

**Kwakiutl Chief:** The chief indicates the noble lineage of the Hunt family. As marks of his wealth and position, he wears a chief's hat, a Chilkat blanket as obtained from the Tlingit in southeastern Alaska through marriage, and holds a shield-like plaque known as a copper to his chest. The copper was an object of wealth and functioned in much the same way as banknotes of large denominations. Each time a copper was displayed at a potlatch ceremony, its wealth increased to the amount of money and blankets distributed at the end of the potlatch.

In 2019, carver Stan Hunt, son of carver Henry Hunt, said, *"The three rings on the hat indicate that the chief is indeed a self portrait of Henry Hunt who was chief three times."*<sup>11</sup>

**Tsonoqua:** The third figure from the top of the pole represents Tsonoqua, the wild woman of the woods. She is a cannibal giant and carries a basket on her back in which she places children she captures. She takes these children home to eat but in most versions of the myth, the children manage to escape. She is characterized by sleepy eyes, pendulous breasts, and a black, hairy body. Her lips are pursed forward, indicating her characteristic cry: "u, huu, u, u." In this case, the Tsonoqua holds a copper as an indication of wealth.

Stan Hunt explained his view of Tsonoqua in 2019: *"If you read ten different books, you'll read ten different versions. Her pursed lips might be making a wind sound to lull the kids into thinking they are safe. My take on the Tsonoqua, other than the fact that she takes kids, puts them in a basket, takes them to her cave, and eats them, is that she's basically like the bogeyman. I mean, it's a big open forest out there. It keeps the kids in the village to tell them a story like that."*<sup>16</sup>

The Sunnylands totem pole.

Photo by Mark Davidson, April 2019.

## SYMBOLS ON THE SUNNYLANDS TOTEM POLE

**Bear holding seal to its chest:** The myth related to this particular configuration remains obscure. The figures represented are a grizzly bear and a seal.

Though no detailed interpretation was provided for the grizzly bear holding a seal on the Sunnylands totem pole, authorities on Kwakiutl crests provide some information: Seals, halibut, and other sea life are often found in family crests given that the Kwakiutl were, and continue to be, people of the sea.<sup>12</sup> Seals, in particular, are a sign of wealth.<sup>13</sup> Grizzly bears, though fierce in nature, were carved on house posts as a friendly and powerful guardian spirit for the household.<sup>14</sup>

*"Both are family crests,"* Stan Hunt said in 2019.<sup>15</sup>

**Sisiutl:** The bottom figure on the pole is a Sisiutl, a double-headed serpent. This creature can change at will from mythical to human form. The central face at the base of the pole is somewhat humanoid in form and indicates the human dimension the creature can take. Yet note the recurved "horns" that rise above either eyebrow. From either side of this face stretch serpents, seen in profile. The scaly body, recurved horn and projecting tongue are all evident in the carving.

*"Sisiutl, the mythological double-headed sea serpent, was a crest of my grandmother. So, this was probably Henry's reference to her,"* said Stan Hunt in 2019.<sup>17</sup>

