An index to the Sapir-Thomas texts

Adam Werle

1. Introduction

This document serves as an index to the Sapir-Thomas (ST) texts, which are also sometimes called *Nootka texts*. These were collected by Edward Sapir and Alex Thomas from 1910 to 1933, then edited by Sapir, Morris Swadesh, and others, and published in six volumes from 1939 to 2009 (see below).

While the first two volumes (1939, 1955) included several thematic parts, the later volumes (2000–2009) contain just one part each. Further, later parts were published out of order. Last, part 3 has no texts, but is rather a grammatical sketch and wordlist. The following table depicts the correspondences amongst volumes, parts, series numbers (sn), and years of publication, in order by year.

(1) volume year sn parts title

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I acknowledge Matt Davidson, David Inman, and Henry Kammler for much helpful discussion, supporting information, and corrections concerning the texts.

2. Bibliography

Next, I provide detailed bibliographic information on all six volumes of the Sapir-Thomas texts. Let us begin with volumes 1 and 2.


Although Sapir and Swadesh called themselves the authors of the 1939 and 1955 volumes, this would not be acceptable today, because they did not create the texts themselves, but rather recorded and edited stories told by other people. The editors of

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the later volumes did their best to correct this, acknowledging the original storytellers, translators, and editors alike. I reproduce such information as given.

Volumes 3–6 (parts 9–12) were published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, through its Mercury Series, and are organized under the broad supertitle *The whaling Indians: West Coast legends and stories.*


Other sources cited in this document follow.


3. Index

I list the Sapir-Thomas texts here according to their traditional numbering and thematic classification. In each index entry, I give the text’s number, title, starting page number, year of collection, and author—that is, the elder who provided the text.

I identify authors by unique two-character codes, as follows. CB: Captain Bill; TB: Tyee Bob; BF: Big Fred; HG: Hamilton George; CH: Chief Harry; PQ: Peter Kishkisk; LD: łaamahšus Dick; LZ: ḡuutasiʔii; LX: ḡuutisim; QX: Qwishanishim; SY: saayaačapis Tom; XT: Alex Thomas; DT: Douglas Thomas; WX: William; FW: Frank Williams. For more background on these codes, see Werle 2015–2017.

I present the original numbering of the texts, and their division into twelve thematic parts, despite certain inconsistencies. For example, although there are 140 texts, they are numbered up to 147. Numbers 80 to 84 are not used, and some texts are duplicated. I mark such duplicate texts with the notation [d]. (Thanks to Henry Kammler for clarification concerning numbering and duplication.)

Be aware that the text titles use at least two different spelling schemes for Nuuchahnulth words and names, namely Sapir and Swadesh’s practical (non-phonetic) spelling, and the Thomas-Arima practical system (Thomas and Arima 1970). Although I have not changed the spelling of the titles, I have corrected a few typos, and have presented all titles with so-called sentence case throughout.

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