work, he chose Oyai of the canyon. Hladerh naturally felt slighted and confided his grudge to Sakau'wan, chief of the Eagles, and his friend. From then on the Eagles and the Wolves of their own day were to be closely allied, as the ancestors of both had moved in from Alaska and at one time had been allies.

For a fuller account see *Alaska Beckons* by Marius Barbeau. The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho and the Macmillan Company of Canada, 1947, pp. 127-136"

Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, vol. 1 (1950), 29.

or Sakau'wan

and

Sispagut

the river
the country

the canyon

allied

by Marius Barbeau

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Eagles and Wolves

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05.08.2011

Of his own volition, the poet returns to Toronto, confident that he will be reunited with the totem pole removed from the Nass River valley by Marius Barbeau. The poet confronts the admissions staff member at the ROM, explains that he refuses to pay to see a totem pole that was taken from his ancestral village. The staff member initiates a lethargic request to allow admission under special circumstances but is unable to contact any of his superiors. The staff member shrugs, verbalizes his apathy, and allows the poet into the museum. The pole towers through the staircase; the poet circles up to the top. The pole is here; the poet is here.