

Grammar and Dictionary of the Yakima Language by Rev. M^c Cles Pandosy
(Jean-Charles Pandosy, Catholic order, Oblate Mary Immaculate, who helped
establish the Mission de Ahtanum in 1847 and remained among the Yakimas
and adjoining tribes until 1856)

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The bands enumerated by Father Pandosy belong to the Sahaptin family of
Mr. Hale. This family is divided into two branches, the Sahaptin proper
or Nez Perces and the Walla Walla in which later he includes all the other.

The country occupied by them extends from the Dalles of the Columbia
and upon the Kooskooskie and Salmon Forks of Lewis' Snake River between
that of the Selish family on the north and the Snakes on the south.

The Pahwanwa pam band usually called Yakamas inhabit the Yakima river,
a stream heading in the Cascade range and emptying into the Columbia above
the junction of the Snake. The word signifies "the ~~Hex~~ Stony Ground" in
allusion to the rocky character of their country. Roil-roil-pam is the
Klickitat country situated in the Cascade mountains north of the Columbia
and west of the Yakamas. Its meaning is "the Mouse Country," referring to
a popular local legend. The name Walla Walla is explained by Father Pandosy
The band so called occupy the country south of the Columbia and about
the river of that name. The Tairla usually called Taigh belong as stated
in the text to the environs of the Des Chutes river which drains
the eastern base of the Cascades south of the Columbia and the Palus, usually
written Paloose live between the Columbia and the Snake. All those bands
are independent and in fact, most of them are divided among several chiefs.

The author of this grammar, Father M.C. Pandosy was for a number of
years resident among the Yakimas and became perfectly acquainted with
their language. In the destruction of the mission by fire during

the Indian war in Oregon and Washington territory, the original of the grammar was lost and the following translation made some time previously alone remained. A revision of the dictionary and much more extensive than the accompanying was destroyed in the same fire. As the mission was then broken up and but little chance exists of an equally complete memorial of this language being prepared hereafter, these have been adopted as a most valuable contribution to our linguistics.

Grammatical notices of the Sahaptin or Nez Perce language, which differs from the Walla Walla perhaps as the Portuguese from the Spanish, were given by Mr. Hale in his Ethnology of the U.S. Exploring expedition and reviewed by Mr. Gallatin in the translations of the American Ethnological Society.

Father Pandosy explains the value of his letters which he employs but it is necessary to observe that there is no true "r" in the language and that the letter when used represents the guttural sound "ch" the Scottish "loch" or German Ich.

Indian Grammar

of the

Pishwan-wa-pam, Walà-wala-Tairtla, Roil Roil-pam and Palus languages.

The grammar which I now present and which I have written in the Pishwanwapam language gives at the same time an account of the Walawala Tairtla Indians of the Des Chutes river and its environs, Roilroilpam and Palus for theirs is ~~the same language~~ a single language divided into many dialects while fundamentally it is the same and a great majority of the words do not allow of a separation. I have written it in the Pishwanwapam in preference to either of the other dialects because it is more familiar to me clearer and easier than the rest.

I take the liberty of making the ~~max~~ remark, in passing, that many

persons write the word "alla Walla with four l's. I have even seen this orthography in books but I find it entirely defective because it alters the word in falsifying the pronunciation and thus puts it out of the question to recognize the meaning. According to this orthography it should appear to me, be pronounced wal-la-wal-la and I have heard it thus pronounced and so for a long time pronounced it myself but when by a sufficiently long residence among the Indians I was able to stammer their language well enough to make myself understood I asked the meaning of this word and they replied "atwanaki pa waniksha komanak tenmaman"..."those Indians are called after the river."

Thus the word atwan which among the pshwanwapams signifies river is rendered by the Wala-walas and the Palus by Wana. Further the Indians of all this neighborhood form the diminutive by repeating the substantiative, changing "n" into "l", giving the voice a different tone, putting the lips out in speaking and keeping them suspended around the jaw. In this way we have the word wana-wana which by the change of "n" into "l" gives wala-wala which should be pronounced very short "wala-wala" and not wala-walla.

Of the Letters

I have thought best before entering upon the subject to give a sketch of the letters which I have used in writing the Pshwanwapam language, that those who may chance to see this paper may, though distant enough from the Yakima country, in some sort hear the Indians speak.

The Yakima language contains but sixteen letters, a e i o u w c h k l m n p r s t. These letters have the same sounds as in European languages. Thus a e i o u are pronounced absolutely as a Frenchman would pronounce them and as with us these vowels are capable of receiving a certain modification of sound by means of accents. The

vowel u is met with very rarely and excepting two or three words in which alone it occurs the Indians pronounce it with difficulty.

The consonants have the same sound as in French and to simplify the orthography are pronounced after the new mode of spelling introduced into France some years since, consequently instead of saying ka elle eme we spell it simply ke le me. The vowel a is always mute in those cases. The letter h is ~~ix~~ always strongly aspirated. The r is always pronounced strong and guttural or as it is in the German language

Qao (a)

Strictly other consonants might be admitted into the Indian alphabet but this does not appear necessary and it would be contrary to the spirit of the age which seeks to reduce everything to its most simple expression.. It would even embarrass the orthography by uselessly overloading it. That necessity is there in fact for the letter q when we possess the k or have not those two precisely the same sound (in French). The same desire to simplify the spelling as much as possible has made me reject the y and the orthographic sign called trema (dialysis) Their retention is in fact useless since it is admitted as a principal that the letter i preceded or followed by a vowel or between two vowels is always pronounced as if it were a y or an i. I have also struck out the x which with us has not always the same sound since it is something pronounced like gs and sometimes like ks.

As among Indians of this neighborhood it would never represent the first sound, I prefer to use ks instead. It might be said indeed that by giving as a general rule in the Yakima language that x is always pronounced like ks this letter might figure in their alphabet but experience has convinced me that the establishment of a general rule is insufficient to overthrow a habit of pronunciation acquired in early education and strongly rooted.

Suppose that some one wished to study the Pshwanwapam language--if he cast his eyes upon the word written ik-siks would he not seize at first glance the true pronounciation, whereas on the other hand if ~~ix~~ he found it written with an x, issix would benot be naturally led to pronounce it ig-sigs a pronounciation which would be altogether incorrect.

The w is here used apparently as older French missionaries used the Greek character ~~x~~ ψ . As a consonant it answers to our W as a vowel to oo.

I employ eh in words which are pronounced like the Chinook tchako, for I do not see how the t placed before ch can give to it the pronounciation which is attributed to it. Besides why invent a novel mode of orthography. Is not the pronounciation to be represented by tch found elsewhere. The English language abounds with it and yet not a single word is written thus. Why then introduce characters which without presenting a thing new, have the defective advantage or rather the inconvenience of embarrassing the reader and writer by the surplusage. It is much more simple to say that ch is pronounced always as in English words in which those letters are found. The same is the case ~~xxxx~~ with sh.

Of the Parts of Speech

Like the dead languages (Latin etc) the Pshwanwapam contains but eight parts of speech, viz the substantative, adjective (pronoun) verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. The article the is wanting but the substantatives, adjectives and pronouns have the precious advantage of being declinable. It must be remarked that the substantatives as well as the adjectives and participles have no ~~xxxx~~ gender. They vary neither in the masculine nor feminine.