Haa Léelk'w Hás Aaní Saax'ú

Our Grandparents' Names on the Land

Edited by

Thomas F. Thornton

In the process of collecting and collating thousands of place names gathered in two decades of personal fieldwork by the editor and augmented by a century of documentation from various sources in a variety of spellings and degrees of accuracy, some errors and inconsistencies in the lists, maps, and narratives may have eluded our proofreading.

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A Note to the Reader

Harold P. Martin

In 1994, after twelve years as the tribal operations officer for the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, I was transferred to the position of subsistence director. During my tenure as subsistence director, I was also serving as president of the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission, made up of representatives from all Southeast Native communities and Anchorage.

Shortly after assuming my new position, I was approached about a Native place names project by Dr. Tom Thornton, who had recently left the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, to teach anthropology at the University of Alaska Southeast. Following the in-depth discussion I had with Tom, it dawned on me that we were losing our elders at a rapid pace, and with the passing of each elder, we lost a wealth of cultural knowledge and history. I suddenly felt an urgency to document our Native place names.

Before the Europeans came to our country, we had Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian names for our surrounding environment. We had names for creeks, rivers, mountains, bays, reefs, and other places of significance. I believe Tom described well the importance of place names and why they should be preserved: "For Southeast Alaska Natives, the most fundamental subsistence resource is the land itself. Indigenous place names are valuable linguistic artifacts containing a wealth of cultural and environmental information concerning our region's land and waters."

We applied for and received several grants to carry out this work from the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund. Thus began an exciting adventure into the past. Dr. Thornton coordinated the project and I administered the grant (see Thornton and Martin 1999).

We first traveled to rural communities throughout Southeast and solicited permission to proceed with the project from tribal governments and elders. Native communities are made up of one main clan that settled that particular area, and several other clans that moved in for various reasons.

We took care to not offend anyone by intruding on burial grounds, sacred lands, or important subsistence areas. Fortunately, we received permission from all communities we visited. To my knowledge, we did not offend anyone, and all in all, we received great cooperation.

Several incidents stand out in my mind. First, when we asked about certain areas, an elder might point out that he could not say anything about that area but would tell us who we could talk with because "it was their clan territory." This, to me, showed respect for one another's territory, and that the protocol still exists.

Another incident taught me a lesson about talking to the media. Interviewed by a young lady from the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, I related to her several examples of place names and their significance. I mentioned a mountain in Chapin Bay on Admiralty Island that had a large hole going through near the top called Shaak'w Wool or "Hole in the Small Mountain." I mentioned that from time to time people have observed geese flying through the hole in the mountain. When she wrote it up, she stated that the people of Kake waited each spring until geese flew through the mountain before they began their subsistence gathering and hunting, which was ridiculous.

At a meeting in Kake, we gathered around a table with a chart spread out before us. I had told Tom that I had forgotten many names, yet whenever a name was mentioned I knew exactly where it was located on the map. There was some humor at this same meeting. Tom liked to be precise and exact on his pronunciation of place names, yet there were names that he tried to say that came out like a reference to certain parts of the human anatomy. Another word he tried to say came out like the Tlingit word for lovemaking. I cautioned him to please not say these words in public.

Initially, there was some opposition to the project. There were those who felt that we would be giving away favorite harvest locations for salmon and halibut, as well as aquatic and terrestrial plants. In reality, the Alaska De-

partment of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Forest Service, already had all fish streams, aquatic plants, and forest products identified and documented. Our purpose was to preserve the Native place names and their meaning in various clan territories.

At the completion of the project, Tom and I traveled to the communities and presented the place name charts and booklets to the tribal governments. These documents were received with great enthusiasm.

In my work on subsistence issues, some federal, state, and municipal agencies and environmental groups had stated that there was no evidence that certain areas were ever used for subsistence purposes. Our place name charts prove otherwise. Nowhere in all of Southeast Alaska is there an area that was not utilized by Natives for one reason or another. All you have to do is look at the maps.

In retrospect, I only regret we had not started this type of project many years earlier, when so many elders who have now passed on would have been available for interview. Nonetheless, after much research, we documented thousands of Alaska Native place names that are now a part of a cultural atlas.

I retired in July of 2000. Dr. Tom Thornton continued his work on developing this atlas of place names, which I am certain will be of great value to the education of our children and grandchildren. I will be forever grateful to Tom for his foresight to document and preserve our Native, cultural place names. I feel a great satisfaction in contributing to the preservation of a small part of Native history.

Harold P. Martin was born and raised in Kake. He is Tlingit of the Raven T'akdeintaan clan.

Foreword: People of the Land

Rosita Worl

Land is important to the Indians of Southeast Alaska. More often a Tlingit, Haida, or Tsimshian will open their speech to a non-Native audience with the statement, "We have lived in and owned Southeast Alaska since time immemorial." Ceremonial speeches, on the other hand, do not require the assertion of land ownership. A reference by ceremonial participants to clan crests and identification of a site by its place name where the crest originated signifies ownership of land. Crests, stories, songs, and names serve as title to sites. Place names also tie Natives to their land. In our worldview, we belong to the land and the land belongs to us. It is no wonder that land is prominent in Native identity. In ceremonies, one of the most often heard phrases is, *Yee gu.aa yáx̱ x'wán, aan yátx'u sáani,* "Noble people of the land, take courage!"

Indicative of our ancient occupation and land tenure are the place names the Tlingit and Haida have bestowed on significant features of their land. The Tsimshians, who arrived in Alaska from Canada in the historical period, brought with them their singular place name of Metlakatla and gave it to the community they established. Names were given to prominent geographic features from the southern boundary at Cape Fox to the most northern reaches in the Yakutat region. The meanings of these names reflect the worldview of the Tlingit and Haida and simultaneously embody cultural, social, historical, and environmental values and knowledge of the Native peoples of Southeast Alaska. Place names symbolize an enduring and spiritual relationship of Native people to their land. They embody the traditional knowledge of changes in land features and landscapes. Place names also affirm the use of the land and its resources. They record the ancient and historical events through oral traditions, songs, and visual art handed down through generations.

The Tlingit and Haida continue to use their own place names in lieu of the English names that identify many geographical sites. When our dance group, the Marks Trail Dancers, was given the name of G̲eisán, Nora Dauenhauer

and I climbed G̲eisán mountain to honor our ancestors who gave this mountain its name. We know it as G̲eisán, and not as Mount Ripinski by which it is officially known. Ironically, Solomon Ripinsky was a friend of Lt. Frederick Schwatka, whose name was taken by the Shangukeidí (thunderbird) clan and transformed to Schwatgi. Lt. Schwatka did not adequately pay the Thunderbirds for transporting goods over the Chilkoot Pass, and thus the clan took his name and naval uniform as payment for his transgression.

Sites and place names continued to be used by the Tlingit and Haida to record their ongoing history even after the arrival of westerners. Perhaps the most widely known and recorded is that of the Peace Rock (G̲uwakaan Teiyí) located on the Chilkoot River in Haines. As its name implies, ceremonies were traditionally held at the Peace Rock to resolve differences between warring clans. In widening the road leading to the Chilkoot Lake, the State of Alaska's highway department demolished G̲uwakaan Teiyí. The Lukaax̱.ádi clan of Haines immediately voiced its objection, and the state ultimately rebuilt the Peace Rock. In addition to its original meaning, the Tlingit now use G̲uwakaan Teiyí as a lesson for their young. Elders cite the destruction and reconstruction of the Peace Rock as a metaphor describing how Tlingit culture was nearly destroyed by western forces and emphasizing the value of a continued relationship to their land as the basis of their cultural survival and vitality.

The case of G̲eisán demonstrates the common historical practice of ignoring Native names and instead honoring a non-Native. The early visitors tended to give their own names to Alaska geographical features and sites. The colonizers ensured that English names would replace the Native names and become permanent as they recorded the English names on their titles and deeds and on their maps. The actions by missionaries and educators, who worked to suppress Native culture and languages, further hastened the loss of ancient place names.

After Alaska became a state in 1958, the new citizens ensured the colonialist practice of using English names would continue. The state adopted a requirement that Alaska Native names for communities and geographic features must be "pronounceable without considerable difficulty." For the most part, Americans generally do not speak anything other than English. With Tlingit being one of the most complex languages in the world and with many sounds that are not present in the English language, the state's requirement guarantees that Tlingit place names will not be considered as geographical names. To add further insult to Native people, the state extended its geographical naming practices to the naming of state maritime vessels. State law requires that state vessels must bear the name of an Alaska glacier. Thus in Southeast Alaska, where nearly two hundred glaciers are named, less than ten are known by a Native name and in a region where communities are dependent on maritime transportation, state law all but ensures that few if any vessels will bear a Native name.

Many of the Tlingit and Haida place names have already been lost, while others undoubtedly would have passed into obscurity or would remain clouded by the corrupted, anglicized interpretation of Tlingit names were it not for the meticulous research of Dr. Thomas Thornton. Dr. Thornton has dedicated eighteen years to this work. He scoured early records kept by the first visitors to Southeast Alaska and studied the records of government officials and early ethnographers, most important of whom is Frederica de Laguna. He interviewed countless elders and pestered many others until they relented and gave him names and stories. This was no easy task as those who have worked among the Tlingit and Haida know that names are owned in the same way as real property and clans jealously guard their clan names. However, through his collaboration with local researchers and elders, he was able to compile more than three thousand place names.

He has become the archival center of place names. When people learn about other names, they often check with him to see if he has the name in his database. As important as the names themselves, Dr. Thornton has captured the meaning of land to Native people through his documentation and analysis of Native place names. Dr. Thornton will readily give credit to the many others with whom he has worked, but he has been the consistent force behind the compilation of place names.

Although we have had a great appreciation and love for our land, Dr. Thornton has made our relationship with our ancestors tangible. As I travel through the waterways of Southeast Alaska, I have felt the presence of my ancestors. I can visualize them paddling their canoes to trade or visit with neighboring clans. It gives one a sense of immortality knowing that we have lived and traveled through the land and seas of Southeast Alaska for thousands of years. However, the place names that are recorded by Dr. Thornton provide a concrete vehicle to reclaim our culture and history and to glimpse into the lives and history of our ancestors.

Dr. Thornton's work is invaluable not only for the deeper knowledge and understanding of an indigenous culture, it also provides an inventory that Native people can use in their efforts to restore Native names to geographical sites. Like the Peace Rock that was nearly destroyed but then reconstructed, we are working to reintegrate our place names onto the landscape of our homeland. Sealaska Corporation, which was created under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 and which reclaimed a number of our sacred and historical sites, intends to identify these sites by their Native names. Although we may not be able to change other existing English place names to Tlingit or Haida names, we are using various federal legislative acts and policies to identify different sites by their ancient names through the placement of plaques that record the Native place names, history, and significance of the sites to Native people. Additionally, this publication will greatly enhance the Sealaska Heritage Institute's efforts to protect heritage sites and help foster place-based education and language revitalization throughout the region.

We are indebted to Dr. Thornton for his dedicated research and the inventory of place names and for providing the cultural and social context in which these names are used. His work provides an insight into the Native worldview and gives further credence to Native people's assertions of the significance of land to them. We believe the cultural information and historical records inherent in Native place names are of benefit not only to Native peoples but to all humankind.

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Introduction

Thomas F. Thornton

Most people who visit Southeast Alaska, even those of us who have lived there, know very little about the Native place names that grace its marvelous lands and waters. In other words, we are *dis*-oriented. To orient means to align or position with respect to a point or system of reference. By ignoring the indigenous toponymy we remain cut off from this vital system of reference, which is itself a technology of orientation every bit as useful as a compass or GPS (geographic positioning system), only more profound. For Natives of Southeast Alaska, the naming of the world begins with its transformation from darkness to light by Raven. Discovering the Box of Daylight at Nass (Naas) River, Raven releases its celestial contents — the moon, stars, and sun — from the stingy Naas Shaak Aankáawu (Nobleman at the Head of the Nass) in order to light the world. Preceding Raven, Naas, today the center of Tsimshian/Nishga culture in northern British Columbia, may be the oldest aboriginal name in the region, perhaps in existence ten thousand years or more. Linguistic artifacts like place names can be hard to date, but there is no mistaking their importance. The nobleman Naas Shaak Aankáawu is named for Naas because he dwells there, and his wealth, power, and status stem from this place, as do his descendants, including many of the Native people of Southeast Alaska.

Place names are the foundation of every culture's geographic coordinate system, of every individual's sense of place (Thornton 1997a). Without place names our ability to distinguish, distill, and describe elements of the physical and metaphysical landscape is severely compromised. We must struggle to find other ways to orient ourselves. Nothing conjures a place like a good name. Where names are absent humans invent them, whether they be colonizers seeking to claim new lands for possession, pioneers venturing to tame the wilderness, or children building worlds in backyards. That's why place names are so important. Each one is itself a box of daylight illuminating a world!

Yet, few indigenous names appear on modern maps of Southeast Alaska, and those that do are often anglicized in ways that alter their sounds and obscure their meanings. What happened to the real names? In most cases they have simply disappeared from the official cartography through a process of neglect or erasure. The neglect was a result of surveyors, mapmakers, and other officials who could not be bothered to master the Native geographic nomenclature, with its odd sounds and hidden meanings. The erasure was a result of something more pernicious and programmatic: a concerted effort by colonizers, missionaries, and their partners in government to subordinate and dismantle the indigenous world by undermining its language, culture, and environment. Because they occupy the nexus of language, culture, and environment, and signify the earthly (and even cosmic) foundations of the indigenous world, place names suffered enormously under policies of cultural erasure. As a result, we have been disoriented from a Native vision of the landscape ever since. Like most aboriginal peoples, Tlingits and Haidas of Southeast Alaska felt this disorientation like a shockwave. As one Tlingit leader explained to Governor John G. Brady in 1898: "Now we do not know what we are to do, as we are like a certain man in a canoe. The canoe rocks; we don't know what will become of us" (Hinckley 1996).

A century later the disorientation remains. A recent executive proclamation by Alaska Governor Tony Knowles (July 19, 1999) declares in bold, "The Canoe Still Rocks in 1999." Indeed it does. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, nearly every Alaska Native language is threatened or endangered, swamped by the flood tide of English. Tlingit has fewer than five hundred Native speakers and Alaskan Haida fewer than a dozen, nearly all over seventy years of age. Endangered along with these languages are the indigenous geographies that have been built up over millennia by the laying down of place names to define landscapes of significance. We should all be concerned about this loss, for just as the extinction of endangered species may com-

promise an ecosystem by reducing its biological diversity and resilience, so too may the extinction of Native geographic names compromise our world by reducing its cultural diversity and thus its resilience. Perhaps more than anything else, Alaska Native geographies, as codified in place names, show us alternative ways of seeing and relating to the world around us. Such diversity is critical in

Table 1. Tlingit Technical Sound Chart

Darker gray boxes indicate sounds like English. Lighter gray boxes are sounds like English in some places, but not in others. Boxes with a heavy outline are consonants are found in German *ich* and *ach*, but not in English.

	Stops			Fricatives		Sonants	
	Plain	Aspirated	Glottalized ("pinched")	Aspirated	Glottalized	Nasal	Semivowels
Dental	d	t	t'			n	
Lateral	dl	tl	tl'	l	l'		
Alveolar	dz	ts	ts'	s	s'		
Alveo palatal	j	ch	ch'	sh			
Velar	g	k	k'	x	x'		y
Velar rounded	gw	kw	k'w	xw	x'w		w
Uvular	g̲	k̲	k̲'	x̲	x̲'		
Uvular rounded	g̲w	k̲w	k̲'w	x̲w	x̲'w		
Glottal	.			h			

Vowels				
Short	a	i	e	u
Long	aa	ee	ei	oo

(Left margin labels: "Front of mouth" / "Back of mouth" for consonants; "Vowels" for the lower table.)

High tone is indicated with an acute accent (´). Low tone is unmarked, except in the Tongass and Klawock dialects, which mark low tones with a grave accent (`) for contrast (see chapters 9 and 10). Throughout this book asterisks (*) are used to indicate uncertain or unconfirmed names or translations.

order to avoid what Vandana Shiva (2000) terms "monoculture of the mind." Indigenous place names, then, constitute an important component of biocultural diversity; for when "you don't know the names," as the great botanist Linneaus said, "your knowledge of things perishes." If indigenous names and languages cease to be known, Native ways of seeing the world likewise may perish.

Fortunately, not all indigenous place names have been lost. On the contrary, many have remained, if not on maps, in the hearts and minds of the Tlingit and Haida people who learned them from their elders while traveling and living on the land. Despite the rocking, erosion, and sedimentation caused by the flood tide of non-Native language and culture, individuals and families have continued to carry on intimate relationships with places named and frequented by their ancestors. In doing so, they have remembered many place names. Thus, Kake (K̲éex̲') elder Fred Friday told land claims investigators in 1946: "The Native people know all the points and rocks and every little area by name. If I told you all the names of all the places that I know it would fill many pages. These areas were used so much that we were familiar with every little place" (Goldschmidt and Haas 1998, 177). Use bred familiarity and familiarity bred naming and prodigious knowledge of places. It was not just that Fred Friday knew a lot of place names, but that he knew a lot about each named place from experience, and could thus unpack and interpret them with his intimate knowledge of their history and ecology. For him, the names held a certain descriptive force and adaptive advantage that made them both memorable and worth remembering. As Sitka (Sheet'ká) elder Nels Lawson (G̲ooch Daa) remarks, "The land itself [became] our method of documentation" (pers. comm.).

While the flood of cultural change has eroded and buried Native place names in the sediments and cutbanks of Western language and culture, for those who have lived in the names, especially as children, they still have a potent animating force. Fifty years after Fred Friday's statement, I shared a list of K̲éex̲' area place names with one of his descendants, Doyle Abbot, as part of an interview. Mr. Abbot, who had moved from Kake to Ketchikan, smiled when he heard them, and commented. "At first, I could not remember a lot of those names … But when you started to say them, it came back to me … like I was seeing a picture. I could see those places. I grew up with them." And the memories flowed.

So evocative are indigenous place names, a speaker who has never even been to a particular site may be able to

sense — visually, morally, and in other ways — its features and significance. Such was the case for the Ḵéex̱' Ḵwáan people, as revealed in Johnny Jackson's narrative on the odyssey of his Ḵaach.ádi clan. Mr. Jackson recalls how his people retreated to the Interior during the epic Flood at the end of the last ice age, and when they returned generations later, how descendants of the original inhabitants, seeing the land for the first time, could recognize key geographic features because they appeared just as had been described by the elders and vividly evoked by the richly figurative place names. Mr. Abbot had experienced a similar revelation.

Perhaps it is not so astonishing that just hearing "old Indian" place names can stir up vivid images of life and land that may never have been experienced directly, or in Mr. Abbot's case, been buried by the deluge and sediments of a cultural sea change. Native place names are like that. Because they are so potent in their ability "to summon forth an enormous range of mental and emotional associations," anthropologist Keith Basso argues, place names are "among the most highly charged and richly evocative of all linguistic symbols" (1988, 103). Among the Western Apache, Basso (1988, 1996) found that speaking with place names was an important means of conveying moral lessons and wisdom through the perceptual and participatory frame of the land, a process he terms *interanimation*. Tlingits and Haidas speaking with and about place names accomplish similar social ends, while at the same time engaging in broad reflections on their individual, social, historical, and ecological character (Thornton 2004a).

Powerful and resonant as they are, place names live not only in the hearts and minds of individuals, but also in society's collective iconography. We find them organically embedded in the webs and strands of culture that continue to be woven, especially those not frayed or overcome by the Western cultural flood tide. In Southeast Alaska, these include the material culture of regalia and visual art, the oral culture of songs and stories, and the social culture of identity, ceremony, and exchange. Like the subsistence economy, these vital cultural institutions continue to animate and conserve indigenous senses of place in important ways. They extend our understanding of place names beyond mere labels on the land and reveal how names and their cultural associations operate as versatile and resilient *cultural resources* — boxes of daylight from which people derive their sense of identity, belonging, and dependence on the land, and from which they draw strength, comfort, and wisdom.

Let us examine briefly how place names not only define the land but work within cultural systems to maintain people's sense of being and belonging in this place, Lingít Aaní (Tlingit Country), we now call Southeast Alaska.

Language and Naming

Naming systems develop as a function of language, culture, and environment. Anthropological and linguistic research has shown convincingly that, while language and culture are not so arbitrary as to actually constitute the environment, as the extreme form of the Sapir-Whorf or linguistic relativity hypothesis supposes, they do play a powerful role in shaping our perceptions of the land. Thus, cultures inhabiting the same terrain may conceptualize and act on the environment in very different ways (Thornton 1995).

The vast majority of place names in this book are of Tlingit origin or derivation. But there are also Haida place names, especially in the southern Prince of Wales Island area; Tsimshian names, especially in the vicinity of Nass River and Metlakatla; Eyak and Chugach names in the Yakutat area; and Athabaskan (Ahtna, Southern Tutchone, Tagish, Tahltan, Tsetsaut) names in interior areas linked to Tlingit country by water, trade, and travel routes. And, of course, there are overlays of names from American, British, French, Russian, Spanish, and other sources, typically laid down by explorers and settlers in the region. Beyond these, there are local nicknames and pet names for places which are not necessarily part of the conventional Native or Euro-American geographic nomenclature. The etymology of many Euro-American place names can be found in the *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names* (Orth 1971, and updates), but Native names in this dictionary are often omitted, misrendered, or untranslated. Tlingit names fare especially poorly.

One reason for this under representation and bowdlerization is the difficulty speakers of English and other Indo-European languages have in grappling with the Tlingit language. Part of the Na-Dene language family, Tlingit is most closely related to Eyak and to a lesser degree, Athabaskan. A relatively homogenous language, it is comprised of four mutually intelligible dialects or speech areas: the gulf coast, inland, northern, and southern (de Laguna 1972, 15ff.). It has a large vocabulary, and the phonology, or sound system, includes some two dozen sounds not found in English (see table 1, the technical sound chart).

Like other Na-Dene languages, Tlingit is characterized

by its grammatical emphasis on the verb and its complex prefixing and classificatory structures which allow whole phrases to be built out of a single verb stem. Typically the verb stem appears toward the end of word (e.g., "to Juneau [Dzantik'i Héeni] he is going-by-foot") with up to twelve prefixes and three suffixes modifying it. These modifiers can transform the verb significantly, making it hard for a non-Native speaker to distinguish and parse. To further complicate things, Tlingit place names often incorporate nouns and verbs in contracted form, making them even more challenging to analyze and "unpack."

In a verb-centered language like Tlingit, place names may incorporate complex verb phrases which have the ca-pacity to define the environment in terms of its actions, movements, and processes. This linguistic emphasis on action is mirrored in Tlingit metaphysics in that actions are attributed not only to what English speakers would de-fine as "animate" objects or beings, but also to inanimate ones, such as rocks, glaciers, and trees, indeed the earth itself (de Laguna 1972, 21). In addition to this "enlivening" influence of the Tlingit verb, the Tlingit system of incor-porating relational nouns and other classifiers into the verb enables the speaker to describe actions with a preci-sion and economy that is difficult to match in English.

To understand how this works, let us look at the Tlin-git and English names for Glacier Bay. The English name,

Table 2. Common Landscape Terms in Tlingit Place Names

Feature	Tlingit generic	Example	Translation
bay	geey	Xóots Geeyí	Brown Bear Bay
fortified place	noow	Deikee Noow	Far Out Fort
glacial silt, sand	l'éiw	L'éiw Shaayí	[Glacial] Sand Mountain (cutbanks)
glacier	sít'	Sít'k'i T'ooch'	Little Black Glacier
hill	gooch	X'aan Goojí	Fire Hill
hole	tuwool	Tuwool Séet	Hole Strait
hole (below freshwater)	ísh	Ishkahít	House on Top of the Fish Hole
hole (below saltwater)	éet	Cháatl Éedi	Halibut Hole
island	x'áat'	L'éiw X'áat'i	Sand Island
isthmus, portage	góon	Aangóon	Isthmus Town (Angoon)
lake/lagoon	áa	Áak'w	Little Lake
mountain	shaa	Nóoskw Shaayí	Wolverine Mountain
point	x'aa	Teey X'aayí	Yellow Cedar Point
rapids	eey	Eey Tlein	Big Rapids
reef	eech	Yées' Eejí	Large-Mussel Reef
river, creek	héen	Til'héeni	Dog Salmon Creek
rock	té	Téyeiyí	Rocks Alongside
rockslide	kaadí	Káa Tlénx'i Kaadí	Slide of the Big Men
sandbar	xákw	Xakwnoowú	Sandbar Fort
spring (freshwater)	goon	Tinaa Gooní	Copper Shield Spring
strait, channel	séet	Taan Té Séet	Sea Lion Rock Strait
trail, road	dei	Deishú	End of the Trail (Haines)
valley	shaanáx	S'eek Shaanáx	Black Bear Valley
village, settlement, land	aan	Kasa.aan	Beautiful Town (Kasaan)

Glacier Bay, is said to be a translation of the Tlingit Sít' Eetí Geeyí (which John Muir [1895] also recorded and helped make part of the official cartography, though it is rendered on maps as Sitakaday [Narrows]) applied by L.A. Beardslee, who surveyed the bay with a Tlingit guide in 1880. Glacier Bay is a classic binomial compound name, consisting of a generic physical feature of the landscape (bay) with a descriptor, in this case a noun (glacier), preceding it. A great many English place names conform to this pattern. The Tlingit name, Sít' Eetí Geeyí (Bay in Place of the Glacier), also is typical in its construction. Like the English, the Tlingit includes a generic (*geey*, or "bay"; see table 2 for a list of common generics found in place names), but the descriptor is not an adjective or a noun, as is commonplace in English; rather it is a relational noun (*eetí*) implying action in time (i.e., "taking the place of") and relative location. This place name reflects well the capacity of the Tlingit place names to communicate complex geographic phenomena succinctly.

More intriguing than its grammatical construction, however, is the idea that the Tlingit name conveys. While the English name implies only the *presence* of glaciers, the Tlingit name denotes a historical, geographic *process* — a process of glacial recession and the consequent formation of a bay in its place. Unlike the English name, the Tlingit toponym clues us into important geological and hydrographic events that have occurred in this place. The Tlingit names for Johns Hopkins Inlet, Tsalxaan Niyaadé Wool'éex'i Yé ([Passage] Which Broke Through toward Tsalxaan [Mt. Fairweather]), and Hugh Miller Inlet, Anax Kuyaawal'ix'i Yé (Where the Glacier Ice Broke Through), are other examples of this kind of action-oriented naming, describing a process which has occurred, or is occurring, over time. The first name requires a seven word English sentence to express the same idea! From this example we can see how important information can get lost in translating Tlingit place names into English.

Another key to the descriptive power of Tlingit place names lies in the fact that multiple relational nouns and directionals can be incorporated into names to describe position and location even more precisely. The place name Geesh K'ishuwanyee (Place below the End of the Edge of the Base of the Kelp) exemplifies this polysynthetic or "stacking" quality of Tlingit by accommodating no less than four relational nouns to indicate a specific place (a reef) in the sea (in relation to a kelp bed) where halibut can be caught. Literally translated, the name can be decomposed as follows: *geesh* (kelp) *-k'í* (base) *-shú* (end) *-wán* (edge)

-yí or *yee* (place below). Relational nouns commonly incorporated into place names are summarized in table 3; they are well suited to describing conditions on both land and sea. English place names typically lack such expressive power because relational terms cannot easily be incorporated into their syntax.

What Is Named?

Like material artifacts, place names lie in particular contexts and assemblages, and their distribution and patterning is not random. Examining what features of the environment are distinguished and labeled by place names enables us to assess basic issues of environmental perception and classification as well as environmental change and land use over time.

As we might expect, many similar geographic features tend to be named across cultures, although not with the same frequency. For example, Tlingits name more hydrographic and shoreline features of the environment, such as islands, bays, and streams, while Euro-Americans name more upland features, like mountains, as a proportion of their total name set (see Thornton 1995). Why? One reason is that in oral cultures a "mental economy" (Hunn 1996) seems to exist, whereby not every landscape feature is named, but rather only those worth remembering. To label all features, regardless of cultural interest, would be both superfluous and taxing on memory. Especially among societies without written records, where names and other knowledge have been passed down through oral tradition, cultural interests influence not only the selection of sites to be named but also their retention in the collective memory. Thus, salient cultural sites, including productive hunting, fishing, and gathering locales; refuges; and key navigational and historical landmarks, are populated with names, while places in between remain a "relatively undifferentiated landscape" (de Laguna 1960, 20). In contrast, in literate societies blank spaces on the map seem to stimulate the naming impulse and the map itself is an aid to memory.

Cultural interests and orality also influence the density of names we find on the land. Where they had strong cultural interests and large populations, Tlingits applied place names thickly, often achieving much higher densities than the corresponding Euro-American toponymy. On the other hand, at the regional level, the density of Euro-American names (just over six thousand) is roughly

twice that of the indigenous toponymy (just over three thousand). Is this a function of the literate society's impulse to fill empty spaces on maps (often with nondescriptive biographical names in honor of individuals), or is it the result of cultural loss of Native place names? This question is not easy to answer. If all Tlingit territories were as thickly named as those documented around Ketchikan and Saxman by Thomas Waterman in 1922, then the density of Tlingit names in Southeast would seem to have been comparable to the Euro-American name set today, or perhaps even greater (assuming Waterman's data was itself not complete). On the other hand, it may be that southern Southeast Alaska, with its deeper historical roots and higher population densities (which tend to correlate with toponymic densities; see Hunn 1994), supported a higher density of names. In the course of our research, Tlingit elders often lamented that "a lot of the names have been lost." Undoubtedly this is true, but if the loss of Native place names is 50 percent or less (assuming minimal loss as of 1922), that would mean that, as a domain of language, Tlingit place names have proven more resilient than we might have expected.

What's in a Name?

Beyond their distribution and structure, understanding place names entails examining their semantic elements to determine what they mean. Semantic patterns are especially important in evaluating place names as sources of traditional knowledge — boxes of daylight — because they tell us why sites were significant and how they fit together. Meanings are not always obvious, however, and for this reason it is always best to "unpack" place names with local experts who have the traditional knowledge to interpret them.

Table 4 provides a basic breakdown of semantic categories in Tlingit place names, along with the percentage of Tlingit place names (based on a regional sample) that fit them. The table shows that the vast majority of names refer to elements of the physical topography (hydrographic and terrestrial) and biological environment (plants, animals, etc.), and human cultural landscape (e.g., historical and habitation sites, etc.). In contrast, the English name set can include up to 50 percent biographical names (Thornton 1995) honoring people, which do not describe the character of the land.

The majority of semantic associations in Native names are metonymic, meaning that the places are characterized by the presence of a particular thing — an animal, plant, mineral, or other phenomena — often in abundance. Such abundance often reflects a subsistence interest, as in G̲aat Héeni (Sockeye Salmon Creek), or Yaana.eit Xágu (Wild Celery Sandbar), K'wát' Aaní (Bird Egg Land), or X̲áat Áa Dugich Yé (Pitching the Fish Place), the latter being a classic "activity name." Anomalous occurrences of species are also referenced. For example, the toponym Kals'ak̲sk'i (Little One That Has Yews) signals an unusual concentration of these hardwood trees, patches of which are rarely found in Southeast. And sometimes metonymy references not abundance, but rather just one individual animal, as in the activities of a certain bear that are commemorated in the name Daak̲ Uwahuwu X̲óots (Brown Bear Who Swam In[land]), or the many toponyms that memorialize the activities of the trickster-demiurge Raven on the land (e.g., Yéilch Yaawax̲ut'i X'aa T'éi, "Raven Adzed [Three] Notches in a Rock Point"). Raven, too, has an abiding interest in subsistence and the names tell how he shaped much of the present landscape in his omnivorous quest for food, as evoked in places like Yéil Nées' Akawlishaa (Raven Ate Sea Urchin), Yéil G̲eiwú ("Raven's Fishnet," an imprint of the net he left on some sloping rocks at the entrance to a bay) and Yéil K̲'wádli ("Raven's Cooking Pot," a set of rocks said to be the remains of a halibut meal he cooked; see de Laguna 1960, 49). In total, mythological names including Raven names constitute about 3 percent of Tlingit toponyms.

Another important type of semantic association is metaphor. Metaphors help us understand landscape features in terms of other things we know. Thus a certain hill formation might resemble a "Whale's Little Head" (Yáay Shaak'ú) or a "Steller's Jay Crest" (Shalax̲'éishx'w). By far, the most important metaphoric schema for landscape is the human body. This is not surprising when we consider that our bodies are the original, primal landscapes that we inhabit, and our most basic tool of measure. Thus, as in English, body analogs are readily found in the landscape — the head of a bay, the mouth of a river, and so on. Even generic topographical references may be couched in terms of the body. For example, a Tlingit word often used to describe a point of land is *lutú*, which means nose or nostril, as in Ltu.áa (Inside the Nostril [point] Lake), a wonderfully apt name that today is rendered as "Lituya Bay" on maps (Thornton 1995). Anatomical references characterize about 8 percent of Tlingit place names. A related metaphoric paradigm is that of kinship, which de-

scribes how geographic features, as bodies, are related. The most common of these is the "child of" metaphor, which defines a small feature proximal to its larger "parent," as in Kein, an important island landmark near Kake, and Kéin Yatx'i (Children of Kéin), the smaller islands that trail it. Such a pattern of naming helps establish not only the character of places but their relatedness, weaving disparate names into meaningful wholes, or ensemblages (Thornton 2008).

A semantic analysis also reveals the synaesthetic quality of Tlingit place names, which employ the full panoply of human senses to render places meaningful. Thus Tlingit names reflect not only the visual sense (i.e., what places look like), but also the auditory (Dàalagàaw, "Hollow Sound"), olfactory (Téey Chan G̲èeyak'w, "Little Bay Smelling of Yellow Cedar"), and even gustatory senses (X̲'alinukdzi X̲'àa, "Sweet-Tasting Point"). Even the play of light and shadow is commented upon. This contrasts with the English toponymy in the region, which tends to favor the static and the visual, and the terrestrial over the hydrographic. As suggested earlier, the English name set is also topographically impoverished in comparison to the Tlingit because of its overwhelming emphasis on biographical

naming — places named for people — a phenomenon that is rare in Tlingit, where people are commonly named for places rather than vice-versa.

Much more can be said about place name semantics (see Thornton 2008). The following chapters explore a variety of other semantic themes in further detail.

Place and Culture Intermeshed

Place is culture and culture is place. Not only do the two animate each other but they are intricately intermeshed. In her magisterial study of the Yakutat Tlingit, Frederica de Laguna (1972, 58) emphasizes:

> The ties between the people and the land are close, and no mere geographical description is adequate unless it attempts also to display the associations which make the Lingít-aní [Tlingit-land] a Lebensraum [living space]. These associations are in part conveyed by the names given to places, sometimes descriptive of the locality, sometimes referring to historical or legendary events which have occurred here. Even when the names are in a foreign tongue they serve as

Table 3. Common Relational Nouns Found in Tlingit Place Names

Relational noun	Translation	Example	Translation
a daa	around or about it	Táas' Daa	Double-Headed Tide around It
a eetí	place where it was (or taking the place of)	Sít' Eetí G̲eeyí	Bay in Place of the Glacier
a ká (shakée)	on top of it (on top of the hill/mountain)	L'awshaa Shakee.aan	Town on Top of the [Glacial] Sand
a k'í	at the base or foot of it	Dzantik'i Héeni	Flounder at the Base of the Creek*
a seiyí	below it; in its shelter	Neixinté Seiyí	Area below the Blue-Green Claystone
a shá	at its head	Taan Shaayí	At the Head of the Sea Lion
a t'áak	back inland from it	L'éiw T'aak Héen	River behind the [Glacial] Sand
a t'aak̲	beside/inside it	Yat'ak̲ Héen	River beside the Face of It
a t'éik	behind it	Tayx'aayí T'éik G̲eeyí	Bay behind Garden Point
a t'iká	out toward the open sea from it	Shee At'iká	Ocean Side of Shee (Baranof Island)
a wán	edge of it	Wanachích	Back (edge) of a Porpoise (an island)
a x̲oo	amidst, among	X̲'áat'x'i X̲oo	Among the Islands
a x̲'áak	between them	Tsaa Tak̲di X̲'áak	Between Which Seals Are Harpooned
a x̲'é	its mouth	Xuk̲xu Séet X̲'aka.aan	Village at the Mouth of Xuk̲xu Séet (Sukoi Inlet)
a yá	front of it	G̲il' Yaká	In Front of the Cliff
a yík	inside of it; inside an open container	Shee Kaak̲ Yík	Inside Shee Kaak̲ (Hoonah Sound)

reminder of those who once occupied the land and are now gone…The human meanings of the landscape…involve not simply places visited and transformed by Raven in the mythical past, but places hallowed by human ancestors. For individuals of course, the world has special personal meanings, for there are places about which their grandparents and parents have told them, spots they have visited in their own youth, or where they still go. None of these personal associations are completely private; all are intermeshed through anecdote or shared experiences. Not only is the world the scene of happenings of long ago, yesterday, and tomorrow, but it has human significance for what it offers in food resources, scenery, easy routes for travel, or places of danger.

Subsistence. Historically, the subsistence economy was the most important means of defining and relating the world of indigenous places. In many respects it still is. It is striking how those who grew up living off the land remember indigenous names, even if they are not fluent speakers. I recall in Kake how several of the "junior" elders in their sixties apologized for their lack of toponymic knowledge because they had "given up their language" or "given up their culture," a familiar lament. And yet when senior elders began recalling names from memory, the juniors, without any hesitation or instruction, would be pointing them out (as if they were seeing pictures, like Doyle Abbot) for us to see on the maps. Observing this for a time, I finally said to one of them, my colleague Harold Martin,

Table 4. Distribution of Semantic Referents in Regional Tlingit Place Name Inventory

Category	%	
Biological	30	Percentage of Tlingit
Animal	(22)	names applied to various
Plant	(8)	geographic features.
Topographical	41	
Hydrographic	(32)	
Terrestrial	(9)	
Anatomical	4	
Biographical	1	
Habitation	14	
Historical	8	
Other	2	

"Wait a minute. You are always telling me you forgot all these names; how is it then that you can find them on the map when they are mentioned?" His response was, "Of course I know these places; I grew up with them. They are where we did our hunting, fishing, and trapping, and we used to refer to these places by their Tlingit names." Unfortunately, contemporary subsistence laws, though they protect (somewhat) customary and traditional subsistence uses, do not explicitly protect people's relationships to particular subsistence places. One of the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission's goals for this project was to help non-Native land and resource managers understand that the most basic subsistence resource for Natives is the land itself, especially ancestral landscapes where their forebears made their livings. Subsistence projects and pathways, as illustrated in the following chapters, reveal these landscapes through encounters with interconnected, named places, "intermeshed" through lived and shared experiences.

The well-known myth of the "Salmon Boy" is illustrative of this process. Widely distributed among peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast, the story concerns a boy's capture and years-long odyssey among the salmon people before returning to his people and becoming a powerful shaman. Since salmon are the most important subsistence resource, the story is worth considering for what it tells us about place. A detailed version rich in toponymy was recorded by John Swanton (1909, 301–10) a century ago at Sitka. In April 2000 I had the opportunity to map this story with elders Herman Kitka Sr. and Ethel Makinen, and Sitka Tribe staff, as part of an effort to retranscribe and retranslate the story for a place-based school curriculum (see Littlefield et al. 2003). We went over the story line by line in both English and Tlingit, with a special eye toward identifying and "getting the story behind" named sites in the narrative. The results were richly illustrative of the resonance that exists between place names, stories, and subsistence, and how an ethnogeographical reading of myth can enrich our understanding of indigenous people's sense of place and the links between language, land, and identity.

Figure 1 maps place names in the Salmon Boy story. Swanton's narrator, Deikeenáak'w, a great uncle of Herman Kitka, assumed that his audience possessed the geographic knowledge to interpret the setting of the story, including the specific places he names or alludes to in passing. As a lifelong salmon fisherman, Herman Kitka had this knowledge, and thus could "unpack" the mean-

ing of the place names in light of their ecological context, including names used exclusively by the salmon people, who see the world from their own submarine perspective. Swanton chose to call the story "Moldy-End," after the unflattering name given to the boy protagonist by the salmon people, whom he insulted by disparaging and casting aside a moldy piece of dried fish offered him by his mother. The proper Tlingit title for the story, the elders agreed, should be "Aak'wtaatseen" (Alive in the Eddy), the honorific name bestowed upon the boy after he returned from his time with the salmon tribe and became a shaman. Significantly, Aak'wtaatseen also embodies a geographic reference, for when the boy returned to his people after having been transformed into a salmon, he seeks out his mother in an estuary, or eddy, at the mouth of the stream, where he attracts her attention by behaving in an especially lively manner.

The legend of Aak'wtaatseen can be read in many ways, but through this story mapping exercise one can see the abundance of traditional ecological and place knowledge that is embedded in the tale, and how our interpretation of the story can be enlivened and enriched by contemporary elders who still possess such knowledge and can thus comprehend the ethnogeographical and ethnoecological "grammar" that underlies the text and gives meaning to the particular ensemblage of places that constitute the story's dynamic and sentient setting. We learn that Tlingit life is not only dependent upon sustainable harvest of salmon but also successful moral engagement with these fish, and an empathetic willingness to see the world as they do. Other traditional stories, localized in named places, reveal similar patterns of engagement with other important marine and terrestrial species upon which Southeast Natives depend (see Thornton 2008).

Social organization. In Tlingit and other Southeast Alaska Native traditions, personal names, titles, and other sacred material and symbolic property (*at.óow*) are passed down from generation to generation through the matrilineal clans (*naa*) and their subdivisions, known as house groups (*hít*). The name Aak'wtaatseen (now carried by Fred Hope, among others) still lives among the Kiks.ádi clan. Like place names on the physical landscape, personal names encapsulate important historical events, figures, and geographies in clan histories and give them resonance in the contemporary social landscape. Thus, it is often said that a knowledgeable Tlingit can identify, from people's Tlingit names alone, where they are from and to what lands and lineages they belong.

The same is true of clan and house group names. Both are inextricably tied to place. While the central importance of the matrilineal clans and house groups in social, economic, and political life is well-described in the literature (cf. de Laguna 1983; Kan 1989; Emmons 1991; Thornton 2002), their multiple ties to place are not as well understood. Two aspects of clan geography are particularly significant: origin and distribution. Origin refers to the location where the clan was founded as a distinct social group and is typically from where the matrilineal group derives its name. The majority of Tlingit clans adopted their names from the geographic areas they inhabited, and the linguistic construction of such clan names invoked a sense of belonging or being possessed by the named place. For example, G̲aanáx̲ (or G̲àanax̲ in southern Tlingit dialect), the Tlingit name for Port Stewart in Behm Canal, was settled by a Tlingit group who then became the G̲aanax̲.ádi, literally the "beings of" (or "possessed by") Port Stewart. An offshoot of this group, the G̲aanax̲teidí settled at the head of the same bay (G̲aanáx̲ Tahéen), and later migrated north as far as Klukwan. These origin sites were often taken as crests by the clan and were considered sacred property (*at.óow*). Clans and house groups not named for natural sites often took their identity from some aspect of the village geography, such as an architectural feature of a clan house (e.g., the Kaagwaantaan or "Charred Timber House People") or its location within the village (e.g., the Deisheetaan or "End of the Trail House People"). The linguistic homology between clan names and sacred geography served to reinforce strong material, social, and spiritual ties to place among matrilineages, and the understanding of these ties was considered to be an essential component of one's heritage and identity (*shagóon*).

In fact it is virtually impossible to properly introduce oneself as a Tlingit person without making some reference to Southeast Alaskan geography. Geographic references are embedded in personal names, clan names, house names, and, most obviously and unavoidably, in k̲wáan names, which define community territories. To say you are "Sheet'ká K̲wáan" literally means that you are an organic member of the community of Tlingit people who dwell in the vicinity of Sheet'ká (Sitka), which is itself a geographic name meaning the "Ocean Side of Shee (Baranof Island)." In this way personhood and place are intermeshed.

For convenience, this book is organized by k̲wáan — traditional community territories which roughly correspond

14. Eey X̱'éidáx̱ Aa Séet
12. Daxéit Héeni
5. Wat Aan Áayi
2. Ḵaa Tú Kax̱sake Héen
9. Kei.is.ax̱ji Héen
4. X̱'as'tuhéen
7. Tlaganís Luká
8. Xijaa.éix'i
6. Yoo Luklihashgi X̱'aa
1. Daxéit
11. Wóoshdáx̱ Awlixeeji Yé
PARTOFSHIKOF ISLAND
3. Xukx̱u Séet
16. Ltooch Héen Tlein
KRUZOF ISLAND
13. Taan X̱aanás' Eejí
HALLECK ISLAND
15. Aan Niyaadé Aa Séet
Krestof Sound
KRESTOF ISLAND
10. Yux Aa Ḵaanáx̱ At Yadugook
Nakwasina Sound
Katlian Bay
BARANOF ISLAND
ALASKA
CANADA
Area Location
Pacific Ocean
N W E S
0 5 mi
0 5 km
17. Táan Daa
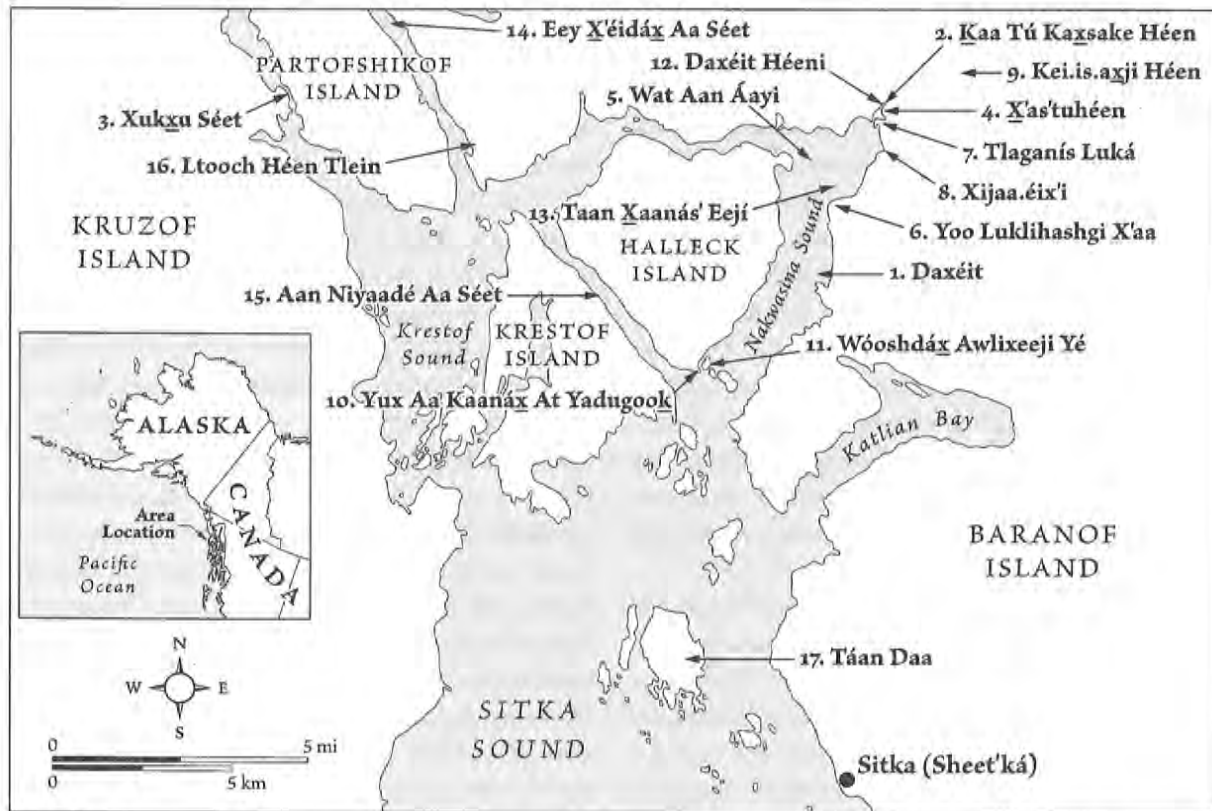SITKA SOUND
Sitka (Sheet'ká)

Figure 1. Story map of the Aak'wtaatseen "Salmon Boy" story based on interviews with Sitka elders Herman Kitka Sr. and Ethel Makinen and a version of the tale recorded from Deikeenáak'w in 1904 by John R. Swanton (1909; see also Littlefield et al. 2003). All stories have settings and most Alaska Native stories are localized in named places. These places are often integral to understanding the plot. The Salmon Boy story begins in Nakwasina near Sitka (Daxéit, "Fallen Stunned," #1), an important fishing camp, where a Kiks.ádi boy is taken by the salmon people after he insults them. Subsequent places he visits follow the path of salmon tribe as they journey to the ocean to feed and mature before returning home to spawn. Along the way, we learn something about the way salmon see and experience the world through the names and descriptions of places. For example, the story relates how salmon returning to Nakwasina are buffeted by strong, shifting tides and sometimes scrape against the rocks and become scarred. Herman Kitka identified one place where this occurs as Xukx̱u Séet (Going Dry Strait, #3), a long channel that goes dry at low tide and in which he has seen salmon struggle and sometimes become scarred or trapped. This is followed by another allusion to an unnamed place where salmon went

ashore and to them "it appeared like they would throw hot rocks on each other" and "the skin of some of them moved like fish skins being roasted on hot rocks." According to Herman Kitka, this is a reference to the Ltooch Héen Tlein (Big Roasting Creek, #16), another Tlingit fishing camp in Neva Strait where salmon collected and were caught and roasted over a fire on special flat roasting sticks. Nearing Daxéit, the salmon people encounter the herring people at #17, Táan Daa (Jumping Fish Around [Island]), with whom they trade insults and boasts about their relative status as a food source for the people. At the junction of Olga and Neva Strait, according to Herman Kitka, the salmon people divide and tell each other to which stream they will be going. The humpback (pink) salmon say they will be going to X̱'as'tuhéen (Saliva Creek, #4). "That's what the humpy people call it," Herman Kitka explains, because the choicest parts of the spawning rivers are taken by other salmon species, so the "humpies" chose to spawn in the lower reaches of the streams, where the tidal action and foam give the water a saliva-like quality. Finally, Aak'wtaatseen returns to Daxéit where he is landed and recognized by his parents (from a copper necklace he wears) and transformed back to human form. Aak'wtaatseen be-

comes a powerful shaman who educates the people about the salmon and shapes the land in other important ways. The small pond near Daxéit, where Aak'wtaatseen bathes and drums for power, becomes Xijaa.éix'i (Beating Time for Shaman Lagoon, #8); the place where he spears the powerful land otter becomes Yux Aa Kaanáx At Yadugook (The Point It [the Spear] Was Thrown Across, #10); and the place where the he cuts out the otter's tongue and fasts for eight days earns the name Wóoshdáx Awlixeeji Yé (The Place Divided, #11; see Sheet'ká Kwáan #301 for alternative name and translation). The story gives these places resonance, just as the places animate and make tangible the story. Cartography by Barry Levely with revisions by Michael Travis.

to modern community areas. The term *kwáan* derives from the Tlingit verb "to dwell" and refers to the total lands and waters used and controlled by clans inhabiting a particular winter village. Unlike descent-based clans and moieties (the two superlineages which organized clans into Raven and Eagle/Wolf), the kwáan is fundamentally a unit of social geography. Accordingly, kwáan may be extended to reference communities of persons, or even non-human persons, dwelling beyond the boundaries of Tlingit territory, as in Taagish (Tagish) Kwáan, a reference to Interior Athabaskans dwelling in the vicinity of Tagish, B.C. Whites often mistakenly assumed that Tlingit kwáans had formal governments like those of Western towns and villages, but such governance did not exist among Alaska Natives prior to the development of modern village-based tribes through the Indian Reorganization Act beginning in 1936; rather political authority traditionally was vested in local clans and house groups which owned and managed places (Thornton 2002). Nevertheless, the affinity between traditional kwáan territories and modern village and tribal boundaries makes them the most logical unit through which to organize the material.

Ceremonial life. Because named places were foundational to the constitution of subsistence and social organization, they were celebrated in art and ceremonial life. The central symbolic elements of art and ceremony are crests, sacred manifestations of animals, places, and other entities, which are incorporated into artistic designs, regalia, and other cultural forms. Crests, observed de Laguna (1972, 451), "are, from the native point of view, the most important feature of the matrilineal sib or lineage, acquired in the remote past by the ancestors and determining the nature and destiny of their descendants." This combination of heritage and destiny, or *shagóon*, is believed to be embodied in the sacred property of the matrilineage and also in the social group members themselves. Each crest, too, has a story "behind it" that evokes elements of the present landscape in relation to the distant past. When a place is appropriated as a crest, its image serves to link indelibly particular social groups to particular terrains.

Crests are officially "brought out" and sanctified in ritual proceedings, particularly ceremonial parties or potlatches, known in Tlingit as *koo.éex'* (from the verb "to invite"). On such occasions, the stories behind the crests are presented by the hosts and witnessed and validated by the guests. Such investiture empowers crests as sacred property (*at.óow*) and gives them material, social, and spiritual value beyond mere symbols. These values, in turn, are put to a variety of ends, such as to heal grief, build community and solidarity, and even to mediate between time and space. Examples of this kind of mediation are discussed in Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1990; see also Thornton 2004a). For instance, in ceremonies in northern Tlingit country, Kaagwaantaan orators still use the phrase *Ch'a tleix' Kax'nuwkweidí* (We who are still one People of Grouse Fort). Kax'noowú (Female Grouse Fort) refers to the site of the Kaagwaantaan's original house at Ground Hog Bay, among the oldest archaeological sites yielding evidence of human occupation in Southeast Alaska (nearly 10,000 years BP). The phrase is used to achieve at least three objectives: (1) promote solidarity and community among the now dispersed Kax'noowú clans; (2) reiterate inextricable ties to this historic, collective dwelling place; and (3) metaphorically transport listeners to this sacred landscape to be reunited with their ancestors who likewise may be summoned forth by name. In short, Kax'noowú serves as a place where time and space merge and cannot be understood without reference to each other; it is a place that is "brought forth to reconfirm" (*gágiwdul.aat*; cf. Nyman and Leer 1993) *shagóon*, Tlingit geographic, social, and historical being in the world. Unfortunately, studies of Northwest Coast art often focus on the visual aesthetics of design and form in crests and neglect the power of place that underlies them. Looking at crests from the perspective of place opens up new horizons of meaning.

The ceremonial sharing of place is, moreover, a kind of

gift or exchange. It happens not only through art and story but also through song and dance. By sharing their "place intelligence" (Thornton 2004a, 2008) in the context of ritual, Southeast Alaska Natives seek not only to build community, heal, or entertain, but also to make claims about their consubstantial relationships to particular territories. This may even extend to the food that is consumed and the gifts that are given away. When I asked Hoonah (Xunaa) elder Frank White why it is important to have food from Glacier Bay at a memorial party for a Glacier Bay descendant, he responded: "It's hard to explain, but Glacier Bay foods are...special. At a party, we like to serve [gull] eggs, salmon, seal, and berries from there not just 'cause they taste the best, but 'cause they're part of who we are. It makes us feel good...Even the deceased is fed this food to make him feel good and guide him on his journey...The spirits of our ancestors are in Glacier Bay. And when we're there subsisting, we feel them." In presenting and partaking of such gifts of place, hosts renew their organic roots; in bestowing gifts of place, hosts invite guests to share in their experience of place. In return, guests are expected not only to witness and validate hosts' relationships to places, but also to respect them. It was respect that Kaadashaan, the great Tlingit leader, sought when he told Governor Brady at the "canoe rocks" meeting of 1898: "Ever since I was a boy I have heard the names of different points, bays, islands, mountains, places where [we] get herring, [hunt,] and make camps, that is why I think this country belongs to us" (in Hinckley 1970, 270). Unfortunately, Kaadashaan did not get much respect from Brady. Perhaps in a Tlingit ceremonial context, he could have illustrated more fully the many ways that his people were connected to the named sites he mentions.

The "Three Rs" of Native Place Names

Place names are truly boxes of daylight. As such, they can shed immeasurable light on the land, culture, and identity of Southeast Alaska's indigenous peoples. The chapters that follow are an attempt to bring forth some of this light.

While mapping, transcribing, and interpreting place names remain important and fundamental tasks, it is clear that from an anthropological standpoint there are additional issues to consider about the role of place and place naming among indigenous peoples. Particularly among Native Americans, concepts of place and being are inti-

mately linked. These links are expressed in both the patterns of naming and the practical deployment of place names in the context of social and ceremonial life. Thus, place names are not simply linguistic artifacts on the landscape, but basic cultural resources. As such, the conservation of place names, along with physical sites they reference, should be a vital component of land and resource management regimes, and not simply the object of intellectual inquiry. This entails defining a process that involves Native Americans in researching, conserving, interpreting, representing, and naming their own geographies, a process that acknowledges what might be termed the "three Rs" of place.

The first of these is *resilience*. As this book demonstrates, despite the erosion of Native languages in Alaska, place names have shown a remarkable resilience, with a considerable number (Ketchikan, Sitka, Klukwan, etc.) even crossing over into the English geographic nomenclature. Why have indigenous names proven so durable? As suggested above, there are many reasons, from their remarkable descriptive force in capturing the essences of places to the fact they are intimately intermeshed with other cultural institutions that have proven equally resilient, such as subsistence and ceremonial lifeways. It follows from this that threats to these institutions, like threats to the environment itself, will undermine the resilience of Tlingit place names. This we should avoid.

The second "R" is *resonance*. By resonance I mean the intensification and prolongation of meanings that arise from place names. Resonance is contingent upon the salient *interanimation*, as Basso terms it, between geography, culture, and individual experience. In canonical form, place names may signal a whole range of meanings beyond mere geography, including important historical, moral, and sociological messages. In some cases, a single name can stand for a story itself. But this is true only for those who know the land, as elder Fred Friday put it, "so much that we were familiar with every little place" including stories behind the names. Unfortunately, in cases where language and land use patterns have become severely disrupted or threatened, these connections tend to become alienated, abstracted, or abrogated altogether. As place names become decoupled from a story, the story itself may become generalized beyond a certain geographic setting and the links between plot and place may be lost. To a certain extent this has happened to the Aak'wtaatseen story that Swanton recorded from Deikeenáak'w a century ago, especially the shamanic landscape nomenclature. Yet other

names continue to have resonance, because people still know them intimately through direct experience and through living cultural institutions (naming, *at.óow*, etc.) that continue to animate them. This we should promote.

Finally, the third "R" is *respect*. Above all, the aim of this book is to promote respect for Native names on the land. Respect not only for their resilience and resonance but for all of their significations — their meanings. Native place names have much to teach us about the landscapes we inhabit, but we must have the patience to unpack their meanings and the willingness to understand the cultural perspectives and natural phenomena that inform them. This is the heart of place-based education, the only kind of education Alaska Natives ever had until little more than a century ago. And for the rich light place sheds, it is the kind of education many still crave, beyond the demands of the dominant society and its schools. This we should remember.

Acknowledgements

This project was, in reality, a dozen smaller projects carried out at the community level in conjunction with Southeast Alaska Native tribal governments. Individual acknowledgements of the many great people and organizations involved are presented at the beginning of each community chapter. For the publication, I am deeply indebted to Michael Travis of Juneau, who not only laid out the entire book but also served effectively as a publisher's editor on matters of style and substance, and also to Ailsa Allen, University of Oxford School of Geography and the Environment, who applied her cartographic skills to improve the final maps immensely. In addition to these acknowledgements, the editor would also like to extend special thanks to two individuals and their respective organizations that helped shape the overall project and this book in fundamental ways: Harold Martin, president of the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission (SENSC), and Rosita Worl, president of Sealaska Heritage Institute. Harold, himself a Tlingit speaker and expert on the Native geography of the Kake community area, was instrumental in guiding the project through all stages: from conceptualization, to funding, to tribal collaborations, to proj-

ect administration, and dissemination of the results. He took an active role in the research process and made sure the results were personally delivered to the tribes. Upon his retirement from the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Harold continued to devote time to the project, working with myself and Gordon Jackson to steer it to completion. Harold has taught me a great deal not only about Tlingit senses of place but about how to follow respectful protocols in conducting research. Rosita, descended from Klukwan and a leading advocate for Southeast Native land and property rights for four decades, was instrumental in seeing that the results of the SENSC project were brought together in a single publication that would serve not only communities but regional and scholarly interests in protecting natural and cultural resources on Native lands. Indeed this has been a key mission of the Sealaska Heritage Institute under her leadership. Without her support and the backing of Sealaska, this publication may never have come to fruition. Finally, I would like to thank the National Park Service Heritage Grant program for funding three separate grants to pursue the place names research between 1994 and 2000.

Although the Southeast Alaska Native Place Names Project is now completed, the effort to document and reincorporate Native place names into contemporary life continues. New names are being generated to mark new places, and old names and their cultural associations are still being unpacked, contemplated and lived. Hopefully, some of place names that we recorded as "uncertain" or only in documentary form (often with peculiar spellings) may yet be re-elicited and reconfirmed by living elders. This is exciting, but also humbling. It means that *Haa Léelk'w Hás Aaní Saax'ú, Our Grandparents' Names on the Land* will have to be supplemented and revised to incorporate new names and new information from new grandparents pertaining to previously-documented names.

But this is as it should be with a *living* indigenous geography. I hope that Sealaska Heritage Institute, working in conjunction with local tribes, clans, and other entities, can facilitate this process, perhaps taking advantage of the multimedia and linking capacities of present technologies to help reorient us to the multidimensional ties that Natives of Southeast Alaska have to their named places.