

The Gwa'yasdams Flood Story



THUNDERBIRD
(TZINQUAW)

KILLER WHALE
(Q'UL-LHANUMUTSUN)

The following is part of a recorded conversation between Basil and his father Jack James. It describes a flood story told in a community close to Mount Stephens, near Gilford Island, off Vancouver Island.

Kwankwanxwalige' (Thunderbird) is on top of the pole... He came down from Mount Stephens, right after the flood. There was a little village there, we call it K'we. He took his Thunderbird dress off and he acted like a man. On the chest of this Thunderbird is a Giant, a Dzunuk'wa (Wild Woman). On the bottom of the pole is the Max'inuxw (Killer Whale) and on his fin is the Luwagila (Raven). The Killer Whales... they save a lot of men, they take them ashore (Jack James, Recording, Jul 1988).

Jack said of the symbols on this pole... *they are all ours, our own (James family). We didn't copy anybody's.* Basil honoured his father by using the family crests in the carving.©



1988 | Size: 13'2" (4.0 m)

Haeklas (Basil James)

Basil was born in 1938 and is now deceased. His family is from Gwa'yasdams (Gilford Island) and their ancestors are from Dzawada'enuxw (Kingcome Inlet) of the Kwakwaka'wakw people. Basil learned to carve from his father, Jack James, who was a contemporary of Hiłamas (Willie Seaweed), a famous Kwakwaka'wakw carver.©



Courtesy of Lorraine James.