

Before Boundaries: Peoples of Yukon/Alaska

by
Catharine McClellan

This paper was originally presented at the 2-4 June 1989, a conference dealing with the Yukon/Alaska/BC border and the issues surrounding this border, held in Whitehorse, YT, Canada. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Yukon Historical and Museums Association (YHMA), Yukon College, The University of Victoria's Public History Group, and the Alaska Historical Society. The proceedings were published by the YHMA.

This paper has been formatted with a local style sheet and displays best using Microsoft's Georgia font. Download it for free for Win [3.1x](#), [95/98](#), or [Mac](#).

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Tribal and Linguistic Considerations](#)
- [Native Concepts of Their Land](#)
- [Native Borderlands](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [Notes](#)
- [References](#)

Introduction

Western geographers have long been accustomed to showing the surface of the earth in two-dimensional graphic form usually on parchment or paper. We can easily look at any political map to see the boundaries of past or present political entities of the world. So, if we are concerned with the international boundary between Alaska and Canada, first set in a rather theoretical way in 1825 when Alaska was claimed by Russia and Canada by Great Britain, we need but look at a map to see where it runs. For convenience, I have provided you with such a map (not included here), though a rather rough one, cluttered up with tribal names and numbered arrows meant to indicate pre-contact trade routes. There you see the familiar border between northwestern Canada and Alaska.

Starting at the Arctic Ocean, it follows longitude 141 slashing south through the arctic coastal plain into the British Mountains (part of the northwestern thrust of the great Cordillera), the highlands and interior flats where it crosses the Porcupine River, a major northern branch of the Yukon River. Then, skirting the edge of the Ogilvie Range to the

east it drops down to and across the great Yukon River itself. Here, the river is still flanked on the east by the Ogilvies, but the southwest the boundary line runs through open highland and valleys drained by tributaries such as the Forty Mile River.

Next, 141 bisects the low divide between the headwaters of the Tanana and those of the White River two other tributaries of the Yukon River, in spite of their intertwined headwaters, enter the river hundreds of miles apart. Now the line runs on south through new sets of high, glaciated mountains, the easternmost parts of the Alaska range the Wrangell Range, the Chugach, and the St. Elias mountains.

At Mt. St. Elias itself, the boundary finally abandons 141 to turn sharply southeast and skirt along the icy peaks behind the great Malaspina glacier and Yakutat Bay and to continue along the Pacific Coast Range around the head of the Lynn Canal. It follows southeast along the Coast mountains until it reaches Portland Canal where it finally turns west out to sea south of Prince of Wales Island at Dixon entrance. The border lands along the boundary thus contain arctic coastal and mountain tundra, bare rocky mountains with craggy peaks, glaciers and ice fields, boreal-forested plateaus and valleys, grassy meadows, swampy flatlands, Pacific rain forests, rivers and lakes, as well as Arctic and Pacific sea waters.

As Lew Green has explained in his splendid book, *The Boundary Hunters* (1982: *passim*), the politics that created this line have been marked by considerable scientific competence, ingenuity, heroic devotion and hardship. The long time Native inhabitants of Canada and Alaska, however, have surely construed what are today's borderlands somewhat differently than have the whites who, in the nineteenth century, divided up their country, and I have been asked to comment particularly on the Yukon/Alaska Native peoples before boundaries.

We cannot, of course, hope to get back to such times except in a very fragmented way, let alone to the arrival of the very first inhabitants or the areas in question. But with the help of what their ancestors passed down orally to present day Natives, and what was recorded by the few whites who first coasted along the shores and then entered the country from various directions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we can perhaps ask some reasonable questions about what was happening in the present borderlands at the time of contact.¹ In a gathering such as this, we will certainly gain new insights from both Native and non-Native scholars.

Tribal and Linguistic Considerations

In order to talk in some shorthand way about the many aboriginal groups involved, we have to have some labels, for the Indians of northern Canada never all had exactly the same cultures or languages even though there was often more of a continuum between traditional Native groups than is suggested by the customary tribal names that appear in text books, law cases, and on maps. But be that as it may, using the names that western anthropologists usually employ today,² I have shown on my working map the major

Native groups who, two centuries ago, were probably living on or near today's international boundary.

Starting this time in the south, the groups to be considered are Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit—who traditionally were coastal fishers, hunters and gatherers; the Tsetsaut, Tahltan, inland Tlingit, Tagish, Southern Tutchone, and Northern Tutchone, Ahtna, Upper Tanana, Han, Gwich'in (Loucheux or Kutchin) who traditionally were inland fishers, hunters and gatherers, although by the nineteenth century a handful of Athapaskan Tsetsaut may have reached the coast, perhaps from a Kaska homeland (Danjeli, 1986; Duff, 1981)³; and the Inuit-Inupiaq (Eskimo) who traditionally were sea mammal and caribou hunters, but not exactly the same groups who were attracted there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century heyday of the Herschel Island whaling activity.⁴

The tribes do not correspond to tightly organized political units of the past. Instead, they are based almost wholly on linguistic considerations, and six major language families are represented by this tribal list: Tsimshian, Haida, Tlingit, Athapaskan, Eyak, and Inuit-Inupiaq.⁵ Some of these families have been grouped into super-families such as Na-Dene or Penutian, the validity of which we need not pause to debate (Krause and Golla, 1981). We *should* note, however, that within each language there are dialectical differences, and that within the Athapaskan language family, there are mutually unintelligible languages. Eastern and a western Gwich'in dialects are distinctly different, and when they first meet, neither a Tutchone nor a Han Indian can easily hear a Gwich'in speaker.

On the other hand, most northern Indians are skilled practical linguists, quickly learning the languages of those with whom they come into contact for one reason or another, whether or not the languages involved belong to the same or quite different language families. With respect to borderlands, however, it would be very interesting to know whether major physical barriers may have helped to create boundaries between those who now speak markedly different languages, or alternatively, whether possession of markedly different languages ever dictated borderlands so to speak, between native groups in the past.

In the interior, the greatest linguistic continuity across the present boundary occurs in precisely those areas where mountain barriers are least. For example, though they have dialectical variations, both Han and Gwich'in speakers straddle 141° as do Inuit-Inupiaq on the Arctic coast. No major ranges divide these speakers of common languages. The Han and the Gwich'in could travel relatively easily across the present boundary either by foot or down the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers in their finely crafted birch canoes, just as the Inuit-Inupiaq could walk or travel by skin boats along the Arctic coast.

But if we consider the matter from north to south, Han and Gwich'in, and Gwich'in and Inuit-Inupiaq are quite different languages are spoken in areas significant mountain barriers (especially in the Yukon), though linked by several passes, and, in the case of the Gwich'in and the Inuit, by the Peel River which flows into the Mackenzie.

On the Pacific coast, the Tsimshian, Haida and Tlingit all live in roughly the same kind of natural environment and speakers of each of these three languages converge at just about today's international boundary at Dixon Entrance. Other Tsimshian and Tlingit lived from south to north along the lower reaches of widely spaced major rivers draining from the interior or near smaller streams in villages tucked into the coves and inlets of the mountainous mainland and islands strung from beyond Prince Rupert to Yakutat Bay. The Haida were out on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Yet, all of these coastal communities with their three very diverse languages could be relatively easily reached by water travel. Extensive and rugged foot travel was required only to reach the Athapaskan speakers across the Coastal Mountain passes.

In short, although there appears to be some correlation between language boundaries and physical barriers, the correlation is by no means absolute. Always, complex factors of history and culture need to be considered, if we are to understand what lies behind the maps of recent linguistic distributions, and we do not yet have the data we need (Krause, 1982).

--- *Native Concepts of Their Land*

Having laid out these rather static and scrappy descriptive “facts” (or assumptions?) about the native peoples who lived in the borderlands at about the time of contact, we can now turn to several tantalizing questions derived from trying to think ourselves back into earlier cultural dynamics of these societies. One fascinating problem is how traditional natives of the borderlands actually visualized their land and learned to find their way about in the past.

Plate 59 of Volume One of *The Historical Atlas of Canada* shows two maps of north central Canada drawn in 1801 and 1802 by two different Blackfoot Indians, and one drawn by an Athapaskan Chipewyan Indian called *Cot aw ney yaz zah*. His map, drawn in 1810, shows the way to travel by canoe between Churchill River and Lake Athabasca including different outward and return routes so that the traveller could avoid bad currents and other such hazards (Moodie, 1987). A forthcoming article by June Helm discusses an even earlier Chipewyan map drawn by the famous chief Matonabee who guided Samuel Hearne to the Coppermine River in 1770-72. This map, drawn in 1770, shows the route from Churchill to the Arctic Ocean. Helm argues very convincingly that Matonabee's map is remarkably accurate if properly read as a guide to the drainage systems in relation to the coastline, and not as an effort to show a landmass on a north-south, east-west grid (Helm, in press).

Fortunately, we also have some early native maps from our area of particular interest. These are the maps drawn by the Chilkat Chief Kohklux and his wives at Klukwan in 1869, showing a version of the Chilkat trade routes into and returning from Yukon (No. 8 on my work map) (Johnson, 1984). Another map, drawn by the Gwitch'in Indian, Paul Kandik, in 1880 for the trader, Paul Mercier, shows the present border area near Dawson and includes the country of the Han, Upper Tanana and Tutchone people (Mercier, 1986: endpapers, 88-90). Some of you may have been lucky enough to see the originals of the

large Kohklux and the Kandik maps in an exhibit here in Whitehorse sponsored by the Yukon Historical & Museums Association in 1987 to commemorate the Yukon Expedition of 1887.

Certainly neither map shows the international boundary nor borders of any kind, though they do designate a few physiographic features and quite a number of specific camps or villages. Like the Chipewyan maps, these Alaska-Yukon maps also appear to be remarkably accurate if one keeps in mind that the basic interest of their creators was to depict specific routes of travel between specific places. Because of this, I doubt if going round and round on his too small piece of paper, which Kohklux did on his first try with pencil and paper bothered him nearly as much as it did the geographer Davidson, who commissioned the map (Johnson, 1984: 12).

I wish we had many more such documents,⁶ including all the ephemeral maps that native traders of the borderlands drew on Alexander Murray's sandbox at Fort Yukon in the 1840s (Murray, 1910), not to mention the drawings in the dirt made by Kohklux (Johnson, 1984: 12). But most of all, I would like to know whether these two dimensional graphics were a purely historical development resulting from the interests of fur traders and explorers for whom they were drawn. Did native people *ever* make visual maps before the whites asked them to? And, if they did, did they ever try to represent the entire country over which they ranges for their livelihood and which they thought of as their own? I suspect that the shamanic maps made by Ahtna and Beaver Athapaskans showing the universe or the routes to a supernatural realm above were all relatively late—some may have even been inspired by the special knowledge that white man's maps appeared to incorporate.⁷ In any case, they were certainly of a different order than on-the-ground route maps, and the question remains whether the cognitive knowledge that the pre-contact Indians had of the aerial limits and nature of the land that they covered in their usual seasonal travels was gained by looking at or making graphics in whatever medium, or whether—as seems likely—they learned the landscape only by constant travel over it and by repeatedly telling and hearing about it.

It is clear that every important feature of the Yukon and Alaska landscape has a native name and a story associated with it. Older natives memorized the information so well that when they had to go places they had never been before, they still could recognize the landmarks and get to where they wanted to go. Texts by Athapaskan elders demonstrate again and again how thoroughly the landscape was “recited” in oral tradition. I think, for example, of Sam Williams telling me in detail about the Tutchone country around Aishihik, and of Gertie Tom on Little Salmon country (Tom, 1987), of Angela Sidney on Tagish country (Sidney, 1980) in Yukon; of Belle Herbert on travelling in the Porcupine River homeland of the Gwitch'in on both sides of the border and around Fort Yukon and other places in Alaska (Herbert, 1982); of Katherine Peter on the Chandalar Gwitch'in country (Peter, 1981), Adam Sanford and Katie and Fred Johns Sr. on Upper Ahtna country (Karl, 1986), Shem Pete on Upper Inlet Tanana country (Karl and Fall, 1987) all in Alaska.

I remember Yukon native elders organizing the telling of their old stories to me as if they were travelling a route through a country in much the same way that Crow once travelled through the world after he had made it, leaving his marks everywhere for humans to see. I think, too, of the many accounts of hunting and trapping trips, complete with detailed descriptions of the natural phenomena encountered en route, that every young native hears again and again. In short, I believe that, in the interior anyway, native concepts of the land and practical guides to it in pre-contact times stemmed largely from internalized oral traditions and not from external graphic representations which, perhaps, they never made at all.

But there is still that question of just what the traditional natives actually internalized in their mind's eye when they were thinking about their land? Was it as if one were looking all around from the top of a hill or mountain at a vast expanse of land spread out in all directions? Or was it always like a string of places and landmarks along a trail or a waterway? Or was it in some other way? I hope that we may have a chance to learn something about this from the natives present.

As for the coastal peoples—what was most important to them where there could be few deeply worn trails on land and none on the water? How did they “recite” the coast? Was it from harbour to harbour, from mountain peak to mountain peak, headland to headland? In addition to the formal clan histories, which do indeed follow the migrations of clan ancestors from place to place, was there also a body of skilled navigators' traditions passed on by constant repetition from individual to individual? I believe that there was (de Laguna, 1960: 16-23; 1972: 209-291).⁸

Native Borderlands

Whatever the answers to these questions may be, and whether or not I am right in thinking that neither interior nor coastal Natives ever shared the western cartographer's idea that land and water masses should be laid out on maps as visual wholes, both the late-arriving creators or current political boundaries and the pre-contact natives did share a common recognition that major physiographic features created important borderlands. The Indians were well aware that mountain ranges or various drainages separated differing ecological niches and raw resources. In the past, the Native inhabitants tried to control the resources that were within their country. In this sense there were certainly pre-contact borderlands, which often corresponded to, but sometimes differed from the “tribal” and linguistic “boundaries” discussed earlier.

To be sure, the Native peoples never conceived of slashing continuous clear-cut boundary lines around entire blocks of land and whatever was contained within them, but there is little doubt that local groups usually thought of themselves as exclusive stewards of their own homelands and whatever natural wealth was contained within them. On the Pacific coast, clan chiefs and their followers frequently contended for the richest oolichon fishing, sea otter, or sealing grounds. Powerful coastal groups also vied with each other for the products of the interior. The rivalry and fighting between Tsimshian clan heads to control rivers and passes that led to particular inland villages (Cove and MacDonald,

1987) is very reminiscent of the rivalry between certain Taku, Chilkat and Chilcoot clan chiefs for control of the inland trade. All over the northern British Columbia and southeast Alaskan coast, powerful Native kin groups made sure to mark, with their family crests, the passes to the interior to which they laid claim. They also displayed their crests in the inland villages or fish camps where they thought they had the exclusive right to trade.

I do not know exactly where the Tlingit face carved in the tree trunk that is shown on our program is located—but I gather it is a Coastal Tlingit clan mark of control of one of the routes to the interior.⁹ Another such carving is on display in the Visitors Centre of Kluane National Park, and Aishihik Indians and others have told me of a painting or carving of a Crow made as a clan crest, perhaps by coastal Tlingit traders at Lost River (a settlement on a branch of the Takhini where he said the ancestors of Aishihik and Hutshi people once stayed). I hope that we will hear more at this conference about these markers which, in a sense, were validating signs of an alien visitor who had crossed into foreign lands. In any case, both Tlingit and Tutchone oral traditions suggest that there were quite a few such carvings on the trails across the Coast Range and meeting places for trade showing just who had the rights to use them. We heard something about this from Haines Tlingit on the 1987 occasion of the Kohklux and Kandik map display. In one sense such carvings or pictographs could be construed as boundary markers.

Directly relevant to any discussion of coast-interior boundaries and trade is another plate in the *Historical Atlas of Canada* that shows in great detail what is known of the various trade routes of the Tsimshian just before contact times, who traded with whom and what products were exchanged in each direction (MacDonald, Coupland and Archer, 1987; see also Cove and MacDonald, 1987).

The plate is a mine of information and I have borrowed its format to some extent to show where there were major precontact trade routes all along and across the international boundaries under consideration today. I, however, do not try to show the routes in detail or others that did not cross current political borders, nor do I list the products exchanged, as MacDonald and his associates have done. That would be a long paper in itself.¹⁰ But we may at least note that many, though not quite all, of the materials that were traded between the interior and the Pacific coast in pre-contact and early contact times were *perishable*; for example sea weed, dried clams, oolicon grease, seal skins, seal oil, sea shells, and cedar boxes were exchanged for tanned moose and caribou hides, furs, mountain goat hair, quill work, lichen dyes, spruce gum, and soap berries (de Laguna, 1972:348; McClellan, 1975a, 501-518; 1988: 235).

On the Arctic coast, walrus hide lines and ivory were sometimes traded across the international boundary for wolverine skins from the interior (McClellan, 1964; McClellan *et al.*, 1988: 233), but such goods leave little archaeological record, and for the most part we know about precontact trade only through oral traditions. This is also true of the interior and, on the whole, we know less about the loci, control and precontact trade of resources across the present international boundaries that now separate Native peoples of the interior from each other than we do about the situation for coast and interior,

especially with respect to perishable goods. The western Gwitch'in of the Yukon Flats in Alaska prized Yukon Gwitch'in caribou, for they had none in their country (McClellan, 1988: 233-34), and the Upper Tanana of the White River headwaters in Alaska and Tutchone who lived in the Shakwak valley of southwestern Yukon, traded with Tutchone and Han of the Yukon River for birchwood to make arrow shafts (Johnson and Raup 1964: 196).

Yet another plate from the *Atlas*, however, shows important distribution centers of *non-perishable* materials in both interior and coastal northwestern America (Wright and Carlson, 1981). Finds from early archaeological sites suggest that obsidian from Batza Tena on the Koyukuk River in western Alaska and from Mound Edziza in Tahltan country in British Columbia was traded from about 9000 BC until contact throughout what now constitutes present-day Alaska, Yukon, British Columbia and the Mackenzie River valley of the Northwest Territories.

As shown on the plate, and particularly relevant to this conference, is the upper White River-Skolai Pass area, the center of distribution for the Kletsan copper. Kletsan Creek (or River) flows from the Natazhat Glacier in the Yukon, thirteen miles into the White River on the Alaska side of the border (Orth, 1967: 530).¹¹ Copper from this general location was traded west to the Kenai Peninsula and southwest to Yakutat Bay in Alaska, north and northeast to the upper Peel River and southeast to the southern lakes of the Yukon. The copper was a major attraction for the Ahtna, Tanana, and Tutchone Indians who lived closest to it, not to mention the Chugach Eskimo and Tlingit of the coast. Ultimately, it seemed to have been the lure that drew the Tlingit up to Yakutat Bay where they could get it from the inland Ahtna, and the Lynn Canal Tlingit were apparently crossing the mountain passes into Yukon for it (de Laguna, 1972: 90, 112, 115, 177, 348, 349). William Workman found 15 copper items at the archaeological site of Chimi, and old Tutchone settlement on the road into Aishihik just above the present day dam and six other pieces were recovered from this general area (Franklin *et al.*, 1981: 125; Workman, 1978: 344-349).

The area where the Kletsan copper was centered was one where we know that there was considerable political tension during the early and mid-nineteenth century, for this is where some of the events in what Atan and Upper Tanana elders often title "The War Between Canada and Alaska" took place, although the international boundary line *per se* certainly had nothing to do with the "war." The fighting occurred after the Coast Indians had begun to bring white man's trade goods into the interior, and the references to Alaska and Yukon are simply a shorthand way of indicating that the hostilities were between Upper Tanana (and perhaps some Ahtna and Tanana allies) and Tutchone of Dalton Post and Burwash. The cause was ostensibly a quarrel over an Upper Tanana woman who had married a Dalton Post Tutchone and run away and also an insult to an Upper Tanana chief that took place when Dalton Post people were trading with their more inland neighbours.¹²

Control of copper was evidently not a major factor in this particular feud, which probably had much more to do with gaining access to white men's trade goods. Still, we may ask

whether the events somehow built on earlier attempts to monopolize the copper sources. Or was access to copper open to all who came seeking it in the kind of pattern associated with what interior peoples called “free” hunting areas? There were usually physiographically determined buffer zones where migratory game abounded at certain seasons. We know, for example, that at the end of the nineteenth century Upper Tanana and Han (and perhaps some Tutchone) all used to gather to hunt caribou in the alpine tundra of the Forty Mile highlands on both sides of the present border (McKenna, 1981: 565). On the Arctic slope, the Gwitch'in and Inuit-Inupiaq also hunted together for these herd animals (McClellan, 1988: 284).

Such “free” lands stood in contrast to the home territories which were usually specific drainages or parts of them that particular bands or local segments of Tlingit-style clans claimed to be their own. Apparently a non-band member, and certainly a stranger—someone whose language or appearance was different from that of persons in the local groups or nearby bands—had to ask if he wished to hunt, fish, trap or make use of other resources in such places, but in ties and other considerations meant that it was almost always granted. Except in times of starvation, the request and affirmative reply were pretty much a courtesy exercise in the recognition and acknowledgement of a given group's stewardship of a particular segment of country, determined by long-time occupation and exploitation, rather than by boundary lines as such (McClellan, 1975a: 482-487; 1975b: 191-192, 206-210, 218-221, 226-227, 238-240; 1988: 175-177).

Conclusion

What I have been saying is just a start on the many questions that have to do with borderlands—physiographic, linguistic, social and political—in pre-contact times. It is evident that I have not been able to give firm answers to even a limited number of them. Native and non-Native historians of the future will probably help us out on this score. For now, I want to close by saying that many of the old-time Yukon Natives have volunteered at different times how very much they dislike the current international and international boundaries and the rules and regulations that come with them. From the Native point of view, they seem completely arbitrary and unnecessary. I give you but two of many instances of expression with respect to the boundaries. In 1977, old Frank Sidney of Teslin said:

The Alaskan Indians used to come here. They used to come here too, way down from the Mackenzie and all the way down to the salt water. And there was no boundary lines then. We owned the country. And white people dividedus between each other—you and your brother—between BC and the Alaska line, between BC and the Yukon. That one was pretty bad! (McClellan, 1988: 277)

Or, as Tommy Peters put it:

And another thing, we never used to have a boundary line at BC. We never see a boundary line anywhere! (McClellan, 1988: 278)

Notes

1. The times of first contacts with whites and the dates when the boundaries were drawn up were not, of course, the same. For a brief history of some of the first contacts in Yukon, see McClellan, 1988: 63-84. [\[back\]](#)
2. The best terminology for northern Native groups is a matter of debate. The loose social structure of the past makes "tribe" a questionable term. As noted in this paper, the "tribal" terms used today by anthropologists are based primarily on linguistic considerations. Modern Native groups increasingly prefer to use Native terms of designation, often meaning "people." For further discussion of this complex problem see, for example, Osgood, 1936; McClelland, 1964, 1970, 1975a: 13-16. 1988: 40-43; Helm, 1981: 1-4; VanStone, 1974: 7-22. [\[back\]](#)
3. Duff suggests that inland Athapaskans several times pushed out to sea, but could not adapt to life on the lower rivers and coast (Duff, 1981: 454-457). Tutchone speakers apparently once lived along the lower Alsek River and at Dry Bay and as far west as the Akwe River on the Alaskan coast but were displaced by the expanding Tlingit, perhaps not too long before white contact (de Laguna 1972: 81-82; McClelland, 1975a: 23-24). [\[back\]](#)
4. The western limits of the former Mackenzie Delta Eskimo are still in dispute, even for post-contact times. Petitot put them variously at the Colville River, Point Barrow, and Herschel Island, and Stefansson at the western edge of the Mackenzie Delta; others, at Demarcation Point or Barter Island. There may have been no Mackenzie Eskimo on the Alaskan coast, even though it was an important trade area. After the short-lived and traumatic whaling era on the north coast between 1898-1908, the large Mackenzie Delta Inuit population went into rapid decline. By 1926 they had mostly died out, but in 1906 there had been a great influx of Alaskan Eskimos from the Colville River in Alaska. They began to move into the delta to trap furs. Other Eskimos and Indians joined them in the Aklavik and Inuvik areas of today. See D.J. Smith, 1984 for further details. [\[back\]](#)
5. See Krause, 1980. [\[back\]](#)
6. The Chilkat also drew a sketch map of the trail from the coast to Fort Selkirk for Captain Dodd of the Hudson's Bay trading ship who was in touch with Robert Campbell at Fort Selkirk through letters carried by Chilkat traders (see McClellan, 1950: 181). [\[back\]](#)
7. Information about the Atna shamanic maps is in fieldnotes of de Laguna and McClelland, 1954, 1958. For Beaver maps of trails to heaven see Brody, 1982: 44-48. I do not attempt to discuss here the "Catholic Ladder," the Algonkian "maps" of scapulimancy, or the mid-eighteenth Naskapi "map" painted on hide, though all are relevant to the problem at hand. See Helm, Rogers and Smith, 1981: 149, Fig 2.1 Rogers and

- Leacock, 1981: 184, Fig. 10; and Philips, 1987: 58-59. [\[back\]](#)
8. See for example the Tlingit story of Kaax'achgook in Sidney, 1988: 13-15. [\[back\]](#)
 9. The only published picture of this carving that I know is in Leechman, 1950: 259. [\[back\]](#)
 10. We still know so little about shifts in routes and products at different periods of time over this area in the past that I feared ending up with a fragmentary and basically timeless picture having very little real correspondence to what went on in real history. I am, however, working up what routes, lists and probable data I can for trade and travel throughout all of northwestern North America. [\[back\]](#)
 11. Franklin, Badone, Gotthardt and Yorga (1981: 5-6) write that: "The copper-bearing basalts of the Copper River-White River regions follow the St. Elias Range from the vicinity of Kluane Lake northwest into Alaska and the Copper River area. In the White River-Kluane area copper is found on nearly all the creeks on the northeast slopes of the St. Elias mountains." [\[back\]](#)
 12. For a few published versions of this widely told story, see McClelland 1975a: 510; McKennan, 1959: 171-172; Workman 1978: 95. I have collected more than a dozen versions of it in McClellan field notes, 1962-1989. [\[back\]](#)

References

- Brody, Hugh *Maps and Dreams*. New York: Pantheon.
1982
- Cove, John J. *Tsimshian Narratives, Vol. 2, Trade and Welfare*. Collected
and by Marius Barbeau and William Benyon. Paper No. 3,
MacDonald, Mercury Series. Ottawa: Directorate, Canadian Museums of
George F. eds. Civilization.
1987
- Dangell,
Reginald
1986 Tsetsaut History: The Forgotten Tribe of Southern-
Southeast Alaska. *Alaska Quarterly Review*, Vol. 4, Nos. 3
and 4: 95-102.
- de Laguna,
Frederica
1960 *The Story of a Tlingit Community: A Problem in the
Relationship Between Archaeological, Ethnological, and
Historical Methods*. Bulletin 172. Washington, DC: Bureau
of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution.
- 1972 *Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the
Yakutat Tlingit*. Smithsonian Contributions to
Anthropology, 7 (3 parts). (Transcriptions of Native music
by David P. McAlester.) Washington, DC: Smithsonian
Institution.

- de Laguna, F. and McClellan, C. 1981 Ahtna. *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 641-663.
- Duff, Wilson 1981 Tsetsaut. *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 454-457.
- Franklin, U. M. 1981 *An Examination of Prehistoric Copper Technology and Copper Sources in Western Arctic and Subarctic North America*. Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper No. 101. Ottawa: National Museum of Man.
- Badonne, E. and Yorga, B. 1981
- Green, Lewis 1982 *The Boundary Hunters: Surveying the 141st Meridian and the Alaska Panhandle*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Helm, June 1981 Introduction. *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 1-4.
- In Press *Matonabee's Map*.
- Helm, June 1981 Intercultural Relations and Cultural Change in the Shield and Mackenzie Borderlands. *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 146-157.
- Rogers, Edward S. and Smith, James G. E. 1981
- Herbert, Belle 1982 *Shandaa, In My Lifetime*. Recorded and edited by Bill Pfisterer with the assistance of Alice Moses; transcribed and translated by Katherine Peter; edited by Jane McGary. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Johnson, Frederick and Raup, Hugh M. 1964 *Investigations in Southwest Yukon: Geobotanical Archaeological Reconnaissance*. Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology. Vol. 6, No. 1. Andover: Philips Academy.
- Johnson, Linda 1984 The Day the Sun Was Sick. *Yukon Indian News*. Summer: 11-15.

- Kari, James
1986 *Tat'ahwt'aenn Nenn': The Headwaters People's Country, Narratives of the Upper Ahtna Athapaskans*. Transcribed by James Kari. Translated by Katie John and James Kari. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Kari, James
and
Fall, James
A.
1987 *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina*. Compiled and edited by James Kari and James A. Fall. Anchorage: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska and The CIRI Foundation.
- 1982 *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska Map*. Revised edition. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- 1980 *?? and Future*. Alaska Native Language Center Research Papers, No. 4. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Krauss,
Michael E.
and
Golla, Victor
K.
1981 *Northern Athapaskan Languages. Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 67-85.
- Leechman,
Douglas
1950 *Yukon Territory. Canadian Geographic Journal*. Vol. 40, No. 6: 240-267.
- McClellan,
Catharine
1950 *Culture Change and Native Trade in Southern Yukon Territory*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of California, Berkeley.
- 1964 *Culture Contacts in the Early Historic Period in Northwestern North America. Arctic Anthropology*. Vol. 2, No. 2: 103-123.
- 1970 *Introduction to Special Issue: Athapaskan Studies. Western Journal of Anthropology*. Vol. 2, No. 1: vi-xix.
- 1975a *My Old People Say: An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory*. (2 parts) National Museums of Man, Publications in Ethnology 6. Ottawa: National Museums of Man.
- 1975b *Feuding and Warfare Among Northwestern Athapaskans. Proceedings: Northern Athapaskan Conference, 1971*. A. McFadyen Clark, ed. 2 vols. Mercury Series. Ethnology Service Paper 27. Ottawa: National Museums of Man: 181-258.

- 1988 *Part of the Land; Part of the Water*. With Lucie Birckel, Robert Bringhurst, James Fall, Carole McCarthy and Janice Sheppard. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas McIntyre.
- Macdonald, George F. Coupland, Gary and Archer, David
1987 *The Coast Tsimshian, ca. 1750. Plate 13. Historical Atlas of Canada. Vol. 1: From the Beginning to 1800*. R. Cole Harris, editor. Geoffrey J. Matthews, cartographer/designer. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McKenna, Robert A.
1959 *The Upper Tanana Indians*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 55. New Haven: Department of Anthropology, Yale University.
- 1981 *The Tanana. Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 562-576.
- Mercier, Francois X.
1986 *Recollections of the Youkon: Memories From the Years 1868-1885*. Translated, edited and annotated by Linda Finn Yarborough. Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 188. Anchorage: The Alaska Historical Society.
- Moodie, D. Wayne
1987 *Indian Maps. Plate 59. Historical Atlas of Canada. Vol. 1: From the Beginning to 1800*. R. Cole Harris, editor. Geoffrey J. Matthews, cartographer/designer. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Murray, Alexander H.
1910 *Journal of the Yukon, 1847-48*. J.J. Burpee, editor. Publications of the Public Archives of Canada 4. Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada.
- Orth, Donald J.
1967 *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*. US Geological Survey Professional Paper 567. Washington, DC: US Geological Survey.
- Osgood, Cornelius
1936 *The Distribution of Northern Athapaskan Indians*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology 7. New Haven: Department of Anthropology, Yale University.
- Peter, Katherine
1981 *Neets'ait Gwiindait, Living in the Chandalar Country*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Centre, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Phillips, Ruth B.
1987 *Like a Star I Shine: Northern Woodland Artistic Traditions*. In *Spirits Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*. Toronto: McClellan and Stewart and Glenbow Museum: 51-92.
- Rogers, *Montagnais-Naskapi. Handbook of North American*

- Edward S. and Leacock, Eleanor
1981
Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 169-189.
- Sidney, Angela
1980
Place Names of the Tagish Region, Southern Yukon. Compiled by Mrs. Angela Sidney for the Yukon Native Languages Project. Whitehorse: Council for Yukon Indians.
- 1988
The Story of Kaax'achgook. *The Northern Review* 2 (Winter): 9-16.
- Smith, Derek G.
1984
Mackenzie Delta Eskimo. *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6, Subarctic*. William C. Sturtevant, general editor. June Helm, volume editor. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution: 347-358.
- Tom, Gertie
1987
Ekeyi: Gyo Cho Chu/My Country: Big Salmon River, Place Names of the Big Salmon River Region, Yukon Territory, Canada. Whitehorse: Yukon Native Language Centre.
- VanStone, James W.
1974
Athapaskan Adaptations: Hunters and Fishers of the Subarctic Forests. Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing Corp.
- Wright, J.V. and Carlson, Roy A.
1981
Prehistoric Trade. Plate 14. *Historical Atlas of Canada. Vol. 1: From the Beginning to 1800*. R. Cole Harris, editor. Geoffrey J. Matthews, cartographer/designer. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

© Yukon Historical & Museums Association, 1989, 1997. The preceding article can not be reproduced, reprinted, or posted to any system outside Yukon Historical & Museums Association without permission from the copyright holder. This restriction includes distribution via Usenet, bulletin board systems, mailing lists, print media, photocopying, and broadcast. To apply for permission or to request more information, send e-mail to yhma@yhma@northwestel.net.