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**Upper Tanana Ethnographic Overview and  
Assessment, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and  
Preserve**

by

**Terry L. Haynes**

and

**William E. Simeone**

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July 2007

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Subsistence





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WRANGELL ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE**

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## ABSTRACT

This overview of Alaska Native history and culture in the upper Tanana region in eastern interior Alaska focuses on the predominantly Northern Athabascan Indian villages of Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin. Based on existing ethnographic and historical sources, along with some data collected during earlier periods of fieldwork, this study describes upper Tanana Athabascan culture prior to sustained western contact at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and examines the effects of socioeconomic and cultural changes on traditional lifeways that occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the study examines the longstanding relationships of the upper Tanana Indians to the neighboring Ahtna Athabascans and to lands in and near to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, primarily in the northern part of the Copper River Basin. This overview illustrates the resiliency of the upper Tanana people in the face of ongoing socioeconomic and cultural changes during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recommendations are made for historical and ethnographic research that will enhance our understanding of the upper Tanana Athabascans and further document their cultural heritage.

**Key Words:** upper Tanana Athabascans, history, culture, territory, language, economy, material culture, religion and ritual, social and political organization.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

In 2004, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve negotiated an agreement with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to prepare an ethnographic overview and assessment of the Native peoples in the upper Tanana region. An overview and assessment is the preliminary study conducted when resources within a park unit are determined to be traditionally linked to contemporary Alaska Native groups, and is essentially a synthesis of existing ethnographic information and an identification of data gaps that may need to be addressed.

This overview of Alaska Native history and culture in the upper Tanana region in eastern interior Alaska focuses on the predominantly Northern Athabascan Indian villages of Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin (Fig. 1). We use existing ethnographic and historical sources and some information from our own fieldwork to describe upper Tanana Athabascan culture as it existed prior to sustained western contact at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to examine the effects of socioeconomic and cultural changes on traditional lifeways that occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We also examine the longstanding relationships of the upper Tanana Indians to the neighboring Ahtna Athabascans and to lands in and near to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, primarily in the northern part of the Copper River Basin.

The National Park Service added the five aforementioned upper Tanana communities to the resident zone<sup>1</sup> for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in 2002, after concluding that these communities had a significant concentration of residents who have customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses in the park. Designation as a “resident zone community” enables community members to harvest fish, wildlife, and plant resources from park lands for subsistence purposes, under provisions of applicable federal regulations, without first having to obtain a subsistence eligibility permit from the National Park Service. This report in part supplements the information compiled by park staff to support resident zone designation and may be useful for addressing cultural or resource management issues that might arise in the future.

As requested by the National Park Service, this ethnographic overview and assessment is directed primarily to park staff that may not have specialized training in anthropology but want to learn more about the upper Tanana Indians and their culture. Such knowledge has a dual purpose: It can help to strengthen government-to-government relationships between the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and upper Tanana villages, and it can facilitate development of interpretive materials for use in educating the public and orienting new employees to the cultural context of the park. We also anticipate that upper Tanana villages will find this report useful for other purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> *Resident zone* is defined as “the area within, and the communities and areas near, a national park or monument in which persons who have customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses within the national park or monument permanently reside” (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Chapter 1, Section 13, Part 42).

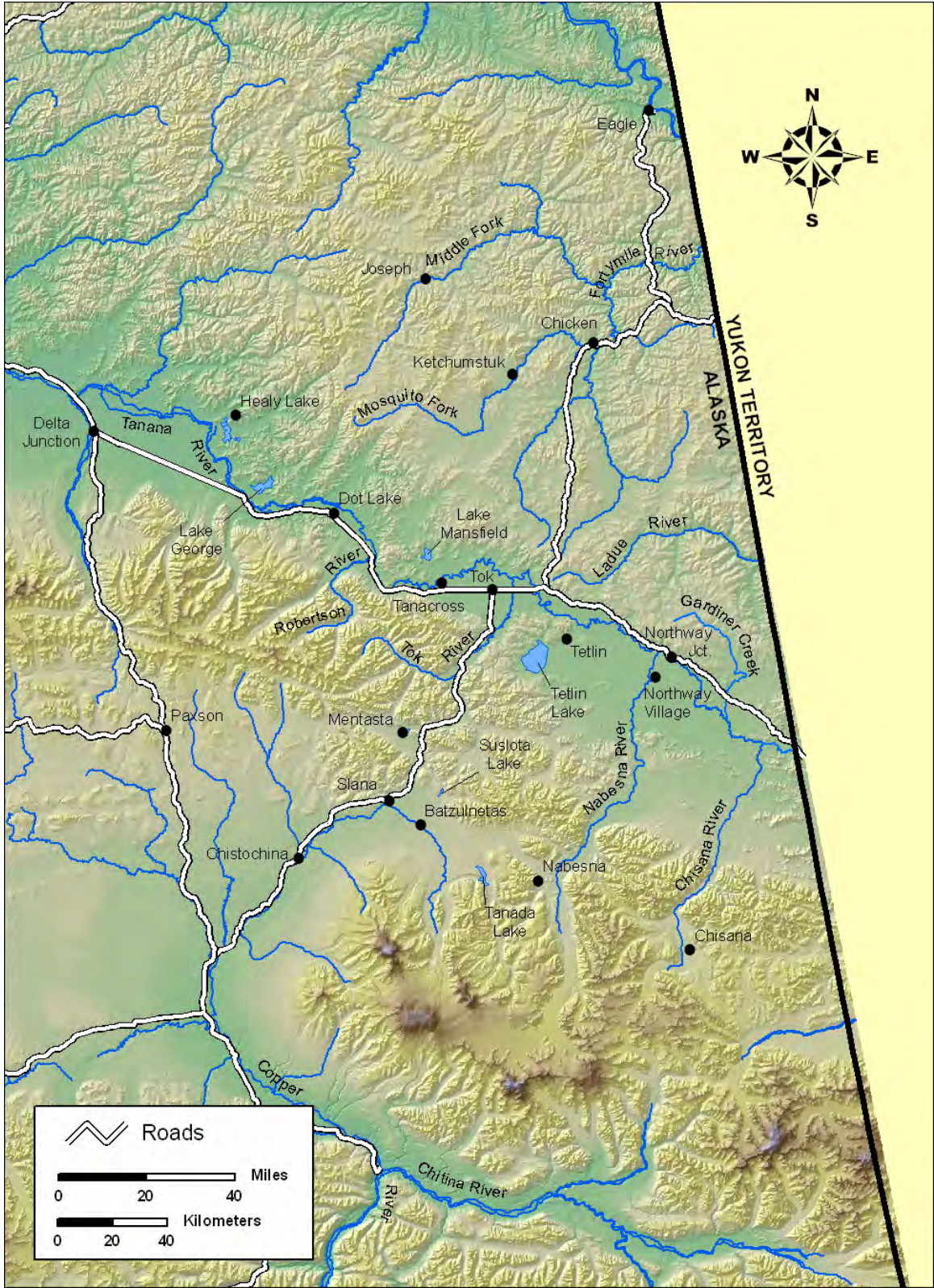


Figure 1. Upper Tanana and upper Copper River region.

## METHODOLOGY

This ethnographic overview and assessment is a broad synthesis of 20<sup>th</sup> century upper Tanana cultural history, traditional territory, socio-political organization, and cultural change. It is derived primarily from published ethnographic and historical literature and archival materials available in libraries in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Additionally, both authors have lived and conducted research in the upper Tanana region and have drawn upon some of our personal experiences, unpublished materials, and photographs for this report. We also have compiled an annotated bibliography that contains both the sources used in this report and other materials that can be consulted for further information about the culture and history of the upper Tanana Athabascan people.

Among the sources of sociocultural and ethnographic information available for the upper Tanana Athabascans, Robert McKennan's pioneering work, *The Upper Tanana Indians*, is particularly noteworthy. This ethnography was not published until 1959 but is based on fieldwork conducted in 1929-1930, half a century after Euro-Americans had established a foothold in the region but before the upper Tanana Indians had completed the transition from a nomadic way of life based out of seasonal camps to year-round residence in permanent communities. The recent publication of McKennan's field journals (Mishler and Simeone 2006) makes available revealing insights into his research and offers a glimpse of life in the upper Tanana region during the short time he was there. Were it not for McKennan's detailed observations, crucial information would not be available as a backdrop for understanding traditional upper Tanana Athabascan culture and examining changes that occurred early in the post-contact period.

Subsequent ethnographic research in the upper Tanana region to varying degrees has complemented and updated McKennan's work. Most are more thematic studies and include examinations of settlement patterns and housing types (Pitts 1972), kinship and social organization (Guédon 1974), and the Athabascan potlatch ceremony (Simeone 1995). Mishler (1986) compiled ethnographic and ethnohistorical data for Tanana Athabascan bands in the Goodpaster and Big Delta area at the western border of the upper Tanana region. The Han Athabascans, whose territory borders the upper Tanana region on the north, are portrayed in ethnographic accounts by Osgood (1971) and Mishler and Simeone (2004), while de Laguna and McClellan (1981), Reckord (1983), and Kari (1986) describe the Ahtna Athabascans residing in the Copper River basin immediately south of the upper Tanana region.

Although documenting land and resource use patterns in the upper Tanana region emerged as important areas of research upon passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-203, 85 Stat. 688, December 18, 1971) and implementation of state and federal subsistence legislation in 1978 (Chapter 151, State Laws of Alaska) and 1980 (Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, Public Law 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371, December 2, 1980), respectively, these investigations actually date back to the late 1940s. Studies have examined land ownership and use patterns, with an emphasis on traplines and property rights (Goldschmidt 1948), traditional hunting practices and technology (Vitt 1971), land use and settlement patterns (Shinkwin et al. 1980), contemporary subsistence practices (Martin 1983; Haynes et al. 1984; Case 1986; Halpin 1987; Marcotte et al. 1992; Andersen and Jennings 2001; Koskey 2007), ethnobotany (Kari 1985), and geographic placenames (Kari 1997).

The content of another recent report, *An Ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin* (Easton 2005), a project also conducted for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, overlaps to some extent with this ethnographic overview and assessment. Characterized as a social history and cultural geography of the upper Tanana *Dineh* (or Athabascan) people, the Easton study documents their aboriginal use of the Chisana River basin in the southwestern corner of the upper Tanana region and extending into Yukon in western Canada. It builds upon his previous research in the Alaska –Yukon borderlands area and covers some topics that lie beyond the scope of this report.

The National Park Service has a cooperative agreement with three upper Tanana communities: Tetlin, Tanacross and Dot Lake, to write their own village histories and provide their own perspective on upper Tanana Athabascan history and culture. These village histories join the biographies of Walter Northway (Yarber and Madison 1987), Andrew Isaac (Yarber and Madison 1988), Ellen Demit (Callaway and Miller-Friend 2001), and Kenneth Thomas, Sr. (Mishler 2005), as important contributions to our understanding of upper Tanana Athabascan culture, as they are written from the point of view of the people involved and not as interpreted by outside researchers.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

As a backdrop for presentation of cultural and historical information, this report begins with descriptions of the physical setting and traditional upper Tanana Athabascan territory. We then discuss language, trails and travel routes, settlement patterns, geographic placenames, and property and territorial rights, in part to confirm the longstanding ties of the upper Tanana Athabascans to the Ahtna Athabascans in the Copper River Basin and to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve area.

Subsequent chapters describe the demography, economy, sociopolitical organization, religious practices and beliefs, and material culture of the upper Tanana Athabascans, as of the early 1900s. A separate chapter focuses on the contemporary scene and examines the challenges and opportunities facing the upper Tanana people early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Foremost among these is proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline in the Alaska Highway corridor in Alaska and Canada. Despite the many acculturative factors conspiring to transform upper Tanana culture during the past 100 years, the contemporary Indian communities are remarkably resilient and proudly retain much of their cultural heritage.

We close this report by assessing the adequacy of existing information to address future land and resource management issues that may affect the upper Tanana Athabascans and their continued access to and use of lands within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. In this context, we offer several recommendations for future ethnographic research to address important data gaps that may also serve to further strengthen ties between the upper Tanana people and the National Park Service.

## CHAPTER 2

### TERRITORY AND LANGUAGE

#### PHYSICAL SETTING

We define the Upper Tanana region as the area of eastern interior Alaska populated historically by speakers of the Upper Tanana and Tanacross Athabascan languages. This area extends north from the Wrangell Mountain range to Joseph Creek, and west from the White River just inside the Canadian border to the confluence of the Goodpaster and Tanana rivers (see Fig. 1). Flowing northward from glaciers in the slopes of the Wrangell Mountains and through the Alaska Range to the Northway-Tetlin lowlands, the Nabesna and Chisana rivers merge to form the Tanana River near Northway Junction. The Tanana River bisects this region and is fed by a series of rivers and creeks, including Mansfield, George, Sand, Gardiner, and Scottie creeks, and the Healy, Robertson, Johnson, Gerstle, Tok, and Tetlin rivers. Small lakes and wetlands are sprinkled across the flat plain of the upper Tanana valley and offer excellent habitat for wildlife and migratory birds.

McKenna (1969a) considered the Goodpaster River to be a natural break in the Tanana Athabascan language area, separating upriver speakers of the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages from the Lower Tanana speakers living farther downriver.<sup>1</sup> A series of rapids on the Tanana River downstream from Tanacross extending to its confluence with the Robertson River also impeded upriver navigation in small boats and limited contact between these neighboring groups. Lieutenant Henry T. Allen dealt with this ecological barrier in 1885 when he tried unsuccessfully to recruit Indian guides at “Kheeltat’s” (Lake Mansfield) for the long trip from there to the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon rivers:

From them we learned that there were remarkable features in the Tananá River, either violent rapids or falls. They would point to the canoes, make gestures indicative of capsizing, at the same time spreading the fingers of the hand and imitating with the voice the roaring sound of water (Allen 1887:80).

Allen (1887:81-82) went on to describe the navigational difficulties his party encountered on the Tanana River between Cathedral Rapids and the Goodpaster River, where they observed “a deserted fishing station and canoes, the only sign of natives seen since leaving Kheeltat’s.” He concluded that the swift current of the Goodpaster River probably accounted for the absence of Indian camps along this stretch of the Tanana and prevented salmon from migrating farther upriver. Consequently, the upper Tanana Indians did not have access in their homeland to salmon, an important renewable resource in the seasonal round of most other Tanana Athabascan groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The Athabascan spoken in the areas around Goodpaster and Salcha is considered a dialect of Tanana (Krauss and Golla 1981; referred to as Lower Tanana in McKenna 1981), based largely on tone isoglosses and lexicon (the latter reflecting the downriver sociocultural orientation observed by Andrews 1975). However, the demarcations between the languages of the Tanana River are problematic linguistically because of ongoing contact in different directions. Salcha-Goodpaster shares phonemic inventory with Tanacross but has no tone, making it prosodically different from both Minto-Nenana and Tanacross (Krauss 1982, Tuttle 1998), Salcha shares lexicon with both Ahtna and Minto-Nenana (Kari, Moffit and Tuttle 1991; Kari and Tuttle 1995).

Tributaries of the Fortymile, Charley, and Ladue rivers radiate through the rolling hills of the Yukon-Tanana uplands north of the Tanana River valley, where upland elevations range from 2,000 to more than 6,000 feet. The most visible landmark is Mount Fairplay, which climbs to 5,541 feet about 40 miles north of Tetlin. The Mentasta and Nutzotin mountains lie south of the Tanana River and rise to elevations of 3,000 to 8,000 feet. Farther south are the Wrangell Mountains and the Alaska Range with their glacier-covered slopes, which reach heights upward of 16,000 feet and form a southern boundary of upper Tanana territory.

Coniferous forests interspersed with stands of deciduous trees, gently rolling hills and small lakes, all features of the taiga ecozone, break the monotony of the flat, open expanses common in this region. Discontinuous permafrost impedes tree growth in many areas and restricts drainage in the lowlands, thus accounting for the abundance of lakes and wetlands in some locations. Muskeg, or spindly black spruce trees surrounded by large expanses of mosses, grasses, and shrubs, is prevalent in poorly drained locations. Willow and alder thickets also are distinctive in river corridors and in areas burned by fires. The region hosts a wide variety of edible plants and berries.

## **CLIMATE**

Situated within a continental climate zone and sheltered from maritime influences by the Alaska Range, the upper Tanana valley experiences the long cold winters, relatively warm summers, and low precipitation typical of the Subarctic. Daily temperatures in Tanacross range from an average low of  $-22^{\circ}$  F in December through February, to a mean high of  $+65^{\circ}$  F in June through August, with extremes of  $-75^{\circ}$  F and  $+90^{\circ}$  F having been recorded. Average daily temperatures at Northway range between  $-27^{\circ}$  F and  $+69^{\circ}$  F. The lowest temperature recorded in Northway was  $-72^{\circ}$  F and the highest was  $+91^{\circ}$  F. The growing season typically lasts about 100 days (Darbyshire and Associates 1980). Low humidity and infrequent winds diminish the severity of the harsh winter cold in parts of the area. Annual precipitation averages about 12 inches and occurs primarily as summer rain, much of which falls in August; the 30-40 inches of snowfall recorded each year usually accumulate throughout the winter months, since temperatures rarely rise above freezing between November and March. Ice begins forming on the Tanana River in October and usually begins to break up in early May.

Also characteristic of the Subarctic are the long days in summer and short days in winter; the sun is above the horizon for 18 to 21 hours each day in June and July, in contrast to the 4 to 10 hours of sunlight per day between November and March (Vitt 1971:30). The monotony of the long and dark winter nights is occasionally broken by brilliant displays of the aurora borealis.

## **LANGUAGE**

The Northern Athabascan language family consists of 23 languages, of which two—Upper Tanana and Tanacross—are spoken in the upper Tanana region (Krauss and Golla 1981). Upper Tanana is spoken in Tetlin and Northway, while Tanacross is the language associated with residents of Healy Lake, Dot Lake, and Tanacross. Linguists also have identified dialectal differences within these two languages among the traditional bands in the region: Upper Tanana has two dialects, one spoken by the Tetlin-Last Tetlin band and the other by the bands farther upriver (Lower Nabesna, now known as Northway; Scottie Creek; and perhaps Upper Nabesna-Upper Chisana). Within the Tanacross language there are slight dialectal differences between

the speech of the Mansfield-Kechumstuk band and that of the Healy River-Joseph band (McKenna 1981:563).

The Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages share some similarities with languages spoken in adjoining areas: Han (spoken in Eagle Village and across the U.S./Canada border in Dawson and Moosehide, Yukon) and the Mentasta dialect of the Ahtna language (spoken at Mentasta and in the general area of the Copper River headwaters). Indeed, speakers of the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages told McKenna (1981:563) they could converse more easily with speakers of Han, Ahtna, and Southern Tutchone than they could with Lower Tanana speakers.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, the upper Tanana people established and have maintained longstanding social and economic ties with these three neighboring Athabascan groups.

According to information posted on its Internet website [<http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/>], the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks estimates that there currently are about 100 speakers of Upper Tanana and approximately 65 speakers of the Tanacross language. Linguists have categorized both these and most other Alaskan Athapaskan languages as being “moribund” (Krause and Golla 1981:77). Efforts to revitalize these languages have included publication of a dictionary of selected terms in the Tetlin dialect (Milanowski 1979) and of a learning guide for the Tanacross language (Arnold et al. 2003).

## UPPER TANANA BANDS

Anthropologists working in the Subarctic generally agree on the difficulty in assigning a specific territory to a particular Northern Athabascan group. According to VanStone (1974:39-40), aboriginal Athabascan settlement patterns began to change soon after European contact and are not easily reconstructed (VanStone 1974:39-40). Furthermore, in her introduction to the Subarctic volume of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, Helm (1981:3) explained that establishing boundaries to tribal territories has been arbitrary. Local and regional bands sometimes shared occupancy and use of an area, and their range occasionally shifted in response to particular circumstances, such as the fluctuating availability of important fish and wildlife resources.

Historically, the upper Tanana people did not think of themselves as living in “tribes,” a relatively recent term connected with political recognition by the United States government. Neither did people reside in permanent villages as they do today. Instead they lived in small groups referred to in the anthropological literature as the *local band* (VanStone 1974:44; McKenna 1969:100). This group was usually little more than a large extended family centering on a core group of siblings, their spouses, children and extraneous relatives. The size of the local band varied, but usually numbered no more than between 20 and 75 people (McKenna 1969:102). When food became scarce the local band often segmented into smaller increments composed of paired nuclear families.

Two or more local bands often ranged over the same territory and under favorable conditions joined together to hunt caribou, for example, or fish for whitefish. In the literature, this larger group is often referred to as the *regional band*, and was sometimes as large as 200 or 300 people. Members of the regional band shared a common language and tradition, and were connected by a

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<sup>2</sup> Brooks (1901:389) observed that “The Indians of the upper Tanana have easy communication with those of the upper Copper River” while traveling through the area in 1899.



multitude of kin ties (VanStone 1974:45). Since relations between members of the regional band involved many ties of blood and marriage, individuals or families could easily shift their affiliations from one local band to another. This flexibility allowed for people to move in response to a shifting resource base. It also meant that the existence of the local band could be short-lived as people shifted from one band to another. The regional band theoretically had a much longer existence since all of the resources within a region were extensive enough to support all of its members over many generations. However, given that resource abundance varied over time, the composition of regional bands likely was fairly fluid.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were seven regional bands living between the U.S./Canada border and Healy Lake (McKenna 1959:17-18; 1980:564, 566; Guédon 1974:12; Pitts 1972). Each band had a number of camps and semi permanent villages within its territory. Territorial rights were held by common consent and could not be easily infringed upon, but intermarriage between bands carried obligations to share so that members of several bands often had access rights to a particular territory. Listed below are the 6 bands in the upper Tanana region described by McKenna (1959) and depicted in Figure 2 as Band Territories 2 thru 7. Note that we have not included McKenna's first group, the Delta-Goodpaster band (Band Territory #1), in this discussion because it lies outside the upper Tanana region as defined for this project.<sup>3</sup>

2. Healy River – Joseph – The Healy River band had a territory that included all of the Healy River drainage, over into the Middle Fork of the Forty Mile River in the north and the drainages of the Johnson and Gerstle rivers to the south. There were fishing villages at Healy Lake, Sand Lake and George Lake.
3. Mansfield-Ketchumstuk – Ketchumstuk and Mansfield had very close ties and overlapping territories. Ketchumstuk territory included the Mosquito Fork, the Middle Fork and the North Fork of the Fortymile River. Members of the band fished for whitefish at Mansfield during the month of July. Mansfield territory included the area around the Mosquito Fork of the Fortymile River to the north, the Tanana River to the mouth of the Tok River in the east, the Alaska Range to the south and the area around the modern community of Dot Lake to the west. Semi-permanent villages included Ketchumstuk (*Saagescheeg*), *Dihthaâd*,<sup>4</sup> and Mansfield. Descendents of this band now reside in the villages of Tanacross and Dot Lake.
4. Tetlin and Last Tetlin - McKenna (1959:18) and Guédon (1974:12) considered Tetlin and Last Tetlin to be separate bands, although there were very close ties between the two groups. In the Upper Tanana language Tetlin is called *Teetlaiy* or “Deep Water” while Last Tetlin is called *Nah K' and* (Halpin 1985). According to McKenna (ibid.), Last Tetlin was one of the only sites in the area that showed evidence of long continued occupation. The territory of the Last Tetlin and Tetlin people included the Nutzotin Mountains to the north, the headwaters of the Fortymile River, and along the Tanana River from the mouth of the Tok River to the mouth of the Nabesna River. The descendents of this band now live primarily in the village of Tetlin.

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<sup>3</sup> We have also not included Beaver Creek in this discussion, although it can be considered – linguistically – as part of the upper Tanana region. Beaver Creek is included in Easton's Ethnohistory of the Chisana Basin (2005).

<sup>4</sup> The spelling of Native place names is taken from sources cited in the text.

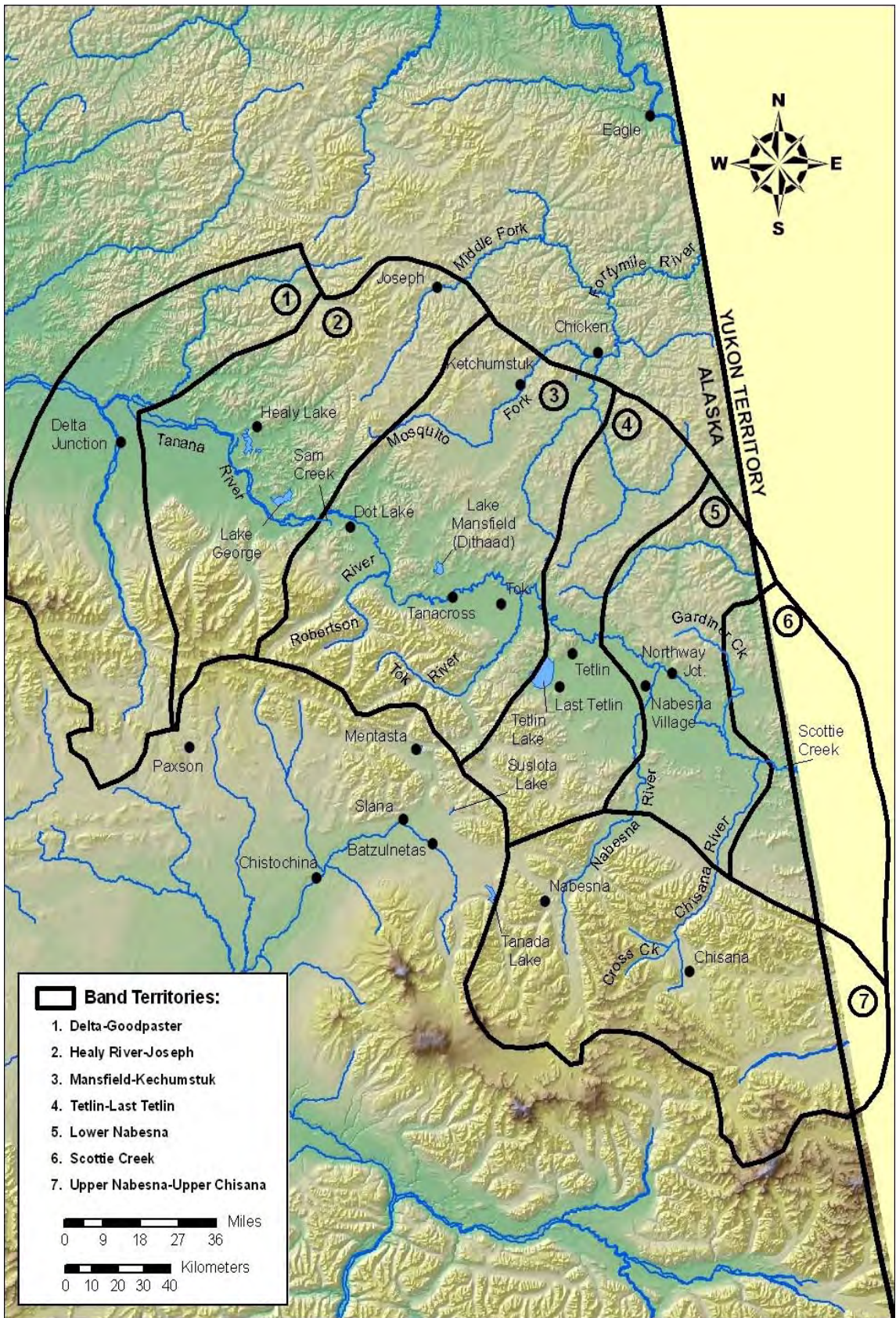


Figure 2. Band territories and villages, upper Tanana region.

5. Lower Nabesna – The territory of this band included the much of the Nabesna River to the south and the Ladue River to the north and along the Tanana River to about the mouth of Gardiner Creek (*Cheejil Niign*) (Yarber and Madison 1987; McKennan 1959:18).  
 Within this territory were a number of fish camps and semipermanent villages, such as *K'ehthiign* or “lake outlet,” also known as old Northway Village (Yarber and Madison 1987). Today members of the band live in the modern community of Northway, which is named after Chief Walter Northway.
6. Scottie Creek – McKennan (1959:18) reported that the territory of the Scottie Creek band extended from the mouth of Gardiner Creek on the Tanana to the mouth of the Snag River in the east. The anthropologist Norm Easton (2005) has documented a number of villages occupied by the Scottie Creek people at one time or another. One such village was *Theek'at* (“rock fishing place” in the Upper Tanana language), which came to be known as Scottie Creek Village (Yarber and Madison 1987). The Scottie Creek people never established a modern village and members of the band and their descendents now reside in Whitehorse, Beaver Creek, and in Northway.
7. Chisana-Upper Nabesna – The Upper Chisana/Upper Nabesna band (who were called *Ddhal Tot iin* or “Among the Mountain People”) hunted and trapped in the basins of the White, Nabesna and Chisana rivers and had semipermanent villages at the mouth of Cross Creek (*Nach'etay Cheeg* or “Animal Trail Crosses Mouth” in the Upper Tanana language) and the mouth of Cooper Creek (*Tthiixaa'* or “Brain Mouth” in the Upper Tanana language) where families spent the winter (Kari 1986). This band never established a modern village. Members of the band and their descendents now live in Northway, Mentasta, and Chistochina.

## **TERRITORIES AND TERRITORIALITY**

Although each upper Tanana band was associated with a specific geographic area within the region, the boundaries separating territories grew less precise as one moved farther away from the core area of the band. Boundaries usually were respected and before encroaching upon their neighbor's territory, members of neighboring bands were supposed to obtain permission from the leader of the band:

If Tanacross guy came over here, all right to hunt, if he goes with somebody. You go [to] Last Tetlin, any place, you have to go with them; [if Last Tetlin] people ask you to go with them, then it's all right for you to go. You can't go by yourselves. He who wants to go hunting [at] Last Tetlin had to ask Chief Luke, to ask everybody. Ask everybody, that's the way. Sometimes, a big bunch of people coming for caribou hunting. They got to ask, to let them know where they are going (cited in Guédon 1974:149).

Adherence to this unwritten rule, however, did not prevent bands in adjoining areas from working cooperatively or sharing resources in difficult times:

A band usually lived in its own territory but was not bound to it. It seems that the location of the “boundaries” depended on agreements with the surrounding bands, and [was] neither absolutely defined nor permanently fixed. A territory did not “belong” exclusively to anybody, although the people living there had the right of

limiting the coming of others. We will see that people could move freely wherever they had kin relatives and this made possible a greater freedom of movement (Guédon 1974:52).

While traveling from Valdez to Eagle City in 1899, U.S. Army Quartermaster's Clerk John Rice recorded two examples of how at least some upper Tanana Indians regarded territorial boundaries in the early days following western contact:

At this place [Mentasta Lake] we found camped some 20 prospectors and 3 of the Tetling Indians. From these latter we learned that all but 2 of the Mentasta Indians had died the previous winter and that the 2 survivors had joined the Ketchumstock Tribe. They were here to verify the report and, if true, to ascertain what the prospects were to obtain a winter's supply of fish. I noticed that they were heavily armed, and on making inquiry learned that they had no right in this section of the country and were prepared to defend themselves if necessary.

When we arrived at Ketchumstock our guide refused to proceed farther with us, as the law of trespassing on the territory of other tribes is rigidly enforced, the penalty being death if the invader is caught, unless he shows a permit from the chief of the country to travel through it. After a great deal of coaxing and promising to bring him tobacco, he finally consented to accompany us to Franklin Gulch (Rice 1900:786).

An 1898 military expedition headed by Lieutenant J.C. Castner observed an interesting encounter between Athabascan Indians from different regions. Castner had hired three Indian guides and packers, whom he referred to as "the Matanuska," "the Knik," and "the Upper Copper River Indian." The latter was recruited "at the forks of the Gakona River and entrance to the pass through the Alaska Range" when the man and his son were headed to the Tanana slopes of the Alaska Range to hunt caribou:

When almost through the pass of the Alaska range the Matanuska came running to me one morning during a heavy rainstorm and pointed off to a mountain about 2 miles away calling out "caribou" excitedly. I could not see any caribou, but saw something that looked like a man. With my glasses I made out clearly an Indian who had seen us and was following parallel to our course, running from rock to rock along the side of the mountains. We halted, and in about half an hour he grew weary of peeking at us from behind a rock and came running toward us. The nearer he got the more nervous the Knik and Upper Copper River Indian got. The Matanuska gazed carelessly at his approach. The first two feared he was a Tanana. Being on his hunting grounds, something one Indian seldom dare do to another, they feared he would kill them....(Castner 1899:258).

## **SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**

Prior to western contact and continuing into the early 1900s, all but one upper Tanana local band maintained a semipermanent winter village or base camp, usually located at a river or lake near the center of its territory, and had established several auxiliary camps at other strategic harvest locations. The lone exception was the Last Tetlin band, whose members inhabited a single camp located at a productive fishing site from which other vital resources also were accessible. As

testament to the long occupation and use of this site, McKennan (1959:47) reported finding “deposits of fish scales two to three feet deep” at Last Tetlin in 1930.

Shinkwin et al. (1980) analyzed data for post-contact Athabascan archaeological sites in the region and reached several conclusions about upper Tanana settlement patterns at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For six local bands, all five major fish and wildlife resources (caribou, moose, sheep, fish, and migratory birds) were available seasonally within a 40- to 50-mile radius of their base and auxiliary camps, and almost all resources could be obtained within a 20-mile radius. One or more key resources usually could be found within five miles of the central base camp or winter village, thereby providing the local band with immediate access to a reliable source of food in most years. Additionally, the proximity of the base camp, or “central node,” to a concentrated resource that could easily be stored for later use (e.g., caribou and whitefish) may have been a major factor in determining the location of these habitation sites.

The time and expense involved in building fish weirs and caribou fences at or near seasonal camps encouraged use of these communal harvesting tools for long periods or until the sites were no longer productive. Fishing activities were usually but not always associated with the winter camps, which might be occupied for several months during the year, while the outlying camps typically were staging locations for hunting big game and used at most for a few weeks at a time. During the transition to residence in semipermanent villages and then in permanent communities, the upper Tanana people continued to maintain and use their winter base camps for seasonal harvest activities.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS**

The available census data indicate that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were approximately 600 to 700 Native people living along the entire Tanana River. Petroff (in Rollins 1978) estimated that in 1880 the Native population of the Tanana River drainage was 700 people, and Allen (1887:137), who traversed the area in 1885, estimated that between 550 and 600 people lived along the length of the river. In 1893 the Anglican priest Jules L. Prevost (1893) compiled a census of the Tanana River and counted 699 Native people living in nine villages.<sup>5</sup> Census data specifically for the upper Tanana region became available after the 1890 census. Mansfield Village had a population of 73, while all the “upper Tanana river settlements” had reported a population of 203 people (Rollins 1978). Figures from the 1910 census show a population of 216 Native people living in villages between Healy Lake and Chisana, and the 1920 census enumerated a Native population of 277 people for the same communities (Table 1).

McKennan (1959:19) believed that between 1900 and 1930 there had been no “marked decrease in the [upper Tanana] population,” because deaths attributable to “white man’s diseases” had been offset by “the greater stability of the food supply, thanks to modern weapons, and by the decrease in deaths from war.” This is an interesting assertion, considering that people in the region had suffered through the 1918 flu epidemic, and may mean that the population had recovered by the time McKennan visited the region in 1930. Native people also told McKennan

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<sup>5</sup> In a letter from St. Michael dated July 3, 1893 from St. Michael, Prevost compiled a census for the Tanana River. The number of villages, 9, Population: 197 men, 178 women, 158 boys and 166 girls for a total of 699 people, 483 of which were baptized members of the Anglican Church.

**Table 1. Upper Tanana Census Data 1885-2000**

Location	1885 <sup>a</sup>	1890 <sup>b</sup>	1899 <sup>c</sup>	1900 <sup>d</sup>	1903 <sup>e</sup>	1905 <sup>e</sup>	1910 <sup>f</sup>	1920 <sup>g</sup>	1929 <sup>h</sup>	1930 <sup>i</sup>	1937 <sup>j</sup>	1940 <sup>k</sup>	1950 <sup>l</sup>	1960 <sup>l</sup>	1970 <sup>l</sup>	1980 <sup>m</sup>	1990 <sup>m</sup>	2000 <sup>m</sup>
Scotty Creek									25	24	17							
Chisana Area							17	95	16									
Northway Village							19		59	53	94	85	196	196	40	112	113	107
Northway																		19
Northway Junction																		72
Last Tetlin	86								18		25	19						
Tetlin	17	47					50	36	34	55	59	66	73	122	114	107	87	117
Ketchumstuk			50	21	42	20	44	23										
Kheltata's/Mansfield	52	73	65	15		27	57			39								
Tanacross								88		86	133	100	137	102	84	117	106	140
Paul's Cabin										8								
Dot Lake																		19
Dot Lake Village													56	42	67	70	38	38
Healy Lake		29					29	35		16	33	77			33	47	37	37
Sam Creek										13	29							
Sub-total		149					216	277		294		347	406	476	280	436	423	549
Tok Junction														129	214	589	935	1,393
Total														605	494	1,025	1,358	1,942

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Allen (1887); <sup>b</sup>Greenfield (1893); <sup>c</sup>Rice 1900; <sup>d</sup>Griffith 1900; <sup>e</sup>1900 U.S. Census; <sup>f</sup>Eagle Historical Society; <sup>g</sup>1910 U.S. Census;

<sup>h</sup>1920 U.S. Census; <sup>i</sup>McKenna (1959); <sup>j</sup>Dept of Interior; <sup>k</sup>McKenna Collection; <sup>l</sup>Episcopal Diocese of Alaska; <sup>m</sup>Rollins 1978; <sup>n</sup>Dept. Of Comm. 2001

<sup>m</sup>There is no 1920 census for Northway/Nabesna. Most of the residents of that area were enumerated in Chisana in 1920.

that their populations had been much larger prior to 1900 and that their villages and camps were annihilated by epidemics occurring just before the arrival of Euro-Americans (ibid).

Guédon (1974) heard similar statements when she was conducting fieldwork in the late 1960s. Native people, according to Guédon, maintained “that large villages or camps were drained of their population by epidemics before or just before the ‘coming of the white men’” (Guédon 1974:10), and she would not rule out the possibility that populations were larger. As she points out, “[a] difference of 20 to 50% would be sufficient to support the native point of view” (ibid.).

Since there are no good estimates of the aboriginal population, it is difficult to measure the exact influence of disease and epidemics. Most scholars agree that diseases introduced through contact with Europeans had a devastating effect on aboriginal populations. There is considerable evidence of major depopulation among neighboring Native groups in the Yukon Territory (Coates 1991:11). Certainly the people in the upper Tanana region endured several epidemics before the arrival of non-Natives in the area. When Allen visited in the summer of 1885, he noted signs of disease and was informed by one local leader “that there has been many deaths among these people” (Allen 1900:445). In 1899, the people residing at Mansfield told the military explorer Griffiths “a great tale of woe of how many Indians had died from which we understood that some epidemic had afflicted them” (Griffiths 1890:726). They may have been referring to the scarlet fever epidemic of 1868, a diphtheria epidemic that occurred in 1882 along the Yukon River (Osgood 1971:32), or an extensive measles epidemic on the Yukon River in 1883 (Fortuine 1992:214). At the time, Native people from the upper Tanana region were visiting trading posts located along the Yukon River at Nuklakayet (1868), Belle Isle (1880-1882), Fort Reliance (1874-1886), and Fortymile (1887) (Clark 1995:3), so it is very likely they were exposed to these diseases.

The census data support McKennan’s statement that the population did not decline between 1900 and 1930. The data also show that over time the population became consolidated or centralized into a few large settlements. The process of centralization has been observed throughout the arctic and subarctic regions of North America (Ellanna and Balluta 1992:53). In the upper Tanana region this process began at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century after non-Native traders and missionaries from the Episcopal Church moved into the area. Traders built stores at Healy Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, and mouth of the Nabesna River (McKennan 1959). The stores provided easy access to trade goods that induced people to build cabins and eventually settle nearby. This happened at Nabesna, Tetlin, Healy Lake, and to a lesser extent, Tanacross. In the case of Tanacross, the major impetus for centralization was the presence of a mission founded by the Episcopal Church. Established in 1912, the mission at Tanana Crossing attracted people mainly from Ketchumstuk and Mansfield, but also from villages as far away as Batzulnetas on the upper Copper River, and Salchaket on the middle Tanana River. The goal of the Church was to develop missions that would induce outlying groups of Native people to a place where they could be easily educated, given proper medical treatment, and kept from drifting toward towns (Rowe 1910-11:68).

However, the process of centralization was slow. Prior to World War II, Native people generally ignored the efforts of the missionaries to consolidate them into villages because their economy and pattern of living did not fit a sedentary existence. In Tanacross, for example, the missionaries aimed to create a stable community focused on the mission and school, and they attempted to convince parents to keep their children in school. At the same time the missionaries realized that families could not live unless the men were out hunting and trapping. In the 1920s

and early 1930s, families often pulled their children (especially boys) from school so they could help in the bush, but in the mid 1930s the U.S. government began to compel families to keep their children in school. As a result, families became separated during the winter months when the men and boys (who were in their late teens) were away trapping and hunting and the women remained in the village with the younger children. During World War II the local economy shifted as men gave up trapping in order to work at the various military installations in the region. By the end of the war in 1945, the local society and economy had made an almost complete shift away from the old seasonal way of life. Many of the seasonal camps and outlying villages, such as Ketchumstuk, Healy Lake and Last Tetlin, were abandoned as people settled permanently in one of the four modern communities, worked seasonally at odd jobs, and purchased groceries which had become more readily available because of the war and the development of the transportation infrastructure.

Cementing the process of centralization was construction of the Alaska Highway that began in 1942. The highway became the central transportation and communication artery for the region. The road provided access to food, medical care, jobs, schools, to other villages, and to the urban centers of Fairbanks and Anchorage. Airports at Tanacross and Northway extended the network of communication even farther. Tok Junction, which had originated as a highway construction camp at the junction of the Alaska and Glenn highways, became the regional center.

Highway construction led to an increase in mortality and sickness in the local Native population. The presence of military medical personnel along the construction route was a mitigating factor in the spread of disease but travel by Native people, as well as the nature of the diseases, carried sickness to outlying regions where medical aid was not readily available (Easton 2005:209). Healy Lake was hit especially hard during construction of the highway. In 1943, probably two-thirds of the Healy Lake people died within months. Most affected were young children and elders. According to Lee Saylor (Callaway and Miller-Friend 2001:143-144), Tanacross and Northway also were affected but the residents of those communities had access to medical care because of the military bases situated nearby. The mortality was higher at Healy Lake because medical treatment was not readily available. By 1946, Healy Lake had disappeared as a year-round village.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the community of Dot Lake came into existence.

Previously the Dot Lake area had been used for winter trapping by Native people from the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band (Marcotte et al. 1991:21). During construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942-43, a work camp called Sears City was built at Dot Lake. In the winter of 1946-47 a family from a small settlement called Paul's Cabin, located on the Tanana River, moved into the deserted camp. A year later a family from Tanacross relocated to Dot Lake, followed by families from George Lake and Sam Lake in 1950 (Martin 1983:18). Between 1947 and 1950, missionaries built a lodge, church, and school.

One of the objectives of this project is to look at the longstanding relationships between Athabascan people living on the upper Tanana River and the neighboring Ahtna. Wheeler and Ganley (1991) have documented the relationship between the Ahtna and the Athabascans living along the Tanana River, and these connections are clearly longstanding. In his ethnography

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<sup>6</sup> Some families continued to return to Healy Lake for summer fishing and at least one family established a permanent residence there in 1947. The village was re-established in the early 1980s (Callaway and Miller-Friend 2001:xii).



McKenna (1959:21, 23) noted the close relationship between the upper Tanana and the Upper Ahtna people. During the winter of 1929-30 McKenna visited the village of Cooper Creek, located at the confluence of Cooper Creek and the Nabesna River. At the time the families of Chisana Joe, Nabesna John, Scottie Creek Titus, and Andy Toby were living there. Joe and John were brothers and their sister Corinne was married to Titus, who was from the village of Scottie Creek located on the U.S./Canada border (McKenna 1959:121). These families are the ancestors of the Albert and Frank families of Northway, and ancestors of the Sanford and Justin families of Nabesna Bar, Chistochina, and Mentasta (Reckord 1983:230).

Analysis of U.S. census records also reveals other relationships between the Upper Ahtna and upper Tanana communities. For example, the 1910 census taken at Ketchumstuk records the presence of an Upper Ahtna family of five from the village of Batzulnetas. One of the daughters in this family was married to a local man. According to oral tradition, this family first moved to Tetlin. At some point one of the daughters married a man from Ketchumstuk who had traveled to Tetlin to attend a potlatch. Later the rest of the family moved to Ketchumstuk, in part to take advantage of the opportunities for wage labor offered by the gold mines on the upper Fortymile River (Simeone n.d.).

The census taken at Mansfield village in 1910 reveals that several Upper Ahtna had married into the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band. A brother and sister from the upper Copper River village of Mentasta had married into the group, as had one of the other daughters of the Upper Ahtna family living in Ketchumstuk. A second man from Mentasta also had married into the band, as had a woman from Suslota who married a local "rich man" or leader. An analysis of the 1920 census shows that the Ahtna family, resident at Ketchumstuk in 1910, had moved to Tanacross. In addition, an Upper Ahtna man from Batzulnetas had also married into the community.

Some time between 1910 and 1920, tuberculosis took the lives of at least nine Ketchumstuk residents. The Episcopal priest, Frederick Drane, vividly described the effects of tuberculosis on the population. After visiting Ketchumstuk in 1918 Drane wrote,

At Ketchumstuk was the pitiful sight of a dying village. Even in the eight years of my acquaintance with the Indians of this place about half have died of tuberculosis, and the doom of the remaining four families was written in the scrofulous sores, the sunken cheeks and the prominent eyes (Drane n.d.[b]:185).

Two brothers living in Ketchumstuk lost all of their immediate family and moved to Nabesna, where they remarried and started new families.

By 1930 Ketchumstuk had been abandoned and most of the families had moved to Tanacross. Additionally, the majority of families who resided at Mansfield village had relocated to Tanacross, although people were still living at Sam Creek and Paul's Cabin. In 1937-1938, L.R. Wright<sup>7</sup>, a nurse employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, took a census of all the communities in the upper Tanana region. Tanacross was the largest Native community with a population of about 133 people, followed by Nabesna or Northway with a population of 94. Analysis of the family names at Tanacross for 1937-38 finds residents coming from a wide area including the

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Robert McKenna Collection, University of Alaska - Fairbanks Rasmussen Library Archives, Series 2 /Box 12 / Folder 2.

Upper Ahtna villages of Batzulnetas and Mentasta and the middle Tanana villages of Minto and Salchaket. The Nabesna census shows people from Last Tetlin and Tetlin, Ketchumstuk, Mansfield, Scotty Creek, and Mentasta living there, while the census taken at Tetlin recorded people originally from Chena, Scottie Creek, Nabesna, Mansfield, Ketchumstuk, and Mentasta.

## **GEOGRAPHIC PLACENAMES**

The intimate connection of Alaska Natives to their homeland is symbolized by the names they assigned to natural features and places. An Inuit from Pelly Bay in the Canadian Arctic made the following eloquent observation about the role and importance of place names to Native people who spend much of their lives traveling on the land, but an upper Tanana Indian might have offered a similar explanation:

All the lakes where you can find fish or caribou have names. That is the only way we can travel. The one way we can recognize lakes is by their names. All the larger mountains and hills, they have names. Sometimes we name them on account of their size or because of their shape. The names of places, of camps and of lakes are all important to us, for that is the way we travel—with names. We could go anywhere, even to a strange place, simply because places are names. That would be how we would find our way. It is the way we can find how far we are from camp or from the next camp. Most of the names you come across when you are travelling are very old. Our ancestors named them because that is where they traveled (Brody 1976:198).

A comprehensive discussion of upper Tanana placenames is beyond the scope of this report, but they have been reasonably well documented and described by other researchers (Andrews 1980a; Mishler 1986; Halpin 1987; Kari 1997; Easton 2005). The extensive inventory of documented place names reflects the detailed knowledge the upper Tanana Indians had of their environment; the fact that elders have recounted detailed information about these landscape features more than a generation after the nomadic way of life had ended also epitomizes the cultural significance of placenames and the importance of being intimately familiar with the environment.

Examples of the rich and detailed cultural information embedded in placenames in another park area are found in *Native Place Names of the Kantishna Drainage*, a report prepared for the Denali National Park and Preserve (Gudgel-Holmes 1991). The Kantishna report is much more than an inventory of placenames and for many entries includes cultural and historical information about the site and in some cases a quotation from the author's primary consultant. Gudgel-Holmes also explains that placenames convey a variety of information beyond simply labeling a geographic feature:

The most prominent information that is conveyed by place names deals with the occupation of the land and the delineation of band or language territory. But names also describe hunting techniques, food preservation methods, trails, transportation routes, population centers, beliefs, resource use, the economy in general, clues to the identity of past inhabitants, but never personal names... (Gudgel-Holmes 1991:3).

The inventory of upper Tanana placenames recorded by Kari (1997) does not include all of these categories and lacks the contextual information provided by Gudgel-Holmes but is nonetheless very descriptive. Examples include: Lower Scottie Creek ("rock weir stream"); Big John Hill

(“mountain of interconnected waters”); East of Last Tetlin village (“where game fence goes into water”); lake above the mouth of Cross Creek (“chasing game into water lake”); lake near Gardiner Creek (“winter muskrat den lake”); Dennison Fork (“obsidian river”); a blueberry picking hill in the lower Tetlin River drainage (“berry trail goes up-mountain”).

## SACRED GEOGRAPHY

Especially for ceremonial purposes, each upper Tanana band was linked to a named hill or mountain near its winter camp (e.g., Tetlin Hill and Mansfield Hill) that served as a symbol and landmark and was referred to as “our grandpa” or “our grandpa’s face” at potlatches or when people were traveling (Guédon 1974:147). Six Mile Hill (*Taiy Tsadlh*) is a culturally significant location for the nearby residents of Tanacross. It was an ancestral habitation site and a place at which moose and caribou were snared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes in cooperation with people from Mentasta and Nabesna (Simon and Gelvin-Reymiller 2002).

Julius Paul from Tanacross said that hills were like flags because they represented the people, but they were also representations of a good leader. In the following quote Julius first explains that a mountain in the Alaska Range called *Na Dang Hu* (‘Marmot Tooth’) stands for the people of Mansfield and is representative of a strong leader. A smaller hill called *Maseeen Siitsii*, located close to Mansfield, was next in importance. Julius then goes on to name other villages that have leadership landmarks associated with them. He also points out that small outlying camps were not in the same category as places like Mansfield and Tetlin, so they had no landmarks.

*Na Dang Hu* is for Lake Mansfield, like American flag. Then *maseeen siitsii* is next, like the Alaska flag, underneath *Na Dang Hu*, which is greater than *maseeen siitsii*.

*Dihthaâd*... [the leader there] this is great man, that kind of man, this, who is the good lead man. That is why they call this [hill], just like lead man, smart man in the village to lead people use to be that’s why they call this [hill, *Na Dang Hu*], higher than other one. In old days they use to say Mansfield use to lead all over, Healy Lake, Mentasta, Northway, Tetlin, Ketchumstuk, lead the village, that is why they call this our flag.

Tetlin hill, Northway same way too. Mentasta same way [the hill is named *Mendaes Dzele*]. Healy Lake same way [i.e., similar to Tetlin and Northway]. Paul’s Place is just like camp ground so there is no place [hill] like that. Mansfield use to be lead for all those guys. Copper River is different, different chief. Ketchumstuk has two different kind of hill, *Udzee Nathel* is one but cannot remember the name of other. Same [or similar] as *Na Dang Hu*. Billy Creek, Sam Lake are just like out camps and have no hill attached to them. George Lake use to have a village but no more (Simeone n.d.).

## TRAILS AND TRAVEL ROUTES

I grew up on Indian trails, hunting for food, touching small pieces of the enormous areas that were under the control of clans already ancient by the time of the arrival of the white man. I roamed freely at first, enjoying the never-ending skies held up by hard-running ridges and ice-covered mountaintops that glittered in the sun—my own version of gold fever, if you will (Justin 2005).

The above quote is from an Athabascan man born and raised in the upper Tanana-Upper Ahtna borderlands area and exemplifies the close connections Native people had (and to some extent still have) to their physical environment. Prior to settling in permanent communities, the upper Tanana Indians were constantly out on the land, moving frequently throughout the year to and between seasonal camps, trading posts, and other locations. Well-used overland trails, some of which probably originated and doubled as game trails, radiated across upper Tanana territory at the time of western contact and facilitated travel within the region and into neighboring areas. Some trails were used primarily by individual bands to access hunting areas within their territory and might only be used seasonally, while others extended into and through the territory of other bands and might be used throughout the year.

Aboriginal travel routes often took the path of least resistance, following naturally cleared corridors, such as rivers, exposed ridges, and low mountain passes, and peaked in importance when foot travel and dogsleds were primary modes of transportation. Use of trails declined in the 1940s, as permanent roads were built in the region and the nomadic way of life gave way to residence in villages. Continuing in use, however, were some trails leading to hunting, fishing, trapping, berry-picking, and woodcutting areas.

The upper Tanana Indians had a keen understanding and awareness of the landscape—both out of necessity and because they spent so much time out on the land traveling in search for food and other vital resources. Trail protocols apparently were strict; people traveling from neighboring areas knew when they were entering upper Tanana territory and often were reluctant to proceed unless and until they had obtained permission from the local band leader(s).

Historically, one could tell whether incoming traffic was family, invited guests, or strangers simply by noting which trail was being used in what part of the region. Simply put, strangers were relegated to one side of the river, while the clans and families would be on the other (Justin 2005).

Adherence to such protocols probably was most important when upper Tanana people traveled into Upper Ahtna territory and vice-versa. As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, however, unwritten rules also governed travel across band territories within the upper Tanana region—except when resources were scarce and freedom of movement to find food was essential to survival of the group.

Trails through wooded areas often were marked to provide important information to travelers. An Upper Ahtna narrative by Huston Sanford in the collection assembled by Kari (1986) describes how one trail in Upper Ahtna and upper Tanana territory<sup>8</sup> was marked and what information was conveyed by the trail markers. According to Sanford, people made blazes on the trees or brush to indicate their destination and what type of game, if any, they had harvested. He likened these blazes to leaving a written note on the trail (Sanford 1986:156-157) that contained important information to subsequent travelers.

Travel by water was accomplished using birch bark canoes and skin boats prior to introduction by fur traders in the 1920s of western-manufactured boats and outboard motors (McKenna 1959:92-94). The flat-bottomed birch bark canoes were favored for water travel due to their

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<sup>8</sup> This trail ran “from Nabesna to Batzulnetas and to Slana to Chistochina and Mentasta and Tanacross” (Sanford 1986:156).

light weight and transportability. Measuring from 12-16 feet in length and about two feet in width, the 40-pound canoes could easily be carried from lake to lake but could carry only one or two passengers and little cargo. Paddles were about seven feet long with a pointed two-foot blade and fashioned from a single piece of dried birch (Vitt 1971:104).

Skin boats were about 17 feet long, four feet wide and two feet deep, and fashioned by lashing untanned moose or caribou skins (with the hair removed) to a wooden frame. These boats were used to cross rivers and could carry a dozen or more people or an equivalent weight in cargo. They were propelled by several paddles on each side and steered by another paddle placed in the stern and operated by a helmsman.

Appendix A presents a more detailed discussion of overland trails and travel routes in the upper Tanana region. It is accompanied by a series of maps depicting some routes documented by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources in its trails inventory, including several trails that linked the upper Tanana region to Upper Ahtna territory.

## CHAPTER 3

### ECONOMY

The Athapaskan subsistence economy, prior to direct contact with Europeans, was based on a cyclical pattern of hunting, fishing, gathering, and trade. Subsistence provided the basic necessities while trade, carried on through networks which stretched from Siberia to Canada, provided locally unavailable resources... (Simeone 1981:9).

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the Native economy prior to sustained western contact in the upper Tanana region and examines changes that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century after people began settling in permanent communities. Our discussion focuses on the annual cycle or seasonal round of harvest activities during this transitional period and assesses the influences of western contact on the traditional economy. Economic interactions are one important measure of the enduring ties between the upper Tanana Athabascans and their Upper Ahtna neighbors, and are examined when documentation is available.

The aboriginal upper Tanana Indians were semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers who moved seasonally throughout the year within a reasonably well-defined territory to harvest fish, wildlife, and other renewable resources. Keenly attuned to their environment, small family groups closely monitored weather patterns and animal movements to plan and conduct their harvest activities. Although the food quest was an ongoing pursuit, major resources usually were most abundant—and sometimes only available—for short periods at certain times of the year; consequently, failure to secure a surplus at these optimal times jeopardized the food security of the band during the long winter and early spring months when critical resources usually were scarce or unavailable.

#### FLORA AND FAUNA

The major animal, fish, bird, and plant species found in the upper Tanana region, listed in Tables 2 to 4, are typical of those found throughout the subarctic boreal forest. Because the abundance and availability of some resources fluctuated greatly from year to year, the upper Tanana Indians relied to varying degrees on a wide range of resources for food, fuel, clothing, tools, and shelter. Even then, and despite their intimate knowledge of the environment, food shortages were not uncommon.

The upper Tanana local and regional band economies at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century retained many of their traditional features and resembled those of other subarctic Athabaskan groups. Access to western trade goods beginning in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—first through Native intermediaries and then at trading posts outside the upper Tanana region—provoked some changes in the annual cycle and influenced the emphasis placed on particular resources.

Chief Sam was a 60-year old leader of the Upper Nabesna regional band when Robert McKennan interviewed him in 1929. Here is how he described the late 19<sup>th</sup> century seasonal round of his band:

In the old days the people seldom stayed in the village. Always they were on the trail, hunting and camping. In July whitefish were dried and cached at the Fish

Table 2. Fish and mammal resources used by the upper Tanana Athabascans.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Upper Tanana Name <sup>1</sup>
FISH:		
Arctic grayling	<i>Thymallus arcticus</i>	<i>Seejiil</i>
Broad whitefish	<i>Coregonus nasus</i>	
Burbot/Lingcod	<i>Lota lota</i>	<i>Ts'aan</i>
Chinook/king salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	
Coho/silver salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	
Dolly Varden	<i>Salvelinus malma</i>	
Humpback whitefish	<i>Coregonus pidschian</i>	
Lake trout	<i>Salvelinus namaycush</i>	
Least cisco	<i>Coregonus sardinella</i>	
Longnose sucker	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	<i>Taats'adn</i>
Northern pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>	<i>Ch'uljuudn</i>
Round whitefish	<i>Prosopium cylindraceum</i>	
Salmon, unspecified		<i>Luugn delt'al</i>
Sockeye/red salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>	
Whitefish, unspecified		<i>Luugn, Luuk</i>
MAMMALS:		
Black bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>	<i>Shoh</i>
Caribou	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	<i>Udzih</i>
Dall sheep	<i>Ovis dalli</i>	<i>Dibee</i>
Grizzly bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>	<i>Ch'iliithoo'</i>
Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	<i>Diniign</i>
Beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>	<i>Tsa'</i>
Ermine	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	<i>Nihbaaiy</i>
Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	<i>Niiduuiy</i>
Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>	<i>Tsuugn</i>
Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>	<i>Tehts'oo/Tehtsoon</i>
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	<i>Dzanh</i>
Porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	<i>Ts'it</i>
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	<i>Noogaaiy/Naagadn</i>
Red squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	
River (land) otter	<i>Lutra canadensis</i>	<i>Ntsiq</i>
Snowshoe hare	<i>Lepus americanus</i>	
Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	<i>Thiikaan, Shyoo</i>
Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo</i>	<i>Nahtsia'</i>
Weasel	<i>Mustela nivalis</i>	<i>Nihbaaiy</i>

Sources: Guédon 1974; Milanowski 1979; Martin 1983; Halpin 1987; Marcotte et al. 1992.

<sup>1</sup> Tanacross Athabascan words for fish, wildlife and plant species were not available for inclusion in Tables 2 – 4 at the time this report was published. The junior dictionary compiled by Milanowski (1979) includes Upper Tanana Athabascan terms in the Tetlin dialect for some but not all of the species listed in these tables.

Table 3. Migratory and upland game birds used by the upper Tanana Athabascans.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Upper Tanana Name
<b>MIGRATORY BIRDS:</b>		
American wigeon	<i>Anus americana</i>	<i>Shah saiy</i>
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	<i>T'aaxadn, Xah</i>
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	
Common goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	
European wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	<i>Shah saiy</i>
Greater scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>	
Greater white-fronted goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	<i>Dzanthat</i>
Green-winged teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	<i>Tuhtsil</i>
Lesser scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	<i>Nal thoo</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	<i>T'aiy choh</i>
Northern pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	<i>Dzehnia</i>
Northern shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	<i>Dilahchuiiy, Dalahtag</i>
Oldsquaw	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	
Sandhill crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	
Snow goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>	
Surf scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	<i>Taatsqq'al</i>
Swan	<i>Cygnus spp.</i>	<i>Taagoh</i>
White-winged scoter	<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	<i>Nal</i>
<b>UPLAND GAME BIRDS:</b>		
Ruffed grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	<i>Ch'ahtagn</i>
Sharp-tailed grouse	<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus</i>	<i>Tsqq'ts'uu</i>
Spruce grouse	<i>Dendragapus canadensis</i>	<i>Daih</i>
Willow ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>	<i>K'atbah</i>

Sources: Guédon 1974; Milanowski 1979; Martin 1983; Halpin 1987; Marcotte et al. 1992.

Camp [near the mouth of the Nabesna River]. Then the people went moose hunting, caching the meat. In the winter they visited the caches and then when the caribou came they killed caribou. After the moose season the people went up to the head of the Nabesna to secure sheepskins for winter. Then they would return to the village; make their clothes; and then take the winter hunting trails to Ladue Creek, the Chisana basin, and the White River. In the spring when the leaves were coming out they returned to the village. They would take birch bark and sew it together to make new tents and then wait for the caribou to come back again (McKenna 1959:46).

This general description characterizes the annual cycle of most upper Tanana bands prior to sustained western contact and underscores the importance of whitefish, caribou, and moose as foundations of the aboriginal diet; not mentioned are secondary resources taken opportunistically or when primary foods were unavailable, and harvest activities that became more important during the fur trade era. Moreover, as Guédon explained in her discussion of the upper Tanana seasonal round,



...local factors are preponderant in the organization of subsistence activities. In [describing] the yearly cycle, informants from different villages emphasized different elements, different kinds of game, and different forms of cooperative and individual activity. Furthermore, any situation, stable as it might seem, was at the mercy of possible shortages of food and other unexpected events.... (Guédon 1974:40).

Table 4. Selected plant resources used by the upper Tanana Athabascans.<sup>2</sup>

Common Name	Scientific Name	Upper Tanana Name
TREES:		
Balsam poplar	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	
Paper Birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	<i>K'ii</i>
Spruce	<i>Picea glauca</i>	<i>Ts'oo</i>
Willow (sp.)	<i>Salix sp.</i>	<i>K'qi' ch'ia</i>
PLANTS:		
Alpine berry	<i>Arctostaphylos alpine</i>	
Bog blueberry	<i>Vaccinium uliginosum</i>	<i>Jign</i>
Bog (lowbush) cranberry	<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	<i>Ntl'at</i>
Crowberry/blackberry	<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>	<i>Naht'ia/Dalts'iign</i>
Currant	<i>Ribes sp.</i>	<i>Nany nuul</i>
Highbush cranberry	<i>Viburnum edule</i>	<i>Tsqq'theel</i>
King bolete ("birch mushroom")	<i>Boletus sp.</i>	<i>Ch'inaiy'</i>
Labrador/Hudson Bay tea	<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i>	<i>Ch'ilaak'qiy'</i>
Lambsquarter	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	<i>Koo'</i>
"Muskrat Cache"/ "Roots"	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	<i>Niitsil/Dzanh tsa</i>
Nagoonberry	<i>Rubus arcticus</i>	<i>Dant'ot</i>
Orange bolete ("cottonwood mushroom")	<i>Leccinum sp.</i>	<i>Ch'inaiy'</i>
Pea-vine root ("Indian potato")	<i>Hedysarum alpinum</i>	<i>Tsuu</i>
Raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	<i>Danch'ogn</i>
Rosehips	<i>Rosa acicularis</i>	<i>Nchoo</i>
Salmonberry/cloudberry	<i>Rubus chamaemorus</i>	<i>Dankaal</i>
Stoneberry	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	<i>Dindaih</i>
Wild rhubarb/sour dock	<i>Polygonum alaskanum</i>	<i>Ts'iigoo'</i>

Sources: Guédon 1974; Milanowski 1979; Martin 1983; Halpin 1987; Marcotte et al. 1992.

Environmental variations and the differential distribution of resources in the areas north and south of the Tanana River are examples of the "local factors" to which Guédon refers, and influenced the availability of certain fish and wildlife species in particular locations. Although the boreal forest hosts an array of plants and animals, some resources are cyclical, fluctuate in their availability, and can be both "abundant and unpredictable" (Guédon 1974:343). Caribou usually were more numerous and present for longer periods north of the Tanana River, for

<sup>2</sup> Table 4 lists only some plants used by the upper Tanana Indians for food, medicine and other purposes. Halpin (1987) identified additional plants and their uses in Tetlin. Priscilla Russell Kari (1985) compiled a more exhaustive plant inventory based primarily on her interviews with elders in Tetlin and Northway.

example, while waterfowl, muskrats, and whitefish typically were more reliable resources in areas to the south. However, any or all of these resources could be scarce during a particular year if they had altered their migration pattern or been impacted by inclement weather or disease. These circumstances have resulted in starvation and food shortages being a common theme in the Northern Athabascan literature.

Chief Peter of Tetlin described to McKennan (1959:37) a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century famine, when caribou were scarce, few salmon ascended the Yukon and Copper rivers, and many people starved in the upper Tanana region. The Tetlin Indians reportedly survived by eating muskrats and roots stored in muskrat caches. The expedition led by Lieutenant Henry T. Allen through Ahtna and upper Tanana territory in the spring of 1885 not only observed the food shortages in Native encampments not uncommon at that time of year but itself endured hardships; the Indians in both regions generously shared their meager reserves with or sold food to the expedition (Allen 1887).

While mapping the route for the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) along the Goodpaster River at the western border of upper Tanana territory in January 1903, a survey party headed by Lieutenant William “Billy” Mitchell encountered a Han Indian man, David, and his family huddled in a spruce bough lodge along the trail awaiting their fate. Through his Indian guide, Chief Joseph, Mitchell learned that,

....It had grown cold so quickly that [David] was unable to get sufficient caribou meat to last him through the winter. The snow was so light that the game ran right through it, but it offered the maximum impediment to snowshoes. He had only killed a couple of caribou since the middle of November, and for over a month they had subsisted on the moosehide contained in their moccasins and the sinews out of their snowshoes, had eaten one dog and were about to eat the others. All these Indians seemed perfectly numb, mentally and physically, so exhausted were they. A white man under the same conditions would have frozen and died long before (Mitchell 1982:70).

Mitchell had his men collect firewood for the family and supplied them with food and rifle ammunition before resuming their survey work. Upon returning to “the Indian David’s camp” about two weeks later, Mitchell reported that the family was recovering well. David had killed two moose, “which put him on easy street for the rest of the spring,” and expressed his gratitude to Lt. Mitchell by giving him a moosehide bag filled with 14 dark sable skins “perfectly matched for color and size” (Mitchell 1982:89).

Chief Oscar Isaac of Tanacross recalled that sometime in the 1920s Sanford Charley of Batzulnetas saved Oscar’s family from possible starvation. While hunting with another family along the Tok River one winter, the group endured a cold spell during which their only food was a few rabbits.<sup>3</sup> Sanford Charley rescued the two families and took them to Batzulnetas “where they were able to regain their strength” (Simeone and Mishler 2006:158).

Inter-regional cooperation between the upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna bands was important as a safeguard against food shortages and enabled local and regional bands to obtain resources not readily available in their own territory:

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<sup>3</sup> Ahtna elders have described grayling and hare as “starvation foods” that lacked enough fat or grease to provide adequate nutrition (Reckord 1983a:36), even though these resources often were available when others were not.

...The Mentasta group made spring and fall caribou hunts in the Kechumstuk area. The people from Tanacross/Mansfield Lake, Tetlin, Northway/Nabesna and Chisana would come to the Upper Copper to fish for salmon in times when food resources in their areas were poor. The people from around Batzulnetas hunted large game in the region of the Chisana band.... Also in times of extreme hunger in winter the Upper Tanana and Upper Copper groups might move to the two lakes in the Gulkana/Lower Copper region which had fish. In addition, salmon was traded among these groups for fur; that is, blankets made of marten, lynx, and other furs. Thus a network existed over a wide region for sharing of food resources, and this network was particularly active in years when there was a shortage of food in one of the regions (Strong 1976:74).

Subarctic Athabascans thus recognized the importance of protecting and conserving natural resources, and relied on the “accumulated experience of their own lifetimes and the lessons passed along from earlier generations” (Nelson 1986:212) to maintain healthy animal populations:

Athabaskan traditions teach that everything in nature is fundamentally spiritual and must be treated with respect. This includes not only avoiding waste, but also following an elaborate code of morality toward plants, animals and the earth itself. For example, if an Upper Tanana man kills a wolf, he should never touch it until he formally apologizes and explains that his family needs it. Children are taught not to bother bird nests or eggs, because all living things are kin to people and must be shown proper respect. Upper Tanana hunters also learn that they should never brag about their success or ability to kill game. Anyone who ignores this may be killed by one of the animals he has offended (Nelson 1986:213).

“Old timers” told a long-time resident of Healy Lake about a winter in the early 1930s when it rained in December and the weather then turned very cold in a vast area extending from the Robertson River and Alaska Range east to the Canadian border. This caused ice to crust in Dall sheep habitat in the mountainous areas, reportedly resulting in hundreds of sheep starving to death. Animals that descended to river valleys were vulnerable to predators (Kirsteatter 2002). Such weather conditions most likely impacted other wildlife resources as well and jeopardized the food security of the local bands.

The upper Tanana Indians attempted to improve their odds in countering or overcoming the natural unpredictability of resource abundance by becoming intimately familiar with and respecting the boreal forest environment. At an early age, children began learning about the behavior and correct treatment of animals, as disrespecting natural things could have dire consequences for the band. As we have seen, however, even if animals were treated properly and taboos observed, food shortages still occurred.

According to Guédon (1974:29),

The animals sharing the land with the Upper Tanana Indians were considered almost like partners of Indian daily life. As the source of food and as living beings they had to be treated with respect. Children were taught early not to disturb nests or eggs, not to bother helpless babies of any kind. No animals except dogs could be brought up as pets. When it was possible, an effort was

made by the hunters to kill the adults rather than the young animals. For instance, it was wrong to kill a young moose calf; a good hunter would rather wait a year. Generally speaking, one was not allowed to kill anything without use. To kill something one would not eat was a waste and a “sin” sanctioned by bad weather, bad luck or worse.... Animal life was not supposed to be different from human life and the same moral rules applied to the relationships between men and between men and animals....

In addition to adhering to a code of behavior, people observed a variety of taboos designed to prevent misfortune or bad luck. Many of these taboos were associated with hunting or some other aspect of the food gathering process, thus underscoring the importance of these activities for survival of the group. McKennan (1959:167-168) recorded several examples of this type of taboo:<sup>4</sup>

- During his wife’s pregnancy, a man may not kill either a bear or an otter. To do so would bring about the death of the child. For the same reason, a man may not bring the body of a lynx into camp during his wife’s pregnancy.
- Ravens, cranes, wolverines, foxes, otters, and dogs must never be eaten.
- The flesh of the bear is taboo to women.
- The heads of caribou, moose, and sheep may not be fed to the dogs; to do so would bring the hunter poor luck.
- Neither the bones nor the carcasses of fur-bearing animals may be fed to dogs, but must be cached in a safe place. Should the dogs get them the hunter will take no more fur.

David Paul (1957b:3), who was raised in the Mansfield-Tanacross area, added several restrictions applicable to young boys: They could not eat fat from around an animal’s eye until adulthood. They had to avoid eating soft caribou horn that is just starting to grow or the boy would have a “heavy mustache.” Finally, boys were not to eat the milk bag of cow caribou or they would gain too much weight to be a fast runner and not be an effective hunter.<sup>5</sup>

## **SEASONAL ROUND**

The seasonal rounds for the upper Tanana Athabascan bands located north and south of the Tanana River are discussed separately to acknowledge minor regional variations in the annual cycles of resource procurement. Although subtle and a matter of degree rather than scale, these differences illustrate variations in local adaptations to the boreal forest environment. With some minor exceptions, however, upper Tanana bands pursued the same primary resources and used the same harvest technologies and preservation methods at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The

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<sup>4</sup> McKennan (1959:162-169) lists many other taboos, omens, and animal beliefs and practices observed by the upper Tanana Indians. Many of these reflect the importance of respecting animals, which at one time had human traits and enjoyed family and clan relationships.

<sup>5</sup> See Vitt (1971:123-125) for an extensive list of taboos concerning the harvest, use, or disposal of animals recorded in his upper Tanana fieldwork in 1970.

primary sources for this presentation—McKenna (1959), Vitt (1971), and Guédon (1974) — are not cited in the text unless a specific quotation is used, and should be consulted for additional details about the aboriginal seasonal round.

### **North of the Tanana River**

At the time of western contact, the Mansfield and Ketchumstuk bands inhabited territory that extended roughly from the Middle Fork of the Fortymile River south to the Tanana River, and from the Mosquito Flats east to the Ladue River (Fig. 2). In the words of one Tanacross elder, “These people [Ketchumstuk] and Mansfield were all like one people. Just all one tribe” (Andrews 1981). The bands maintained semi-permanent villages at Lake Mansfield and Ketchumstuk but spent much of the year at temporary camps in outlying areas. Archaeological investigations at *Dihthâad* or “deep creek”, located on Fish Creek one-half mile below Mansfield Village and about six miles northwest of Tanacross, yielded evidence indicating that upper Tanana Athabascans had inhabited this site for hundreds of years (Shinkwin 1979) and attests to the longstanding cultural significance of this area.

***Spring and summer:*** After a typically long and cold winter, people eagerly anticipated the arrival of spring. Fishing at Mansfield Lake and Fish Creek for whitefish, northern pike, and grayling began in the late spring and continued until mid-July and was a major harvest activity; whitefish was an especially important and perennially reliable food source. All band members except the very young children assisted in harvesting and processing the catch.

Grayling, pike, suckers, and lingcod usually were not targeted species but some were captured in the traps and dipnets. Pike sometimes were taken with a long spear fashioned from birch wood with three sharp points that resembled a pitchfork. Standing in shallow water, the fisher speared the pike as they swam by and flung them on the shore for later retrieval.

The spring fish harvest provided a welcome dietary change after a long winter of eating mostly dried fish and meat. Fish not eaten fresh were processed and dried on racks for later consumption. Both fresh and dried fish were cooked in boiling water, produced by placing heated stones into a birch bark basket. Another preservation method probably used by the Mansfield and Kechumstuk bands is described by a woman from the Goodpaster River near Healy Lake:

Some fish they dried and some they put in the ground. They would dig a long hole in the ground and put poles all over the bottom and then line the whole thing with birch bark. Then everyone would bring this fish and the Chief would mark this fish and this fish and this one and this one and they were to be his. Then all the fish, but not the livers, they put in the hole and covered with more bark and then dirt.

About Christmas time the Chief would make a big speech and point at this one and that one to go dig up this hole. The fish was soft and smelled strong but they would pull it out and start cutting off chunks and eating it.... But first the Chief would take the fish he had marked for himself. As soon as this fish was out of the ground it froze and everybody filled their sled and away they went. That night they would have a big feast (Anderson 1956:11-12).

Upper Tanana families with ties to the Upper Ahtna Indians sometimes hiked to the Copper River to fish for salmon during the summer months, since this species was not available in the upper Tanana River drainage.

One elderly man [from Dot Lake] recalled childhood experiences at his family's fish camp on the Copper River [in the early 1900s]. During the months of May, June, July, and August, they harvested king, silver, red, pink, and chum salmon with a fishwheel. This man's father operated the fishwheel and women cut the fish and hung them on racks near the river to dry. Both men and women tied the dried fish for packing and storage.... Three pairs of wooden poles were driven into the ground, and three lengths of split willow shoots were laid on the ground, one against each pair of poles. The dried fish were placed between the poles with their heads facing outward. After 40 fish had been stacked, the willow shoots were tied together, first in the middle around the tails and then at each end. The resulting bundle of dried fish did not come apart and could easily be carried to a cache for storage.

In addition to being consumed by the family, some fish were traded for imported food products or given away to friends. Most of the salmon was used for feeding dogs, which were essential for hauling wood and meat, and providing transportation or packing capabilities for hunting and trapping trips. "Rotten fish" was prepared by burying cleaned salmon in an underground cache during the summer months. When retrieved, the fish steamed and emitted a pungent aroma. Rotten fish pieces were dipped briefly in boiling water and administered as a cure for heart trouble (Martin 1983:80-83).

Early in the summer, several young men were directed to climb a hill east of Mansfield Lake and watch for caribou migrating from the north.<sup>6</sup> Upon spotting caribou, the men set a signal fire to alert other band members at the fish camp, at which time most adults left the camp armed with bows and arrows to participate in the hunt. Another caribou hunt occurred in mid-summer, when caribou calves were targeted in the area south of Mansfield Lake. Women preferred the dark fur and lightweight skins of young caribou for making clothing.

During the summer, moose feed on young willow shoots, which produces tender meat and a thick and oily layer of fat that people valued for the grease it yielded (Martin 1983:36). Several methods were used to hunt moose in the summer. A lone hunter concealed himself along a well-traveled moose trail after placing several braided babiche snares in the trail. When a moose stepped into the snare, its movement was impeded long enough for the hunter to dispatch the animal with bow and arrow. In wooded areas a straight fence was erected with snares placed at intervals. Dogs sometimes were used to drive the moose into the fence and snares.

Ahtna men from Mentasta sometimes joined the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band for moose hunting in late summer in areas north of the Tanana River. Such hunts typically involved men who were hunting partners or who had kinship ties to bands in the Suslota and Batzulnetas area.

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<sup>6</sup>See Murie (1935: Plate 1) for photographs of two traditional caribou lookouts in the Ketchumstuk area. One is a spruce tree with a platform placed on branches near the top and limbs cleared away to aid the observer, while the second is a more elaborate structure fashioned from poles fastened by willow withes.

Migratory waterfowl and game birds were a valued source of fresh meat. Grouse and ptarmigan were taken opportunistically throughout the year with bow and arrows or with snares and fence-snare arrangements:

Grouse were sometimes snared by using a circular fence-snare set-up. The fence would be used especially during the mating season when the males drummed and fought one another. Willow branches were erected in a circle with two parallel open-ended fences dissecting the main circular body. Snares would be set up along the outer fence as well as in the two entrances and along the length of the parallel inner walls. It is said that such a trap often resulted in capturing ten or more mating males in a short time (Vitt 1971:164-165).

Fewer ducks and geese migrated through the region than in some areas south of the Tanana River, but they were easily captured when molting. Men in birchbark canoes quietly approached waterfowl in bays and coves and shot them with bow and arrows. Women placed snares over waterfowl nests with eggs to entangle birds upon their return. Women and children then caught the birds and collected eggs from their nests. Brooding females with ducklings were left alone.

Beginning in late spring and continuing throughout the summer and early fall months, both adults and children gathered a variety of plants and vegetative materials. Berries, edible roots, and assorted plants were eaten fresh, preserved for later consumption, or used for medicinal purposes. Birch bark and spruce roots were needed to make baskets, cooking vessels, tools, cradleboards, and canoes.

**Fall:** Caribou hunting during the fall migration involved the use of fence, corral, and snare complexes and was a seasonal activity critical to the survival of the upper Tanana people. The most prominent fence in Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band territory was about 20 miles long and “extended from a few miles beyond Lake Mansfield on down the Mosquito Fork nearly to Ketchumstuk” (McKenna 1981:566), while smaller ones were constructed in other upland locations. A Dot Lake elder told Martin (1983:44) about a caribou fence used when his father was a boy that ran from the headwaters of Chief Creek across Bear Creek and down to the Robertson River. McKenna (1969a:100) considered the caribou fence in either of its two forms to be the most important technological device used by Alaskan Athabascans.<sup>7</sup>

Neighboring Indians from as far away as Dawson often hiked to Ketchumstuk to collaborate with the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band in using a caribou fence to harvest large numbers of caribou during the late spring and early fall migrations. Upper Ahtna Indians from Mentasta sometimes traveled more than 200 miles (round trip) to Ketchumstuk to procure caribou and ensure they had sufficient dried meat to make it through the winter (Strong 1976:62; Reckord 1983a:29). The adult men and pack dogs employed a relay system to transport the fresh caribou meat back to Mentasta (Ainsworth et al. 2002:19). An adult dog might be expected to carry as many as two hind quarters for short distances. The Upper Ahtna continued this practice until at least the late 1930s. Near Lake Mansfield in May 1937, the archaeologist Froehlich Rainey encountered

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<sup>7</sup>“Upper Tanana fences were of several kinds. One form consisted of two converging lines of felled timber, the apex of which might or might not be filled with snares. Men and women combined to drive the animals into the cul-de-sac where they were easily dispatched. Another type consisted of a long, straight fence set with snares at intervals, into which the animals were driven” (McKenna 1959:48).

“Mentasta Johny [sic] and friend near Fish Creek where they had shot 7 caribou” (Froehlich G. Rainey Papers, diary entry for May 23, 1937).

According to McKennan (1981:566), caribou “were taken in such quantity that the band was able to subsist largely on the dried meat throughout the winter.” While this was perhaps the ideal situation and might have been the case during McKennan’s visit in 1929-30, it disregards the numerous accounts of food shortages among the upper Tanana Indians like those described earlier in this chapter. It also may underestimate the role of fish in the traditional diet, although McKennan does acknowledge the increasing importance of fishing in the post-contact era.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the observations of early day travelers suggest that caribou were scarce in the upper Tanana region in the 1880s and 1890s, before the population peaked at an estimated 568,000 animals in the 1920s (Murie 1935:6).<sup>9</sup> Such population fluctuations during a relatively short period inevitably caused the upper Tanana bands to exploit a variety of resources to ward off starvation. According to Heffley (1981:141), the upper Tanana Indians “must have relied more heavily on other, more evenly spaced, resources” when caribou numbers were low.

Moose hunting in the fall was either an individual pursuit or group activity. A lone hunter might follow fresh moose tracks for hours or days and kill the animal after it bedded down. Several men sometimes hunted moose together, placing snares at intervals along a brush fence at the base of a hill. Some of the hunters positioned themselves at the opposite side of the hill before daylight, and then shouted at the approaching moose or set fires to drive the startled animal over the hill and into the awaiting snares. Hunters using bow and arrows killed animals not caught in the snares.

A moose taken a long distance from camp was skinned, gutted, cut into six pieces, and cached in spruce boughs until it could be transported back to the camp. Oscar Isaac of Tanacross described the processing of a moose and the use of its various parts:

After a moose was killed, its ears and head skin were placed high in a tree to give thanks to its spirit and to insure future hunting success.

The moose was laid on its back or side on a slight natural incline and skinning proceeded from the throat area down to the groin with cuts extending to each knee joint. The hide was then stripped with the meat kept on it to prevent it from being soiled by dirt or hair which taints the meat rapidly. Next the head was cut off at the joint where it is attached to the body. The body was placed on its left side and the meat dissected from along the back and ribs—this produced the brisket and rib cuts from one side. The animal was then reversed and the same cuts taken from this position.

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<sup>8</sup> According to McKennan (1959:35-36), “In any event fishing apparently did not play the important part in the Upper Tanana economy that it has among most other Northern Athapaskan tribes.... Such is not the case on the Upper Tanana where fishing is largely confined to the single month of July. While the first fresh fish are eagerly sought by the Indians, the dried fish and frozen fish are put up largely for the dogs and are only eaten by the Indians when no meat is to be had. The coming of traders with their market for dog food and the great increase in the number of dogs owned by the Indians themselves are modern factors that have operated to increase the importance of fishing, but in spite of these it is still of secondary importance.”

<sup>9</sup> Skoog (1968:267) cites several late 19<sup>th</sup> century observers who saw little evidence of caribou or of caribou use by the local Indians during their visits to the upper Tanana region.



The stomachs were carefully taken out being careful not to cut into its contents. The windpipe was cut close to the throat and along with the intestines were [sic] washed, taken out and set aside. The windpipe was discarded while the intestines were washed, cleaned, turned out and hung to dry. Later they were rendered out for their fat content. The stomachs consist of three separate digestive systems; all three were cleaned and saved with the third or last stomach later used to store grease. The second stomach was washed and cleaned for later use as food. Likewise, the largest or main stomach was emptied of its contents and cleaned out to be later eaten. All three stomachs were considered edible.

The large intestine begins at the lower end of the stomach and is carefully cut out whole while the smaller, lower intestine was split open, cleaned with a knife and hung up to dry.

The fat around the kidneys was carefully put aside to be later rendered into high-quality grease for cooking. The heart, liver, stomach linings and large intestines were prepared by roasting. The lungs were not eaten unless a period of starvation was present.

After the innards were cleaned and prepared, the legs were cut off at the knees, and the remaining fore and hind quarters cut off for easier handling. The long bones were kept for their marrow and grease content and were cooked down in camp.

Favorite portions of the moose were the head, the ribs, the marrow, as well as the embryo. The head, with all its parts, was the most favored and was reserved solely for men—it being taboo for women unless she was old and could have no more children.

The hide was used for clothes, packs, bench covers and cut into lines, snares, etc., as the need arose. Little of the animal was wasted in the old times (cited in Vitt 1971:156-157).

Moose meat was eaten fresh or preserved. If warm weather prevailed in the early fall, the meat was cut into thin strips and dried for later consumption. More typically, meat was frozen and stored in high caches. Moose antlers in the velvet stage were roasted in a fire, the seared skin covering peeled off, and the softer inner section consumed. Similarly, moose hooves and legs were boiled in a large birch bark basket, the fur and skin stripped off, and the meat, hooves, and sinew eaten. One recipe for “Indian ice cream” consisted of dried and pulverized tenderloin that was blended with moose grease in a birch bark container until the mixture was light and fluffy.

The Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band employed several methods to hunt Dall sheep in late summer and early fall in local mountainous areas (e.g., at the headwaters of the Robertson River) or as far south as the Mentasta Mountains. A man hiding behind a rock blind constructed near sheep trails called the sheep; as an inquisitive approaching sheep stopped to locate the source of the bleating, the hunter shot it through an opening in the blind with a bow and arrow. Sometimes a hunter crouched behind a natural barrier downwind from the approaching animals, leapt out and stabbed the sheep behind the shoulder. The terrain in sheep country favored use of snares placed at the heads of draws, into which several men drove the sheep to kill them. Kenny Thomas, Sr., of Tanacross described traditional sheep hunting in the Alaska Range:

...We got place down here they call Sheep Place. People used to go there all the time. In my Dad's days, they kill it with a bow and arrow. Anywhere from thirty to forty sheep come through that place where they lick salt. They call it, Ch'entaaga. Ch'entaaga is a place where all the animals go for salt. When a whole bunch of sheep come there, then the people get behind it, get over the hill (Thomas 2005:193).

Dall sheep were a desired source of food and material for clothing and tools, but were of minor importance because of the difficulty in hunting them and the small amount of meat each animal yielded. The tallow-rich ribs were favored and eaten fresh, while the meat was dried and the skins used to make winter clothing. Spoons and dippers were fashioned from the horns.

Grizzly bears were both feared and respected animals throughout Athabaskan territory and in the upper Tanana region were hunted only by skilled and brave men. A lone hunter approached a feeding bear surreptitiously and shot it with a blunt arrow in order to antagonize the animal. The bear typically turned toward the hunter, who now was kneeling on one leg with a long spear by his side. When the bear charged, the hunter raised the spear and aimed for the bear's jugular vein in the lower throat area. If the thrust was successful, the spear was braced on the ground while the bear struggled until it choked on its own blood and died. The hunter might hasten the process by striking the weakened bear with a heavy caribou horn club that was strapped over his shoulder and under one arm. A successful bear hunter gained prestige and status in the camp.

To take a black bear, the hunter mimicked the call of a raven. The bear responded, believing that the raven was scavenging nearby on a dead animal, and was either speared or clubbed to death.

Only women past childbearing age and men were allowed to eat bear meat but bear fat had many uses in the camp. Berries were preserved in bear grease and the fat was used as tallow to make candles. Hides were tanned and used only by men for sleeping robes and bedcovers. Some bear meat was fed to the dogs.

**Winter:** At the first snowfall and until the following spring, the regional band typically divided into smaller local bands and moved to semi-permanent camps where fish and meat had been cached for consumption during the winter months. Food reserves often were limited in winter, making it impractical for the larger regional band to remain intact.

When game is scarce... people must separate into smaller groupings of perhaps only three or four nuclear families which spread out over a wide area. Of course, small groupings like this were in touch with one another and thus ready to help each other in times of difficulty. People felt free to move back and forth between groupings and to hunt outside their usual areas when game was scarce (VanStone 1974:40).

Despite the cold temperatures and short days in winter, the food quest continued. Men on snowshoes tracked caribou and moose when conditions permitted and shot them with bow and arrow. If animals were hard to find or hunters had experienced bad luck, a shaman might be consulted for guidance. A shaman communed with the spirits and could predict changes in the weather, the appearance of caribou, or the success of a hunting party. A Tanacross elder gave an example of this consultation process:

...a number of hunters approached the shaman previous to leaving for an important hunt. They wanted to know if they would have luck and bring home meat for their families. The medicine man built a little mound of snow, sat on it, and told the men to cover him up with snow until he could not be seen. He instructed them, once he was covered, to cut willow spears and throw them into the snow pile. If the spear stuck in the snow and it shook, this man would have a successful hunt. If it just stuck but didn't move, the success was in question. If it fell out, the man would have no luck no matter how hard he hunted that day. Only one spear was usually shaken by the medicine man, and this selected hunter would set off knowing that the spirits would help him that day, and that he would be successful in the hunt. Often this little spiritual confidence enabled the hunter to achieve the needed results (Vitt 1971:122-123).

If a hunter located a bear den and determined that it was occupied, he prodded the hibernating animal with a spear or long pole, or started a fire at the entrance and smoked it out. As the annoyed bear exited the den, it was stabbed with a spear or shot with a rifle. Occasionally a wall of stones was erected in front of the den to offer the hunter some protection from the bear and the same procedure followed to dispatch it.

Small game could be found throughout the year but often was targeted in winter, especially when other resources were unavailable. At the peak of their cycle, snowshoe hares were abundant and could easily be chased down and clubbed to death or called by a hunter lying in wait. Dogs were used to chase a porcupine up a tree, from which it could be dislodged and clubbed behind the head. To procure muskrats, a man or woman cut a hole in the top of a muskrat cache and either speared the exiting animals or lured several of them into a hoop net.

Lynx were targeted in early winter for their meat, oil, and fur. Hunters placed snares in lynx trails to capture the animal or deployed dogs to chase the lynx up a tree where it could be dispatched with bow and arrow. Prior to the fur trade era, other furbearing animals—red fox, land otter, marten, mink, wolf, and wolverine—were taken by bow and arrow or in deadfall traps as needed for using in making clothing.

McKenna (1959:60-62) and Vitt (1971:166-174) describe the various types of snares and deadfalls the upper Tanana Indians used to catch game animals, furbearers, and wildfowl, and Vitt has reproduced diagrams of these tools as published in other ethnographies. Firearms eventually became the weapon of choice for taking big game animals and wildfowl, but use of snares and deadfalls (along with metal traps) to take furbearers continued at least into the 1930s.

### **South of the Tanana River**

McKenna (1981:564) subdivided the Upper Tanana Indians inhabiting the area south of the Tanana River in 1929-1930 into five regional bands, which were described in Chapter 2 (see Fig. 2). McKenna (1959:18) and Guédon (1974:12) distinguished between the Tetlin and Last Tetlin bands, but for purposes of this discussion we have combined them to correspond with the band area boundaries delineated by McKenna and because these two bands exploited the same general geographic area.

- The *Tetlin - Last Tetlin bands* used an area ranging from the Nutzotin Mountains north to the headwaters of the Fortymile River, and from the mouth of the Tok River to Nabesna; the Last Tetlin local band also inhabited a village site near a

lake at the base of the Nutzotin Range. The territory of these two bands was generally west of the area exploited by other bands, although harvest areas sometimes were shared.

Case (1986:19-25) describes in more detail the territory of the remaining four bands that are affiliated with Northway Village, based on her 1984 fieldwork in that community. The traditional areas of these four bands encompassed the Chisana and Nabesna river drainages, the head of the White River, Snag Creek in Canada, part of the Ladue River, and the area between these rivers:

- The area inhabited by the *Lower Nabesna (Old Nabesna) band* included the lower Chisana River from Gardiner Creek to its mouth, the lower Nabesna River from approximately the Cheslina River to its mouth, and the confluence of these two rivers with the Tanana River. They used the upper Ladue River drainage, as well as lakes and streams south to the Black Hills east of the Nabesna River. This group maintained a summer fish camp about 7 miles upriver from the mouth of the Nabesna River.
- While maintaining seasonal encampments on lower Scottie Creek and Desper Creek (“High Cache”) as late as the 1940s, the *Scottie Creek band* used the area from the mouth of Gardiner Creek on the Tanana River south to the mouth of the Snag River on the White River in western Yukon Territory. This included Mirror Creek, lower Stuver Creek, and the Island Lake area.
- Finally, the territory of the *Upper Nabesna-Upper Chisana bands* centered on the headwaters of the Nabesna and Chisana rivers and their tributaries, and included the Chisana, Nabesna, and White river basins. These groups ranged west along Jack Creek to Slana and Batzulnetas. For many years they had a winter camp at the mouth of Cross Creek in the Chisana valley and later used one seasonally on the east bank of the Nabesna River near the mouth of Cooper Creek.

These two bands once had separate but adjoining territories. McKennan (1959:17-18) described these two bands as one and assigns to them the same territory. He reasoned that the Chisana gold stampede in 1913-14 sufficiently depleted wildlife resources in Chisana band territory to require its merging with the Upper Nabesna group. Moffit and Knopf (1909:14) visited the area prior to the Chisana gold rush and described the “Chisana Natives” as being more independent than those at Batzulnetas and Nabesna, due to their isolation and limited contact with white people. This isolation soon disappeared. Northway residents interviewed by Case also described the Chisana people as a group with a “chief” that had a village on the upper Chisana River and used areas extending into Upper Nabesna and Scottie Creek band territories.

***Spring-Summer:*** While other bands in this area dispersed in the spring, the Last Tetlin band remained at its winter hunting camp, which was located in a productive fishing location and doubled as a summer fish camp. Fishing for whitefish began as soon as the ice moved out in March and April and continued until mid-July, with cylindrical fish traps and large dip nets at

weirs built across streams near the outlets of lakes like those described for the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band being used. Constructing and operating weirs and processing the large numbers of whitefish typically harvested were labor intensive activities requiring the participation of most able band members. Lieutenant Henry T. Allen recorded his observations of fishing at “Nandell’s Village” [Last Tetlin] in early June 1885:

The food of the natives at this season is chiefly fish, taken in the stream by means of a dip-net which just fills the channel, made narrow by means of small spruce piles driven side by side. Here there were several kinds of them, including pickerel, suckers, grayling, and two varieties of whitefish. The “catch” in the single dip-net supplied all, and from each fisherman Nandell exacted a royalty. Some one was on the fishing-stand with net in hand day and night.... (Allen 1887:76).

The Lower Nabesna band also fished with weirs and dip nets at locations used every year or as long as they remained productive:

Hundreds of fish were netted in a few hours during a heavy run when several men operated two or three nets in rotation, emptying a full net while dipping another. Fish were cut and hung to smoke and dry at once, children carrying loads of fresh fish to women at family cutting tables until everyone had enough. People smoked and dried their fish at the camps. A portion of the processed fish was carried to a winter camp location. The rest was cached for later retrieval in the fall and winter, for use at camps which served as a winter base of activity, such as Scottie Creek and Fish Camp (Case 1986:26).

McKenna observed pike fishing using different gear on a small lake near Tetlin in early March 1930, where warm springs kept the water open, and described it as follows:

The place was literally alive with small pickerel [northern pike] about four to seven inches long. The Indians were flipping them out by the hundreds by means of a small wire hook attached to a small stick. Not much sport and the fish are too small to eat so the Indians boil them up for dog feed and dog feed is an omnipresent factor in northern life (Mishler and Simeone 2006:99).

Upon arriving at Batzulnetas early in June 1885, Lieutenant Allen found “quite a number” of upper Tanana people there for salmon fishing. They probably were members of bands from south of the Tanana River. Allen reports that people frequently put dip nets in the water to determine if the migrating salmon had yet arrived (Allen 1887: 68-69).

The Tetlin-Last Tetlin and Lower Nabesna bands inhabited territory that was prime habitat for migratory birds and attracted more waterfowl than did areas north of the Tanana River. Eggs were collected and hunting with bows and blunt arrows<sup>10</sup> for ducks, geese, and swans began as

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<sup>10</sup> In the report of the 1899 Copper River Exploring Expedition, Oscar Rohn noted in his summary of exploration in the Wrangell Mountain district that the Nabesna Indians were using bullets, knives, and arrow points made of native copper. The copper reportedly was obtained at four different places, including a site on a tributary of the White River and at other locations farther west on the headwaters of the Tanana and Nabesna rivers (Abercrombie 1900c:111). Copper was commonly used by most upper Tanana bands for making arrow points and knife blades prior to the introduction of steel (McKenna 1959:52, 58).

soon as the birds nested at the many small lakes in the area. After being plucked and cleaned, the birds were cooked in boiling water and consumed.

Muskrats also flourished in the wetlands areas south of the Tanana River and were an important source of food in the early spring before their mating season, at which time the meat developed a musty flavor and was relegated for use as dog food. Prior to western contact, hunters in lightweight birch bark canoes employed a vocal call to attract muskrats and shot them with bows and arrows. Canoes constructed of canvas over a wood frame and .22 caliber rifles later replaced this traditional harvest method. Muskrats also were speared in their houses and tunnels. To prepare a muskrat for consumption, the animal was suspended over a fire to burn off its hair and char the skin, then split into chunks and boiled.

The pelts of muskrats taken before spring breakup (and in late fall before lakes froze solid) were fashioned into parkas, mitts, boot inserts, and sleeping robes. This traditional use declined after traders arrived in the region during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and exchanged cash or credit for prime muskrat pelts, which were in high demand at that time.

Caribou were targeted during their late winter – early spring migrations through Tetlin-Last Tetlin band territory and later in the spring in areas frequented by the Nabesna and Chisana bands. Men set snares to catch caribou along fences located on Ladue Hill and at Chisana.

Rabbits were a source of food throughout the year and were hunted using a variety of methods (Vitt 1971:129-133). One technique employed in late summer involved women and children (and, in some cases, all able-bodied camp members) conducting a rabbit drive. This was an especially productive activity in years when rabbits were at the high end of their population cycle. Snares were set when rabbit tracks were located, at which time people encircled the area and drove the rabbits into the snares.

Women collected a variety of edible roots, plants, and berries until the first frost. Although nominally less important than fish and wildlife as a food source, plants such as wild rhubarb, Labrador tea, raspberries, blueberries, and cranberries provided essential nutrients and added variety to the diet, and were preserved for use throughout the winter. Birch bark and spruce roots were collected for use in making baskets and other implements used in the camps.

Ahtna men from Mentasta with kinship ties to upper Tanana bands south of the Tanana River sometimes collaborated on moose hunts in the late summer. These hunts sometimes extended over large areas ranging as far away as the Nabesna, Chisana, and White rivers. When hunters built a fire to inform other band members at the main camp that a moose had been killed, this was a signal that they should come to the kill site and aid in processing the meat. Hunters periodically burned hillsides and areas near a good water source at the base of small hills, to promote regeneration of the area with willows and grasses favored by moose.

**Fall:** Fishing in small streams near the lake outlets continued after the first frost. Traps, set nets, and spears were used to catch large numbers of pike and migrating whitefish until ice closed off the streams. Fishing for small pike was an important activity in the fall. Halpin described use in Tetlin in the late 1980s of this time-tested technique for catching small pike, which closely resembles the summer harvest method previously described by McKennan:

Just prior to freeze-up, usually near the end of October, yearling pike (5” - 10”) referred to as “pickle,” are harvested in small sloughs, rivers, and along lake shores. They are taken with a *sal*—a handcrafted hook attached to a long wooden

pole that resembles a gaff.... Since they are taken in the fall, they are also easily frozen and stored in outdoor caches.... "Pickle" taken earlier in the fall are often used as bait [on a hand-held line and hook for catching burbot] (Halpin 1987:51).

The harvested fish were frozen, placed in birch bark baskets and stored in outdoor caches for later consumption and to feed dogs.

Before snowfall prevented travel in the mountains, some local bands moved into the high Nutzotin drainages and passes to hunt sheep, occasionally harvesting moose and caching the meat along the way. In years when caribou migrated through the lower Chisana River drainage enroute to Canada, members of the Chisana band hunted them in the Scottie Creek area. Lower Nabesna band members often camped in the hills surrounding the Ladue River when searching for caribou.

**Winter:** Although some caribou wintered in the area between the heads of the Chisana and White rivers, large numbers often migrated through the region for several weeks beginning in late November. A successful winter hunt, using fences and snares, might produce enough meat to sustain the band until spring. The harvested animals froze quickly and often were stored above ground on platforms or under logs to deter wolves and wolverines.

Fishing continued until the ice thickened and open leads could not be maintained. Hunting for snowshoe hare, ptarmigan, and grouse continued throughout the winter, with moose being sought if food reserves were running low.

The upper Tanana bands took a much-needed break from hunting in December for a month-long winter festival at the winter camps, a period observed by games, riddle contests, and storytelling. It occurred after the winter caribou hunt, when the band typically had sufficient food on hand and could temporarily set aside their worries. Families assembled in the lodges and listened to the elders tell stories, some of which could not be told at other times of the year. The period was sometimes called "hook game month," in reference to a game the people played that essentially served as a gift exchange:

Both men and women played this game which was quite simple. The paraphernalia consisted of a wooden hook suspended from a short pole by a piece of babiche. This was dangled in the door of a lodge, the player remaining hidden. The owner of the lodge would attempt to guess his visitor's name, and the proper answer brought forth an affirmative jerk of the hook. He would next attempt to guess what gift his visitor desired, and again a jerk of the hook indicated the correct answer. Often a small bit of fish, caribou skin, or fur was attached to the hook as an aid to the guesser. The desired gift having been ascertained, it was forthwith placed on the hook, and the player went his way. The end result of this game was an exchange of presents between every family in the camp (McKenna 1959:104).

Food reserves at the camp often were depleted by the end of the winter festival, so when it ended young men traveled to nearby caches to retrieve meat that had been stored there during the fall hunts.

Furbearer trapping occupied the winter months, with each local band typically using areas within its own territory. Lifting-pole snares and deadfalls were used to capture fox, lynx, marten, wolverine, rabbits, and ground squirrels. Several families joined forces to hunt muskrats prior to spring breakup.

## THE PARTNERSHIP SYSTEM

Cooperation and collaboration both within and between bands persisted as fundamental characteristics of the upper Tanana food quest at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the communal efforts involved in operating fish weirs and caribou fences, the partnership system was a critical form of collaboration when resources were scarce and helped to ensure survival of the group. McKennan (1959:50) characterized the upper Tanana partnership system as being a “formalized institution,” rather than “enlightened social consciousness.” As recently as the 1960s, Guédon (1974:134-136) found that longstanding partner relationships continued to guide many of the social interactions in Tetlin, especially among the older people.

Partnerships were established among men of different clans and usually from different bands within the region (e.g., Lower Nabesna and Tetlin, Mansfield-Kechumstuk and Lower Nabesna). Such alliances also were formed within the Chisana-Upper Nabesna band, while some members of the Mansfield-Kechumstuk band had Upper Ahtna partners from Mentasta. Having a partner from a different band made strategic sense by providing each partner with access to resources over a larger geographic area. A man might enter into more than one partnership but usually selected as his partner, or *kla*, a brother, his sister’s husband, or a cross-cousin. These arrangements could be short-term or lifetime alliances, and might involve both families sharing a dwelling if circumstances warranted. The wives of partners had less formalized relationships than did the men.

Specific rules governed hunting partnerships. A successful hunter gave the best parts of a harvested animal to his partner, lest he gain a reputation as being greedy, and was expected to give half of his harvest to his partner when food was scarce. A man who continually defied the cultural norms usually lost his *kla* and was unable to establish a new relationship. One partner was expected to assist the other if attacked by a bear, even if doing so put his own life at risk. Should death occur, the surviving partner made a full accounting of the incident and explained to the family his actions to offer aid, lest he be banished or killed for neglecting his responsibilities.

## FUR TRADE

The fur trade and associated western trade goods introduced significant socioeconomic and cultural changes to Alaska Native cultures, beginning in the coastal areas in the 1700s and over time expanding into more remote areas of the interior via the major river systems and western Canada. Evidence documenting the nature and extent of these changes among the upper Tanana Athabascans prior to sustained western contact is limited, but they occurred more gradually and arguably were much less destructive than the devastation inflicted on coastal Natives by Russian entrepreneurs. As long as their homeland remained isolated, the upper Tanana band economies essentially retained their aboriginal underpinnings and continued to revolve around seasonal movements to areas where fish and wildlife were abundant and could be harvested most efficiently.

Prior to the late 1800s, the upper Tanana Indians had experienced only limited direct exposure to western society, although they were introduced to trade goods earlier in the century. According to Brooks (1900:492), “The Upper Tanana Indians obtained their first knowledge of the outside world by the products of civilization which they obtained through the Coast Indians of Lynn Canal.” This was an outgrowth of a trade network between the Chilkat Tlingit and Canadian Athabascans that originated early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Tlingit tradition, intermittent



trade originated between the Chilkat Tlingit and Canadian Indians in northwest British Columbia and southern Yukon Territory long before western merchants arrived in southeast Alaska, with Tlingit expeditions traveling inland to exchange, in formalized transactions, dried fish and eulachon oil for furs and dressed skins (Olson 1936).

By about 1800, the coastal Tlingit began acquiring western commodities from Spanish, Russian, British, and American traders and were firmly established as middlemen in the trade with interior Athabascans (Strong 1976:150). The powerful Chilkat Tlingit regulated this trade by controlling the passes to Lynn Canal and blocking direct contact between interior Indians and trading vessels on the coast (McKenna 1959:29). The geographer Aurel Krause verified this phenomenon while working in Tlingit territory in 1881-82:

The Chilkat were the middlemen between the interior and the coast and they guarded this position so zealously that for a long time they would not allow any white man to go into the interior and they still try to prevent the American fur traders in every way from trading directly with the Athapascans. Several times during the winter of 1881 to 1882 these Athapascans came through the pass laden with the results of their hunting, skins of all kinds, among them beautiful furs of black and silver fox which bring the highest prices. But only one of them, a blood relative of one of the Chilkat chiefs, was allowed to deal directly with the whites, the rest all had to leave their wares with the Chilkat for comparatively low prices (Krause 1956:134).

Consequently, the upper Tanana Indians traded furs to Kluane Lake Tutchone middlemen, in exchange for such commodities as iron tools, tobacco, glass beads, dentalium shells, blankets, and Chilkat ceremonial robes. Trade negotiations at North Fork Island on the White River near the Alaska-Yukon border apparently took on a festive tone, with the upper Tanana and Kluane Indians camping together “amidst much singing, dancing, and merrymaking” (McKenna 1959:129). Enroute home from these expeditions, the upper Tanana sometimes exchanged trade goods with the Ahtna.

A Russian-American Company trading post was established at the mouth of the Copper River in 1788 and later moved to Nuchek on Hinchinbook Island near present day Cordova. Lower Ahtna Athabascans, who controlled access to most sources of native copper in the Copper River basin, first acquired European goods from this post via Chugach Eskimo and Eyak middlemen, and then traded with the Upper Ahtna who served as intermediaries in dealings with the upper Tanana Indians. Ahtna trade at Yukon River posts in turn sometimes was conducted through upper Tanana intermediaries (Strong 1976:149-150; de Laguna and McClellan 1981:645). The common theme and guiding principle was that each group controlled the economic transactions occurring in its territory.

We have found no definitive evidence indicating that the upper Tanana Indians traveled to the Susitna River and Knik Arm to trade for western goods, but these were important venues for the Upper Ahtna and may have been another source of some items obtained by the upper Tanana bands:

The oral history of the Ahtna of the Upper Copper Valley gives a detailed account of the trade to Knik Arm. The distance from Batzulnetas to the east of Knik Arm, as the crow flies, is more than two hundred miles—making it a round trip of over

four hundred miles. This journey was made by the Ahtna on foot carrying baggage by backpack, by human drawn sled, or by dog pack. The trading journey took a total of from three to five months with the people leaving sometime between January [and] March and returning in April or May. Because of the poor means of transportation only limited amounts of trade goods could be brought back into the Copper Valley. The Ahtna traded fur for a variety of trade goods including leaf tobacco, tea, sugar, a little flour, muzzle loaders and percussion cap firearms, black powder, lead balls, a kind of fuzzy blanket (sometimes used for making clothes), glass beads, and dentalium shells (Strong 1976:154).

Pitts (1972:45) cites secondary sources who claim the presence of a trade route “between the Tanana natives and the Cook Inlet People.” If trade did occur between these two groups, it probably involved lower river bands and not those in the upper Tanana region, as the upper Tanana elders with whom Pitts consulted said the Ahtna Indians were intermediaries in the trade between the Tanana and Cook Inlet Natives.

Interactions between the upper Tanana Athabascans and Euro-Americans in the upper Tanana region began no later than the mid 1880s as sporadic encounters with explorers, prospectors, and military expeditions passing through the area. The pace accelerated as the fur trade expanded into what was then one of the more remote areas of interior Alaska and following gold strikes at Franklin Creek on the Fortymile River in 1886 and at the Klondike in 1896.

Euro-American contacts outside of the region, however, possibly date back to the mid-1840s, when members of the Mansfield-Kechumstuk band hiked to Mednovskiy Trail House, a Russian post near the mouth of the Chitina River in Ahtna territory, and to Nuklukayet, a trading post located near the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon rivers (Simeone and VanStone 1986:2).<sup>11</sup> McKennan (1959:30) believes these contacts occurred after trading posts had opened on the Yukon River and reports that “the older Indians recount tales of their early journeys to the white man’s stores on the Yukon, and the names of “Jock” McQuesten and Joe Ladue were mentioned many times to me.” McQuesten arrived in Alaska in 1873 and Ladue appeared a decade later.

Although exactly when and where contacts began between the upper Tanana Indians and white traders may never be known, we do know that by the 1880s the upper Tanana were trading closer to home at Yukon River posts at Fortymile and Eagle (McKennan 1969a:95).<sup>12</sup> The Scottie Creek band probably traded at Fort Selkirk, a Hudson’s Bay Company post located at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers near Dawson (Simeone and VanStone 1986:2).

François Mercier established a trading post at Nuklukayet in 1868 and from 1872 to 1877 was the general agent of the Yukon District for the Alaska Commercial Company. Subsequently he

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<sup>11</sup> Pitts (1972:43) cites evidence linking obsidian found during archaeological excavations at Healy Lake with an obsidian source at Utopia Creek near Indian Mountain in the Allakaket region of the Koyukuk River. Just how and when this obsidian arrived at Healy Lake is unknown, but it suggests the possibility of interactions between the upper Tanana and Koyukon Athabascans prior to western contact. These dealings conceivably occurred at Nuklukayet, located near the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon rivers.

<sup>12</sup> Lt. Henry T. Allen explained the logic in this change: “Should the Nabesnatánas [upper Tanana Athabascans] descend the Tanana to its mouth for trading purposes, a return could not be made until the winter time; this journey, however, is not a necessity with them, on account of their ability to obtain ammunition from Fort Reliance or Fetutlin [Fortymile] by a portage of six days (Allen 1900:477).

was involved in several other Yukon River trading operations until leaving Alaska in 1885. In his memoirs, Mercier relates an encounter between the noted Kutcha-Kutchin Chief Sénaté (from the Fort Yukon area) and an unnamed chief of the “upper Tanana Indians” at a trading post in Fort Yukon, which occurred at some unspecified time during Mercier’s tenure in Alaska:

Yet another time, when two of Sénaté’s boys were hunting within the territory of the Upper Tanana Indians, they encountered a large party of these Indians, at the head of which was found one of the most influential chiefs of this large tribe. To amuse himself at their expense, this chief forced the two sons of Sénaté to eat bone marrow in which he had put juice from his chewing tobacco. On returning to Fort Youkon they told all this to their father, Sénaté, who promised them he would take a brilliant revenge. Then, some time later, this chief of the upper Tanana having come to trade at Fort Youkon, Sénaté found him there. Without letting him see anything, Sénaté invited this chief to a festival under his roof, where he was served all manner of good things, and when he had eaten well, he ran his two hands through his hair, and put his right hand on the greasy eating utensils, a sign that he was full and satisfied, and then made ready to depart. “Stop!” said Sénaté to him, “I have another dish to make you eat.” He made him eat a part of a portion of marrow in a little half case of bark, mixed there with the same thing and told him “You must remember that you made my sons eat this last fall, and eat well now, or I will kill you.” He made him eat! (Mercier 1986:56).

Mercier’s recollection stands as very early documentation of the presence of upper Tanana people at a trading post and as an illustration of the rivalries that ensued between neighboring Athabascan groups.

The upper Tanana Indians both served as and used middlemen in trading ventures. Lt. Allen commented on their role as interpreters for the Ahtna at Fort Reliance:

The route (Mile’s Pass) from the headwaters of the Copper to the Upper Tananá, and the finding on both side of natives who had been to the Yukon River to trade, settles the mooted question, “Do the Copper River natives visit the Yukon?” With regard to this matter the traders themselves were not confident, until a few questions were put, which brought forth the facts in the matter. Mr. McQuisten [Leroy Napoleon “Jack” McQuesten], trader of Fort Reliance, and Mr. LaDue [Joseph Ladue], a prospector, asserted that they had seen some Copper River natives at the post in 1883, and that a native on the north side of the mountains was uses as a second interpreter to them. From this and other information I conclude that their visits are not frequent, and that traffic is effected usually by intermediate parties (Allen 1887:71).

Citing his own informants and other sources of information, McKennan described other trade interactions involving the upper Tanana and Ahtna Indians:

Occasionally the Copper River natives even crossed the Tanana country to Fort Reliance on the Yukon, though such instances were rare, the trade usually being carried on by intermediaries.... According to John Bremner’s diary, the Copper River Indians secured [gun] powder from the Yukon via the Tanana natives. Evidently the bulk of trade came from the Yukon rather than the Copper. Old

Nicolai, however, who ranged from the Taral to the head of the Nizina carried on some trade in beads and ammunition with the interior. He would leave his goods at this camp on the Chitistone, and the Tanana natives when they arrived would deposit furs in the proper amount.... This route via Skolai Pass continued to be used by the Nabesna and Chisana natives after white miners had located on the Nizina. Chisana Joe told me that many times he had made the trip and packed back powder, beads, tobacco, and tea; and Frank Sam recalled that he had seen his first white man when he hiked with his father, Old Chief Sam, from the lower Nabesna to Dan Creek via Skolai Pass (McKenna 1959:28).

Trade transactions to this point in time probably involved the exchange of furs for western commodities. Precisely when the upper Tanana began selling furs and handicrafts is unclear but in 1885 Lieutenant Allen negotiated cash purchases while he was in the region:

We purchased all obtainable food at Nandell's and Tetling's, giving in exchange all the money that remained and every garment or article of any description that could be spared (Allen 1887:77).

If this was the transaction referred to by Strong in his Upper Ahtna economic history, the upper Tanana evidently were not yet familiar with the use of money:

A story is told [by the Upper Ahtna] of the people of Tetlin helping some Americans... and receiving in return gold coin, silver coin, and paper money. The gold coins the Native people made into rings, the silver coins had holes punched in them and were sewn onto their clothing, and the paper money they threw away (Strong 1976:156).

The Anglican missionary, Richard J. Bowen, accompanied Han Indians from the Yukon River on a trading expedition to the Ketchumstuk area in the winter of 1895. His observations reflect the complexity of negotiations prior to the establishment of trading posts in the upper Tanana region:

A tribe of Indians, known as the Ketchem Stock [Ketchumstuk] Indians also joined the Takudth [Han] Indians toward the head waters of the Fortymile Creek. These Indians were in touch with a tribe from beyond the Copper River area and made annual trips to their country for trading purposes.... The time arrived when the Takudth Indians decided it was time for them to make their trip over the Alaska Border, to do their trading with natives less experienced than themselves (Bowen n.d.:116, cited in Mishler and Simeone 2004:7).

The Han planned to meet with the Ketchumstuk people and then travel farther south to meet with an unidentified group of "Indians of the Interior:"

The Indians of the Interior had seen me at the head of our dogs and sleighs and they went into the timber and would not come out again to trade. The Ketchem Stock [Ketchumstuk] and Forty-Mile [Han] Indians had to go into the bush to a place decided upon before the Interior Indians would either trade or expose their furs.

Only those who were deputed to trade went into the bush. The others, with myself and dogs remained in camp. I really believe I was refused this meeting

through intervention of the Ketchum stock and Forty-mile Indians. It evidently was a preserve they did not wish to have interfered with either by missionary or white trader for fear the Interior Indians would be influenced to cease trading. The monopoly was worth something and must be held at all costs (Bowen n.d.:131, cited in Mishler and Simeone 2004:7).

While surveying a route for the WAMCATS telegraph line near Ketchumstuk in February 1902, Lt. William L. “Billy” Mitchell negotiated a trade with Chief Charley, a Han Indian from Eagle Village:

We had tea and a good talk together. He had a beautiful silver tip fox skin which in those days was very rare. We had a great trade over it, which ended by my giving him an order on the store in Forty Mile for certain amounts of powder, lead, caps (as they still used muzzle loading rifles), flour, bacon, beads, bright colored wool and large buttons (Mitchell 1982:49).

This probably was not a typical transaction at the time, given the rarity of and high demand for silver fox<sup>13</sup>, but it suggests that Chief Charley,<sup>14</sup> was a skilled intermediary in the fur trade and familiar enough with trading post operations to have no qualms about exchanging a valuable fur for a piece of paper. Mitchell mistakenly thought Chief Charley was from Ketchumstuk, when in fact he may have been traveling there to obtain furs from inhabitants of the winter camp.

By no later than the 1890s, the upper Tanana Athabascans were trading for firearms, the earliest being flintlock rifles. Copper slugs, probably acquired from the Ahtna, were used if lead slugs were not available. When Robert McKennan was conducting fieldwork in 1929-30, the trader John Hajdukovich donated to the Dartmouth College Museum two flintlock rifles he had obtained in the upper Tanana region—a Russian double-barrel cap and ball muzzleloader and a British Johnstone long cap and ball rifle. Flintlocks were succeeded first by .45-70 and .44 caliber rifles, then by the .38 Winchester. Later these were replaced by .30-30s and .30-40s (Cook 1989:115).

Operation of the WAMCATS telegraph line between 1902 and 1910 required erecting stations along the route that were staffed by soldiers from the U.S. Army Signal Corps. A trading post also was established at “Tanana Crossing” to provision the soldiers stationed there. This post may have been operated by John Martin (Pitts 1972:50). Rival traders soon opened posts at other strategic locations in the upper Tanana region:

From then on there have always been one or more white traders at the Crossing. About 1909 a Captain Northway made his way to the mouth of the Tetling [Tetlin River] by boat with a stock of trade goods, probably the first white trader to establish himself on the upper river. He returned again in 1910 but lost all that he had in the river. In 1912 W.H. Newton, who since 1907 has kept a post at Healy River, opened a store at the Crossing and established caches to both Tetling

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<sup>13</sup> Robert McKennan reported that the trader Milo Hajdukovich purchased a silver fox pelt at Nabesna in 1929 for \$335 from a “poor ignorant Indian,” implying that the fur was worth more (Mishler and Simeone 2006:99).

<sup>14</sup> See Mishler and Simeone (2004) for more information about Chief Charley and the Han Athabascans in the area bordering upper Tanana territory on the north.

Village and the mouth of the Nabesna. In 1914 Newton sold out and removed to Healy, but the Chisana stampede had brought many newcomers up the river so that from 1912 on there have been trading posts at Tetling<sup>15</sup> and the mouth of the Nabesna (McKenna 1959:25).

Elsewhere in the region, Charles Simons operated a store at Chisana from about 1914 until his death in 1929. Members of the Upper Nabesna-Upper Chisana band then had to transport their furs to posts at Slana in the Upper Copper River basin, some 100 miles from Chisana and 60 miles from Nabesna. By this time, competition for the Indians' business had emerged among rival traders, Ted Lowell and Milo Hajdukovich, who operated posts at Tanana Crossing, Tetlin, and the mouth of the Nabesna. Yet another trader, Herman Kessler, was based in Scottie Creek band territory near the mouth of Gardiner Creek. In 1929, the white population in the upper Tanana region consisted of these traders, half a dozen residents in Chisana and a few trappers (McKenna 1959:26).

Perhaps because the upper Tanana people no longer had to travel long distances to trade furs, their reliance on western goods increased and the traditional economy began to change markedly. Business was conducted at the posts and at seasonal encampments located long distances from the stores during the winter months, which the traders accessed by dog team. Hoping to ward off competition during spring muskrat hunting season, the traders often transported trade goods to the spring camps in motorboats.

John Hajdukovich, like his cousin Milo, was a trader in the region in the 1920s and 1930s and is remembered for his efforts to improve conditions for the upper Tanana Indians, especially in Tetlin. Appointed in 1924 as a U.S. Commissioner for the upper Tanana district<sup>16</sup>, he viewed assimilation into white society as a slow process during which the Indians should have legal control over some activities affecting their communities. John Hajdukovich tirelessly supported Indian education, health care, economic development, and creation of a reservation at Tetlin—all this at a time when such advocacy on behalf of Alaska Natives was the exception and not the rule. Altruistic as some of his ideas and accomplishments might have been, Hajdukovich never forgot his own economic interests.<sup>17</sup>

In a 1979 interview, Ted Lowell, who worked for John Hajdukovich from 1929 to 1935, recalled freighting goods some 54 miles up the Chisana River to trade with Indians at the mouth of Scottie Creek.

[Lowell] would spread his trading goods out in a clearing on the ground, and the Scottie Creek band of Natives would gather there to trade. Some of the Indians came from the Yukon Territory with furs to trade. "I'd stay there a couple of

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<sup>15</sup> Halpin (1987:8) says the first post at Tetlin was established in 1912 by a Mr. Flannigan at the mouth of the Kalukna River, which is referred to locally as Old Store Creek.

<sup>16</sup> The Organic Act of 1884 created the District of Alaska and authorized the presidential appointment of a skeleton bureaucracy. U.S. commissioners exercised all the duties and powers of justices of the peace and notaries public, and were authorized to grant writs of habeas corpus.

<sup>17</sup> See Brown (1999) for more information about John Hajdukovich and his work on behalf of Tetlin and other Upper Tanana Athabascans.

days,” Lowell said, “and in fact I’d sell out everything I had in the boat, and could have sold the boat too” (cited in Cole 1979:29).

Their nomadic way of life began its inevitable transformation when the upper Tanana Indians first obtained western trade goods as early as the mid-1800s, although other acculturative forces occurring over a span of several decades also contributed to the shift to settlement in semi-permanent communities (at Healy Lake, Tanana Crossing, and Nabesna) and a sedentary existence by the 1930s. A symbiotic relationship developed between traders and the Indians, whereby each had or could obtain something the other needed or wanted. The Indians acquired firearms and steel tools that enabled them to be more efficient hunters and trappers, along with other items that had more intrinsic value. By extending credit, the traders obligated the Indians to run traplines in order to repay their indebtedness so they could obtain more trade goods.<sup>18</sup>

McKenna believes that the accumulation of wealth was not a feature of pre-contact upper Tanana society but that during his time in the region “to be wealthy is the ambition of every Upper Tanana man.”

Because the Upper Tanana secured their first goods of white manufacture from the Kluane, I am of the opinion that items of Chilkat culture, particularly the emphasis on wealth, came in at the same time. Not until the location of the American traders on the upper Yukon did the natives secure guns, and the older members of the present population can remember well the introduction of this new weapon. With the establishment of the Yukon trade the natives were able to deal directly with the white man, with the result that their furs brought them larger quantities of goods. The emphasis on property and wealth, which had been engendered in the days of the Chilkat trade, thus became more firmly entrenched, with the result that an individual’s position in Upper Tanana society came to be measured in terms of the goods he possessed; or rather, and this is far more important, his prestige came to depend on the amount of goods he could ostentatiously give away (McKenna 1959:129).

## **THE MIXED ECONOMY**

At the beginning of this chapter, we indicated that the hunting and gathering economy of the upper Tanana Indians at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century retained many of its traditional features but was entering a period of transition. Chapter 7 discusses in more detail the agents of change responsible for the shift from residence in seasonal encampments to more permanent villages, but here we look specifically at the transformation of the traditional hunting and gathering culture into what Wolfe (2000) calls a “mixed, subsistence-market economy.” In this type of economic system, households combine jobs with subsistence activities, invest a portion of their income in small-scale technologies used to harvest wild foods, and share wild food harvests with other households. Wolfe coined this phrase after analyzing data collected by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in rural communities across the state and refining his earlier reference to “subsistence-based socioeconomic systems,” whose features include:

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<sup>18</sup>While visiting Tetlin in March 1930, McKenna reported that “...all the Natives owe Milo [Hajdukovich] money, and consequently, being Indians, take their fur to [Ted] Lowell” (Mishler and Simeone 2006:101). Consequently, when rival traders operated in the same village, the Indians were able to manipulate the system to their benefit.

a community-wide seasonal round of subsistence activities; high participation rates in fishing and hunting activities; substantial outputs of fish and game products for local use; a domestic mode of production; extensive non-commercial distribution and exchange networks; traditional systems of land use and occupancy; and a mixed economy combining subsistence and commercial sectors (Wolfe 1984).

In the early 1900s, the upper Tanana bands still spent most of the year dispersed into one or two family units that operated out of ancillary camps to harvest fish and wildlife resources. These family groups reunited at a larger base camp for the month-long winter festival and when a communal effort was required to efficiently harvest migratory resources such as caribou and whitefish. Some members of bands in areas north of the Tanana River occasionally traveled to Upper Ahtna territory to hunt and fish with partners or relatives, although these arrangements more often involved upper Tanana bands located south of the Tanana River. Upper Ahtna Indians in turn sometimes traveled north to participate in caribou drives with the upper Tanana.

The fur trade introduced the upper Tanana Indians to western commodities beginning as early as the mid-1800s. As was the case among the neighboring Upper Ahtna, the earliest transactions probably involved the exchange of furs for three categories of trade goods:

1. Items of western manufacture that replaced Native aboriginal means of production, such as firearms, gunpowder, and iron or steel tools.
2. Trade goods that were consumed and considered “minor luxuries,” including tea, sugar, tobacco, blankets, cloth, and clothing.
3. Goods that became part of the Native “prestige economy” and were used as potlatch gifts, such as dentalium shells and glass beads. Later this category would expand to include firearms and blankets (Strong 1976:160-161).

These dealings with western traders typically required long trips and involved tough negotiations with Native intermediaries until trading posts were established closer to home.

By the late 1800s, gold rushes and a growing Euro-American population in and near upper Tanana territory had created a market for wild game, fish, and firewood, which joined furs as items of commerce and added to the incremental changes influencing the traditional hunting and gathering economy. Gold mining operations also impacted the environment in ways that were at least partially responsible for more consequential changes to the Native economy in some parts of the region:

In order to rid the country of mosquitoes and to make the native spruce timber more accessible for mining operations, vast tracts of land were indiscriminately burned off. As a result of the large-scale burning and over-hunting, big game species became scarce in many areas. The old migration routes of the caribou changed or completely disappeared from the area and moose became almost non-existent, thus increasing the pressure on those animals that remained. The natives had to depend on remnant populations to supply their needs. As the big game species began to play a smaller and smaller part in their economy, the need for capturing and preparing fur bearing animals became of greater importance in their economic lives (Vitt 1971:55-56).



The period of transition escalated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with establishment in 1912 of St. Timothy's Episcopal Mission at Tanana Crossing, where some seasonal jobs were created to induce people to move to the mission. Kenny Thomas, Sr., born in 1922 at Lake Mansfield, recounted how later establishment of the mission school impacted the traditional economy:

So the school started, and long time ago there was no school, and my people didn't know how to speak English or anything else, and the school comes in. So what we used to do is, we used to go way out in the country, like every summer we move out in the country to dry meat, to dry the fish and whatnot, to pick our berries, anything for the winter time. But after the school comes into the country, why we can't do that any more (Thomas 2005:24).

As traders moved into the region, a few men obtained summer jobs helping to freight goods up the Tanana River and others cut and sold firewood. John Hajdukovich also hired local men as guides and packers for fall hunting expeditions he led in the Alaska Range (e.g., Endicott 1928). Some jobs were created in the 1930s and 1940s during wartime construction of airfields and the Alaska Highway, which served to further consolidate the upper Tanana bands in several villages on or near the road system.

By the late 1940s, however, the wartime boom had ended and along with it most of the wage earning opportunities available in the region. When Walter Goldschmidt and Theodore Haas visited Northway, Tanacross and Tetlin in 1946, they emphasized the importance of fur trapping in the economies of these villages at that time:

The modern economy of the natives is not unlike the aboriginal economy, except that in the marketing of fur animals has enabled the natives to purchase the products of civilization, and therefore has integrated their economy with that of American society in general (Goldschmidt 1948:7).

In the economy of the modern Indian in Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross, there still is a combination of production for home use and production for export. The two phases of the economy are interrelated, and their continued existence depends upon this balance in activities... The products for export are furs. With the reduction of game and the long dependence upon the products of modern civilization, the native society rests as fully upon this aspect of their production as upon the other—just as of other native peoples of the world and, for that matter, the farmers in America—that the production of goods for export has steadily grown in relative importance (Goldschmidt 1948:10).

An expanding road system combined with a continuing influx of white people to Alaska in the 1950s and 1960s to increase competition for wildlife in the upper Tanana region. For example, fewer than 10 percent of the caribou hunters passing through check stations on the Taylor Highway in 1955 were from Tok, Dot Lake, Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross. Nearly 70 percent of the hunters were civilians and military personnel from the Fairbanks area (Olson 1955). From the mid-1950s to early 1960s, estimated harvests of Fortymile caribou, whose range partially overlaps the traditional territory of several upper Tanana bands, exceeded 2,000 animals in some years (Valkenburg et al. 1994:15), most of which were taken by non-local hunters in road-accessible areas.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game surveys recorded moose harvest levels for several Upper Tanana villages in the 1960-61 regulatory year: Tetlin—30; Northway—18; Tanacross—14; and Dot Lake—4 (Bentley 1962). In 1961-62, village surveys recorded harvests of 25 moose in Dot Lake and 25 in Tanacross (Rausch 1963).<sup>19</sup> These data suggest that reliance on moose was increasing—in part, perhaps, because they could be found in areas more accessible to village residents and where Native hunters faced less competition than typically was encountered on the Taylor Highway.

University of Alaska students Roger Pitts and Ramon Vitt conducted ethnographic research in upper Tanana villages during the spring and summer of 1970. Although their descriptions of the local economies in the 1950s and 1960s are among the few sources of such information available for that period, we question the veracity and validity of some of their conclusions. For example, Vitt characterized the upper Tanana Athabascan economy in 1971 as follows:

Sport hunting has become the main use of the animal reserves today, not only for the natives but also for the whites. The meat obtained in the hunt is still an important addition to the native larder, and this supplemented with food stamps and other government subsidies is usually sufficient to maintain a rather low standard of living in the villages. Many of the young native youths do not hunt; they do not know the fundamental principles of hunting except by word-of-mouth; and have, as far as the hunt is concerned, made a transition into the white world (Vitt 1971:57).

Pitts (1972:197) added that by 1953 the upper Tanana Indians had “completely abandoned the remnants they had retained of the old seasonal hunting patterns and adopted a complete cash and welfare economy:”

During the summer months some intermittent fishing between firefighting is done at the old fishing villages, such as Mansfield and Kath Theel, but not by the village as a whole as characterized pre-contact and early post-contact times. Usually only separate nuclear families engage in this activity. Generally firefighting is the prime occupation of the younger men during the summer months.

In September and October, each family normally goes out for its yearly moose but hardly any caribou hunting is ever done. Through the winter some individuals find jobs in Tok and Northway but the majority live off unemployment during the non-firefighting season. In early spring some trapping is done of muskrat and other fur-bearing animals. By June and July fishing again becomes the chief pursuit of the native family until Bureau of Land Management employment opens up (Pitts 1972:200-201).

The traditional seasonal round unquestionably had changed markedly by the 1950s, but we have no evidence to suggest that in its place a “cash and welfare economy” had emerged or that by 1971 the upper Tanana Indians had suddenly transformed into “sport hunters.” Pitts and Vitt

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<sup>19</sup> Survey methodologies are not described in these reports, so we are unable to determine if these harvest data accurately reflect the village harvests for the year. We also cannot account for the substantial number of moose reported to have been harvested by residents of Dot Lake, a community with only 56 residents in 1960.

apparently were not present in the region during the fall hunting season, so their impressions of hunting practices either were pure speculation or were based on secondhand information rather than direct observation.

Whatever the role of fish and wildlife resources might have been in the upper Tanana village economies of the early 1970s, harvesting and using wild foods currently are integral features of the upper Tanana village economies. Selected fish and wildlife harvest and use data from studies conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, in upper Tanana villages in the late 1980s and in 2006, are presented in Table 5 and demonstrate that wild resources contribute significantly to the economies of many households in Dot Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin. Comparable data are not available for Healy Lake but residents there, too, continue to actively harvest fish and wildlife resources.

In addition to recording resource harvest data and describing seasonal harvest activities in the upper Tanana region, Division of Subsistence research has confirmed the complementary roles of harvesting renewable resources and wage employment in the village economies, and in some instances illustrates the continuing social and economic ties between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans. Readers should consult the following Division of Subsistence reports for more information about the “mixed, subsistence-market economies” in the contemporary upper Tanana villages: Haynes (1983); Martin (1983); Haynes et al. (1984); Case (1986); Halpin (1987); Marcotte et al. (1992); Andersen and Jennings (2001); and Koskey (2006) and (2007).

Marie-Francoise Guédon also conducted ethnographic research in the region in 1969-70 and observed “a loss of balance between a strong individualism and a feeling of solidarity within the community” (Guédon 1974:129). She associated the trend toward individualism with the cash economy and the introduction of firearms in the late 1800s, which contributed to the demise of cooperative hunting efforts. However, Guédon illustrated the resiliency of traditional values by reporting that in Tanacross in 1971, a successful moose hunter shared his good fortune by putting on a meal for the entire village (Guédon 1974:137). This action, which enhanced the hunter’s prestige and reinforced the traditional practice of sharing resources in the community, confirms that not all customary practices associated with hunting had been abandoned.

Table 5. Selected fish and wildlife harvest and use data for Dot Lake, Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross, 1987-1988 and 2004-2005<sup>20</sup>

	Year	Dot Lake	Northway	Tanacross	Tetlin
No. of households (HH) in community	1987-88	20	90	34	29
	2004-05	19	80	42	40
Pounds of edible resources harvested per HH	1987-88	378	1,001	685	854
	2004-05	451	799	670	844
% of HH attempting to harvest moose	1987-88	47%	82%	67%	59%
	2004-05	63%	60%	65%	81%
% of HH harvesting a moose	1987-88	20%	33%	30%	35%
	2004-05	31%	50%	51%	55%
% of HH receiving moose from another HH	1987-88	67%	76%	63%	85%
	2004-05	50%	08%	16%	74%
% of HH harvesting caribou	1987-88	20%	20%	19%	05%
	2004-05	13%	32%	43%	45%
% of HH receiving caribou from another HH	1987-88	53%	49%	44%	05%
	2004-05	06%	32%	11%	39%
% of HH harvesting whitefish	1987-88	47%	67%	70%	69%
	2004-05	50%	55%	32%	94%
% of HH receiving whitefish from another HH	1987-88	33%	40%	18%	51%
	2004-05	38%	10%	14%	52%
% of HH harvesting small game/furbearers	1987-88	53%	84%	74%	79%
	2004-05	31%	65%	22%	45%
% of HH receiving small game/furbearers from another HH	1987-88	20%	22%	19%	25%
	2004-05	0%	15%	11%	36%
% of HH harvesting salmon	1987-88	20%	20%	22%	5%
% of HH receiving salmon from another HH	1987-88	73%	53%	81%	10%
% of HH attempting to harvest waterfowl/game birds	1987-88	60%	84%	70%	54%
% of HH receiving birds from another HH	1987-88	40%	22%	19%	45%
% of HH harvesting edible plants	1987-88	93%	80%	89%	69%
% of HH giving edible plants to another HH	1987-88	47%	16%	15%	25%

<sup>20</sup> These data are derived from tables in Marcotte et al. (1992) and Koskey (2006). Comparable data are not available for all species harvested and used during the two time periods represented in these surveys, or for Healy Lake. Koskey did not record 2004-05 harvest data for salmon, waterfowl, and game birds in his household survey.

## SUMMARY

McKenna (1959:47) compared the aboriginal seasonal round described to him by Chief Sam—cited earlier in this chapter—with the timing of harvest activities he either observed or was told about in 1929-1930:

Old Sam's picture of a nomadic existence sums up the life of an Upper Tanana native. Fishing at well-known sites in July; moose hunting in the summer; sheep hunting in the fall; then the early winter migration of caribou; then more moose hunting and quite possibly hunger, alleviated somewhat in the late spring by ducks and muskrats; and then again the welcome appearance of the caribou in late May.

The annual cycle of the upper Tanana continued to follow this general pattern in the late 1920s but by this time furbearer trapping and the demand for muskrat pelts had “injected a new factor into their seasonal life” (McKenna 1959:47). This is borne out in McKenna's field journals, which contain numerous entries describing transactions between the Indians and traders and strongly suggest a growing dependence upon western trade goods in the late 1920s.

In aboriginal times and prior to settlement in permanent communities, the upper Tanana Athabascans devoted much of their time and energy to obtaining food. The concept of “strategic exploitation” characterizes their resource procurement activities, whereby the greatest amount of food is obtained with the least amount of work:

... in aboriginal times it was a basic strategy of Northern Athabaskan hunters to take their greatest amount of animal food at definite points in time and space when the animals were massed together and/or especially vulnerable. For example, fish were taken during their massed spawning migrations and caribou during their mass migrations. These mass migrations take place at definite times—according to the annual cycle of the species involved—and can be taken easily at definite points in space; for example fish by weirs blocking the stream through which they travel or caribou by big game fences built in mountain passes blocking their migration route. Other animal species are harvested singly and when they are not particularly vulnerable; for example a spearsman killing a bear or the snaring of snowshoe hare. But an element found throughout is that of harvesting animals at times when they are most vulnerable; for instance, hibernating bears, waterfowl in molt when they can't fly, or moose when they break through crusted snow which supports the hunter or when they are helpless swimming in lakes (Strong 1976:71-72).

This concept accurately describes the food procurement methods used in the upper Tanana region, but “strategic exploitation” did not come with a guarantee. It worked only if sufficient numbers of whitefish, caribou, and waterfowl migrated through the area and were available for harvest. To obtain alternative resources required more time and effort and was less efficient. The numerous accounts in the literature of food shortages, like those mentioned earlier in this chapter, illustrate just how difficult it was for the upper Tanana Athabascans to make a living even in the best of times.

Heffley (1981) examined the aboriginal resource use patterns of several Athabaskan groups through the lens of an ecological model of optimal foraging strategy formulated by Horn (1968),

which posits that an optimal relationship exists between the group size (i.e., settlement pattern) of hunter-gatherer societies and resource distribution. She based her analysis of upper Tanana Athabascan settlement patterns and foraging strategies, which did not correspond to Horn's model in all cases, on McKennan's (1959) descriptions. However, Heffley accurately characterizes the resource procurement practices of these groups prior to western contact:

The Upper Tanana adapted their foraging strategy to a mixed resource base. They exploited mobile, clumped, and unpredictable resources as well as evenly spaced, stable ones and adjusted their settlement pattern to accommodate this strategy. Clumped, unpredictable caribou were hunted by aggregated hunters in spring and fall. The local band provided the level of aggregation for this strategy, and the larger villages reflected this. Fish runs in July nucleated the Upper Tanana at the few available fishing spots. The local band was the exploitative unit at this time also.

Evenly spaced, stable resources were exploited by smaller units, for the most part two nuclear families. These units dispersed into the forest and returned periodically to the village where food was cached from the caribou hunts and fish runs. The smaller units moved over the area throughout the late winter. The groups might change their location five times during the winter, and even daily if prey animals were not available in the area... (Heffley 1981:141-142).

These traditional practices and the seasonal round of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century began changing as the upper Tanana Athabascans acquired rifles, steel traps, motorboats and other tools that reduced the need for communal harvesting strategies. What did not change, however, are the strong ties of the people to their ancestral lands and the continuing importance of fish, wildlife, and plants in the upper Tanana household and village economies. Additionally, as is illustrated in Table 5, the longstanding custom of sharing wild resources endures as an important feature of upper Tanana culture.

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## CHAPTER 4

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

#### INTRODUCTION

Traditional upper Tanana social and political organization as described in the ethnographic literature was typical of most hunter/gatherer societies (cf. McKennan 1959; Guédon 1974). People lived in small, autonomous groups composed of closely related kinsmen. Kinship affiliations were extensive, reaching beyond the immediate group and providing people with a network of relationships from which to seek assistance in time of need. Political organization was decentralized and informal, with most decisions affecting the group reached by consensus. Leadership was in the hands of “rich men” who maintained their position through the accumulation and distribution of resources. At the same time, Athabascan social organization in east central Alaska was distinctive from Northern Athabascan groups living in western Canada and far western Alaska by having a kinship system based on matrilineal clans organized into moieties.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Athabascans in the upper Tanana region no longer live in small bands, but in villages where the population often is composed of an amalgamation of the descendants from several local bands (see below for a discussion of local bands). At the same time, social networks in modern upper Tanana communities continue to be so tightly bound that everyone is related somehow to everyone else. As in the past, the most important social unit, from the standpoint of the individual, is the immediate family or family members who share the same house (be it a couple and their children, a single parent and minor child, or grandparent). Next in importance is the extended family that includes siblings, parents, grandparents, and grown children who live in other households in the community. Members of extended families now often live close to one another and most day-to-day activity takes place at this level. Family members drop by to visit, watch television in the evening, eat, or to ask some kind of favor. On certain occasions the entire village functions as a unit. For example, fire fighting crews and sports teams are organized along village lines and village members also work together to put on feasts and potlatches. Modern villagers have developed a strong sense of identity with their community and the surrounding landscape. A village and the surrounding landscape are not simply a backdrop or stage for some activity, or a place of residence, but a home in the sense of a place of belonging so that when a person says, “I am from Northway” she or he is asserting an identity associated with a specific place and group of people.

While many aspects of the traditional social organization have disappeared, such as restrictions on who one can marry, or cross-cousin partnerships, there is still a strong emphasis on kinship, and affiliation with family members. Traditionally defined relationships are still an important part of community life; for example, nephews and nieces are often deferential to their maternal uncles and aunts, and clans and clan membership still play a central role in upper Tanana culture

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<sup>1</sup> In Alaska the Holikachuk and Deg Hit’an people, who live on the lower middle Yukon River have a bilateral kinship system, as do Athabascan groups in western Canada such as the Dogrib, Slavey, Hare, Yellowknife, Chipewyan, and Kaska. Bilateral kinship is when an individual traces descent through both the mother and father (Haviland 1989:448).



and especially in the potlatch, which continues to be a very significant feature of Athabascan life in east central Alaska (see Chapter 5).

## **MOIETIES AND CLANS**

Upper Tanana society was and still is composed of eight or nine matrilineal clans that are arranged in exogamous moieties named Raven (or Crow) and Sea Gull (or Wolf). In other words, upper Tanana society is arranged into halves (i.e., moieties) or opposite sides, with four or five clans on each side. In this way individuals are separated into “opposites” who marry, help one another during life crises, particularly death, and entertain each other at potlatches (de Laguna 1975:89). Ideally, moieties are exogamous. That is, marriages are supposed to take place between people who are in opposite moieties so that a person in clan A would ideally marry a person from clan B, which is in the opposite moiety. While this was the preferred marriage pattern, and people who violated the rule would be the subject of gossip, it was not strictly enforced. Wealthy men, for example, who could afford to have more than wife, frequently married women from different clans. Today clan exogamy is largely ignored, and people marry whomever they please.

A clan is defined as a group of people who acknowledge a bond of common descent but cannot trace the actual genealogical links to one another (VanStone 1974:51). Clans have names and origin stories that tell how the clan came into being. Clans are not localized or limited to one particular village, but spread over a large area—although clan names vary from group to group. For example, clans found in Tanacross and Tetlin also exist among the Ahtna of the Copper River and in villages on the middle Tanana River. When traveling, individuals can expect hospitality from their clan mates in a distant community even when they have no other ties.

## **DESCENT**

Individuals in upper Tanana society are born into their mother’s clan. This is called matrilineal descent<sup>2</sup>, which is defined as “descent traced exclusively through the female line for purposes of group membership” (Haviland 1989:439). An individual is born to his or her mother’s clan and remains a member of that clan all of his or her life. Relatives from the mother’s side are usually considered closer than relatives from the father’s side. Tanacross elder David Paul (1957b:1) explained it this way:

My mother and father almost the same tribe [clan], not quite, but I belong to my mother’s people. All children belong to mother’s tribe [clan]. Young people must know these things to know who are his friends; who fight with him in war; who he must give meat when hunger come; and who he can marry.

As noted above, clan relations continue to be important under certain circumstances, such as the potlatch. Some members of the younger generation have knowledge of the clan system, but more often young people derive their identity from their family name and village rather than clan. Because the system is matrilineal, children born to a Native woman and non-Native man have an easier time fitting in than does a child born to Native man and non-Native woman.

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<sup>2</sup> Matrilineal descent is not to be confused with matriarchy in which the mother is the head of the family.

Ideally and as noted above, marriage was supposed to take place between a man and woman who are from opposite clans. Preferably the person one marries is a member of one's father's clan. A Tanacross man explained that by marrying a woman who belonged to his father's clan he raised children for his father's clan. He pointed out that he was also following the tradition of the *Altset'dendei* and *Dik'agiyu* clans to marry back and forth across the generations.

My wife is same tribe (clan) as my dad.... I married my dad's people (clan); just for that, my dad is satisfied. I raised my children for my dad's tribe (clan).

From way back, two tribes (clans) started doing it (intermarrying). My grandpa, my mother's dad, married *Altset'dendei*, same tribe (clan) my daddy's father. From way back, they still marry to each other, *Dik'agiyu* and *Altset'dendei*. We like it that way, which is old time way (quoted in Guédon 1974:87).

## KINSHIP

Upper Tanana kinship is based on what is formally known as an Iroquois system of cousin terminology (Hosley 1981:542; Andrews 1975:99) and reflects the matrilineal clan system and the importance of cross cousin marriage. In this system a person's parallel cousins, that is, the children of a person's mother's sister or one's father's brothers, are classified as one's siblings. Cross cousins, or children of either one's mother's brother and father's sister, are considered more distant relatives and ideally are possible marriage partners. As possible marriage partners, cross cousins are considered "joking relatives," "sweethearts," and "partners" (Guédon 1974:112).

An example of a special relationship between cross cousins was the partnership between persons of the same sex. In the case of males, partners were often brothers-in-law, so they were from opposite clans. They hunted together, shared food, and assisted one another in times of stress (McKenna 1959:50). Partners were supposed to treat each other very well. If a man killed game he was supposed to give his partner the best parts of the animal. In this quote Andrew Isaac says a partner is to be trusted and that it is important to extend them every courtesy.

We have to be proud about, like Gene [Henry]. He is our friend, Indian way *sch'leng*. We are not supposed to talk against *sch'leng*. We really trust the *sch'leng*. Really proud about the friend in Indian way, trust them, treat them right. Happen if they comin' in our village, out trap line we give room to stay, if he got dog with them, got to feed that dog too. This is one way, Indian way, Indian, Athabascan Indian really proud about trust their partner. Don't talk bad against it [the partner]; don't treat bad, take care of them. (Simeone n.d.).

In the parent's generation, a distinction is made between maternal and paternal uncles and aunts. In a matrilineal system the maternal uncle had authority over both his niece and nephew and they in turn treat him with the greatest respect. The maternal uncle was responsible for training his nephew and disciplining him if the need arose. In some cases the boy actually resided with his uncle. Because the nephew and maternal uncle belonged to the same clan, the uncle taught the boy clan stories and was involved in all affairs concerning his nephew's relations with the clan, even after the nephew was married and had children (Guédon 1974:124).

A boy's relationship with his paternal uncle, like his relationship with his father, was much less restrained. In fact, a paternal uncle was often treated as a 'father.' Both the father and the paternal uncle taught the boy to hunt and took him on hunting expeditions, even when the boy

was very young. When it was time for the boy to marry, the paternal uncle often directed him to choose a wife who belonged to his father's clan (Guédon 1974:125).

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is usually very close. In the grandparents' generation, the terms grandmother and grandfather are applied indiscriminately to all distant relatives in that generation regardless of actual relationship.

The upper Tanana distinguish between siblings by age and gender so that different terminology is used to distinguish a person's older brother from a younger brother and an older sister from a younger sister. The same terms were also applied to parallel cousins so that the term for older brother, for example, was also applied to father's brother's older son and mother's sister's older son (McKenna 1959:122). True brothers and sisters were people one could trust without reservation and from whom one could always ask for help. The relationship between siblings is determined by age. Older siblings are supposed to be treated with respect and have authority over younger siblings.

Today people are less concerned with these formal relationships, which in an earlier time strongly influenced how people organized their lives. Nevertheless, kinship continues to be a strong theme in Athabascan culture and people often comment on how non-Natives seem to ignore their relatives.

### **LIFE CYCLE: BIRTH, PUBERTY, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH**

Many of the "rites of passage" described below are no longer practiced. Young women or young men, for example, are no longer sequestered at puberty, and the vigorous physical training described for boys is left to school gym classes. At the same time, young boys and girls are still taught outdoor skills and parents or grandparents still sometimes distribute gifts to commemorate a child's first harvest of fish, berries, or small game. In addition, many of the death-related rituals are still practiced today.

In the past, both young men and young women were trained to be physically tough and resourceful. At puberty both underwent rigorous training that included the strict observation of taboos or restrictions to insure good health and a long life free of afflictions visited upon old age. For example, both boys and girls had to drink cold water through a tube made out of swan's bone. They could not stretch their legs out in front of them but always had to sit on their feet to prevent leg cramps during old age. Likewise, when boys and girls washed their faces they had to move their hands upward so that their faces would not sag when they were old. Both boys and girls wore a hood that covered their faces and prevented them from looking directly at anyone or at the sky. The hood was covered with raven feathers so that the hair would not turn gray when they got old (Tyone 1996:17-22).

Walter Northway described his training as a young man. As soon as his voice changed, Walter was told to leave the house and stay secluded from the community.

When I was around fourteen or fifteen my voice changed. My dad instructed me to pack up and move out. I had to move about five miles away from home. I had to build a tree house to live in.

Then I was given materials – a thin moose skin to count days and two small, dry sticks, one short and one long. The short stick was to use like a toothbrush in order to have straight teeth. The long stick was to chew for strong gums and

strong teeth. Then I had to weave sinew through my fingers. In the morning when I awoke, I warmed up water, put a small amount of moose grease in the water, and wet a dry, flat twig in my mouth. I had to drink the water for three days without eating. Just drink that water.

I used that twig for my teeth. I also had to bite and bite on the long stick. That is why I don't have a problem with my teeth to this day. They fall out now by themselves. No toothache.

While sleeping I had to keep my legs bent. I was not supposed to straighten them out. I had to eat early too, before the women got up.

I couldn't drink straight out of a cup. I had to use a swan leg bone as a straw. My dad also tied a swan windpipe around my neck so I could have strong, loud voice.

The meaning of all this training is to stay strong and young (Yarber and Madison 1987:38-40).

Early on, young men were taken on hunting trips where they learned the habits of animals and the taboos associated with them. On these trips the young men learned to snowshoe all day and keep up with the men. They were educated about the weather and how to survive if their clothes became wet when the temperatures fell below zero. In camp young men were forced to get up before everyone else, gather firewood, and start the morning fire. To toughen them physically they had to strip and plunge into icy water, or in winter roll in the snow. Andrew Isaac of Dot Lake described some of his physical training when he was growing up.

I was five or six years old. "Get up! Run!" He kicks my butt. I run right outside without moccasins. "Get in the water!" We jump in the water and swim across to the other side. "Get out and run!" We make a long circle in the woods and dive in the water again. Cold water, ice floating in it. Man, we shout. Cold. Ice across our neck. We run out and jump in the hot steam. Take off our clothes and warm up (Yarber and Madison 1988:21).

Young men were also taught certain words, incantations, and songs to increase their chances of encountering and killing an animal.<sup>3</sup> Andrew Isaac described how he received caribou and moose luck from his elders.

I had caribou and moose luck. No people believe it, but us, we believe it. We use it and it works. It's like different kind of dialect, magic words, sounds.

We get it as a gift from our parents, our grandfathers. We got to spend the night. Maybe for a week, he talks to us when we go to bed. He brings his face to us and we listen. Different human word. Quite a bit different dialect like. I was surprised. Old man just start talking.

We have to be careful. He told us not to jump [skip] one word. If we do that, Indian way, they quit [they are no longer useful] (Yarber and Madison 1988:30).

Andrew Isaac goes on to say that these words were not to be used everyday but only when a hunter was having bad luck and no one was to be told these words.

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<sup>3</sup> In the Upper Tanana language, such words are called *ch'oosii'* (cf. Tyone 1996:77).

Walter Northway explained that there were different kinds of “*ch’oosi*”, or magic words, used to cure burns or wounds, to help with walking, to stop rain, and to deal with animals and bad luck. Walter said that he knew all of these words and used them, but “if they are not used right, they can be dangerous. I don’t teach anymore these things because they might be misused. Times have changed” (Yarber and Madison 1987:40).

At the onset of menses a young woman was isolated for nearly a year in a small shelter always part from her family’s house so that she could not hear people talking. Only female relatives attended the girl during this time. They brought food and instructed her in sewing and proper behavior (Tyone 1996:17-22). The girls ate out of a special cup and bowl and their fingers were tied together to prevent them from having spaces between the fingers. Their female relatives brought them sinew taken from the back of the moose and patterns for footwear, mittens, or dog packs. Girls that sewed with large stitches would have a hard time finding a husband. Women who sewed with large stitches were called “rabbit women” and those who sewed with small stitches were referred to as “mouse women” (ibid).

Girls remained in seclusion for one year. When they returned to the community they faced other prohibitions. For example, they could not eat fresh fish, Indian potatoes, or cranberries and blueberries. The prohibition against eating berries was to prevent excessive bleeding during menstruation. Also to prevent excessive bleeding the women sat on the “tundra rose” (ibid).

When young women emerged from seclusion they were considered eligible for marriage and often were married to older men soon after their menarche. Wealthy men frequently had more than one wife and typically married whomever they pleased. In a family with more than one wife, the eldest wife usually had seniority and supervised the younger wives.

Young men typically married much later in life than young women. Marriages were arranged by the parents of both the bride and groom and as a rule people married outside of their local band, but within the regional band. Parents watched the prospective spouse carefully to assess their skills and, in the case of a woman, her personal hygiene. Andrew Isaac explained that when he was a young man it was customary for the parents to closely scrutinize the young woman to make sure she was not lazy. It was also customary for the young man to demonstrate his value by working hard for the prospective bride’s parents. Andrew Isaac also points out that the situation is different now and young woman are having children and living without the support of a husband.

If we want to marry, our parents got to see that girl. Watch them all the time. They won’t say they are watching, but they are. For lazy-looking girls, don’t want to work, one of the parents will say no. If an Indian want to marry, it will take two years. The boy with you, go in your house and stay there. You go close, but don’t touch.

As soon as the boy goes in that house he works. Get up early. Do things right away. Don’t pay attention to that girl. If the girl want the boy she got to do the same thing.

Today is different way. So many Native girls have got kids. Hard to support them. They got a bad time. Us Indians living have got to teach our girls about us. Or somebody will get hard up right away.

And Indians want their children to take care of themselves. Treat themselves right and feed themselves right. We want to break them into living good (Yarber and Madison 1988:21-22).

Death not only brought grief, which could often be expressed in violent ways—by self-mutilation for example—but also danger through the contamination of the corpse and the gathering of ghosts. After a person died, the spirit of the deceased remained in the vicinity of the corpse for a period of time. During that time there was always the threat that the deceased's spirit would try and take another soul. Customarily it was the responsibility of the non-relatives, or members of the opposite moiety, to dress and dispose of the corpse while the relatives of the deceased mourned. Those who handled the corpse were contaminated and for 10 days had to observe a number of taboos or restrictions. After the body was disposed of, either through cremation or interment, the deceased's relatives held a potlatch in which they distributed food and gifts to members of the opposite clan, and especially to those people who had taken an active part in the disposal of the corpse. If the relatives of the deceased could afford it, they held another potlatch a year or more later in memory of the dead. The potlatch was not only a religious ceremony, as described in Chapter 5, but also an important vehicle for gaining personal prestige. It was one way for young men to publicly prove their worth.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, leadership in upper Tanana society rested with “rich men,” (*‘ha’ke* in the Upper Tanana language), who were charismatic, enterprising individuals who combined an interest in others with a degree of personal cunning and economic calculation. The upper Tanana “rich man” fits into an anthropological category called the “Big Man” whose authority was largely personal, and whose status was the result of acts that elevated him above most other members of the group. To achieve his status, a rich man must be wealthy, generous, and eloquent, as well as physically brave and skillful in dealing with the supernatural (Haviland 1989:486-487). It should be noted that term “chief”, introduced by non-Natives at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is sometimes used when describing “rich men,” but elders do make a distinction between the modern elected “chief” or tradition bearer and the old time “rich men.” Today there are no “rich men” in the upper Tanana region.

In his discussion of upper Tanana leadership, McKennan (1959:132-133) emphasized the importance of distributing wealth to acquire the allegiance of friends and relatives. He also emphasized the transitory nature of leadership and shifting allegiances once the rich man became old and unable to provide for his followers. According to McKennan, Chief Sam of Nabesna was a good example of an upper Tanana rich man. As a young man Chief Sam was “both industrious and shrewd.” In the 1870s he made annual trips to Yukon River trading posts to buy beads, guns, and ammunition that he distributed at potlatches, thus establishing himself as a generous, important man. By the time McKennan met him in 1930, Chief Sam was “old and rheumatic” and his influence was gone (ibid).

Ideally a leader was responsible for organizing the acquisition, accumulation, and distribution of material wealth. He could also help to settle disputes, act as a religious leader or healer, and lead in the ceremonial life of the community. Wealth was an indispensable part of leadership because it was only through the frequent distribution of food and other goods that a leader maintained his legitimacy and authority. Wealth was connected to being “smart” and to “luck,” both terms defining the way to success. To be smart, a person had to be shrewd, tricky, or unpredictable,

and to stand apart because of his work and knowledge. Success was also predicated on luck. In this case luck is defined as the “manifestation of the good will of natural forces” (Guédon 1974:143). Luck therefore was a result of carefully observing rules or taboos that kept a person within the good graces of powerful natural forces. Luck also derived from the ability to confront powerful supernatural forces through magical or shamanistic skill, such as knowing magical words or incantations.

In the following quote, a person from Tanacross provides an ideal vision of a hard working leader, in this case Chief Healy from Healy Lake. Here the emphasis is on hard work, generosity, and reserved or unostentatious behavior, except on special occasions when the chief displayed his personal wealth in the form of highly decorated clothing and personal adornment. There is also an allusion to the taboos in the form of dietary restrictions that Chief Healy followed to help insure his good luck. As Guédon (1974:143) points out, no man was expected to succeed in so much work unless he was helped and protected by a good deal of luck.

Old Chief Healy, I hear story. He was living yet in the country when I was growing up. When his family eats, he does not eat. He eats all by himself....His wife cooks for him special way. Poor looking clothes, hard working. He goes out hunting, moose, everything. All hard works. He hunts fish, ducks, all kinds; he kills rabbits, cuts spruce tree, puts them in cache. When poor people, he just gives away to them. Lazy people got poor living. Only certain day, one day, he (Chief Healy) dresses good; maybe once a year. Puts on all rich clothes, walks around. Sometimes, he would look for the whole village. That's the only time he would dress. Also when potlatch, 3 days....walks around, does nothing, visits friends (quoted in Guédon 1974:143).

A major responsibility of the rich man was to look after the welfare of his kinsmen and their dependents. To this end, he directed his kinsmen in harvesting activities by telling them when and where to hunt and fish and how much food they should harvest and store. In this quote the person describes how the leader organizes and directs the hunt:

When people start being hungry, the “boss” go out, he talks. He let them know where to go. One hunter goes, let the chief know where he goes; next one, next other one. Some men, two, three, they go before daylight. They all go, but they scatter around someplace. What way they gonna take to come back, they let him know. Also, who shoots, he'll be there. He knows; he watches over. Then they all come back, but one is still gone. They check around again to find him. They know each other (quoted in Guédon 1974:146).

A skilled leader could gather and store relatively large amounts of food, which he then distributed throughout the winter.

Leaders also led trading expeditions, using their younger kinsmen as packers. Here Maggie Isaac of Dot Lake describes the trade her great-grandfather was involved in and how he used the trade to meet his obligations to his kinsmen.

Trails go to Chena and Salcha. Great Grandpa go to Tanana. First of June my grandpa go down [river], they go by canoe, bring all his nephew and all his uncle, all go down to Tanana. All people go together, bought all that shell, tea, chew [tobacco], what ever they use, come back when berries ready to ripe, August or

September. Hard trip but old people pay so much a day for the packing. His own relative pack stuff for them, the leader old people take care. If chief hire you and do it for them they give you stuff if you get hard up, they share with shell, tea, and all that stuff. The chief keeps up all his people, just like one family (Simeone n.d.).

While leadership was achieved through hard work and luck it was also an ascribed status. Individuals had status because of their social background. In the following quote Gaither Paul of Tanacross describes the importance of “background” or ancestry in being recognized as a leader. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sam Thomas (who was born between Ketchumstuk and Mansfield about 1860) was a well-known figure in the upper Tanana region. At the time Paul was growing up in the 1920s, Thomas was a partially blind elder, yet he was considered a spokesman and advisor who had considerable prestige because of his own achievements and because he was descended from a long line of “chiefs.” This means that Sam Thomas was a descendent of people who were known to possess knowledge and abilities that made them “great” or “rich.” It was widely accepted that their prestige had come to rest in Sam Thomas. Paul then goes on to explain that in the “Indian Way,” because he is related to Sam Thomas, he too has some of that prestige. One of the things Paul remembers most about Thomas was his skill as an orator. This skill was based on Thomas’s extensive knowledge of local genealogies and his ability to mobilize that knowledge in speeches made at potlatches.

I remember people look to him [Sam Thomas] as advisor, spokesmen, because that man knows everything. [His name was] *Ga Gan Ta* or Rabbit Arm. Everybody look to him for advice on old ways, he know it all. This man, in Indian way, his forefathers are chief, in Indian way nobody can beat him in debate, because he can use the greatness of his father and use that with his talk. And everybody know they can’t beat him in debate. Those are all forgotten now, but that’s the way it was then. He is the spokesman, he is the one that knows everything about old people.

He is oldest brother of my daddy’s mother. So this in Indian way make him my grandfather too. So in Indian way, those *Dihthaâd* people [people from Mansfield village] are known for their greatness, or richness, or what ever, he come from those people. In any kind of debate he can use those as his weapon and nobody can beat him. In that debate, I remember that M-shaped mountain that sign of Mansfield, that is mentioned and pointed to and stuff like that [here Paul is speaking about particular landmarks associated with each village, see below].

Because I come from those people. Because I come from those people like Sam Thomas, his daddy and all those people at Mansfield. Because they are my grandfather, if today Indian feel like those days, even if they know I am poor man, people respect me, just on account of those people before me. Even if I got nothing, I am still come from those people and people just respect me for that.

One old man told me, this is Mark’s daddy, one time he told me. If old time people, you and your brothers, if you know a lots of old time people, and if people think about old time, think like old time if you know everything like that man Sam Thomas, stuff like that, nobody can beat you with debate, any kind of argument. Even you have nothing, you can have those people behind you. I



guess that's the way Indian feel. But its all gone now, nobody feel that way any more (Simeone n.d.).

The importance of rich men in the history of upper Tanana society is reflected in the fact that they are identified precisely in the genealogical record and are considered the grandfathers or progenitors of the people. Each community, along with the surrounding territory, was identified with a particular "chief" (cf. Guédon 1974:141). This recognition is enshrined in the local landscape and particularly in the hills or mountains associated with each community. Such landmarks are often referenced in potlatch oratory and used as metaphors of strength and endurance.<sup>4</sup>

Today leadership in modern upper Tanana society rests with elected officials and "tradition bearers" or traditional chiefs. Elected officials include a village council presided over by a chief or president. The primary duties of the council are to oversee the administration of the village government, pass and implement local laws, and represent village interests at the regional, state, and federal level. The village council is the legal governing body of the village and is usually composed of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and council members. Both women and men serve on the council and women are often elected village chief or president of the council. Some of the prerequisites for being elected to village government are a western education and the perceived ability to deal with state and federal bureaucracies.

Tradition bearers are not elected, but are older men or women who have lived a traditional life and are recognized for their knowledge of traditional culture. As such they have little formal education and are not expected to actively participate in the administration of the village or the numerous meetings that accompany modern bureaucratic life. Instead the traditional chief is expected to provide moral guidance to the community based on their knowledge of tradition. Leaders in general and tradition bearers in particular, are expected to put the community before individual self interest or personal gain (see Simeone 1995).

The village council has its roots in Episcopal Church and U.S. government policies (Simeone 1995). In an effort to formalize leadership and assert its role in village life one of the first things the Episcopal Church did at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was to organize village councils and to appoint leaders who they thought were sympathetic to the church. Walter Northway (Yarber 1987:46-47) recounts how in 1912 he went to Tanacross for a meeting at which Chief Sam was appointed chief of the people living around the mouth of the Nabesna River. According to Walter, the village council was to enforce certain rules of behavior. For example, the council enforced a curfew and inspected each house to make sure it was clean and neat: "the dishes had to be washed and put away and other housecleaning done" (ibid.). If the house was not clean, the council had the right to punish the offender. After the Indian Reorganization Act was extended to Alaska in 1936, the village council became the legal governing body of each village.

Changes in the upper Tanana polity include loss of autonomy and the fragmentation of leadership. Ellanna and Balluta (1992:273) make the point that prior to sustained contact with non-Natives, Athabascan leaders functioned holistically within the society and their influence and power emerged from the members of society and represented their values. Today the state

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<sup>4</sup> Similar comparisons have made by other elders living in the region. Fred John of Mentasta described Mentasta Mountain as a "chief" and said it was the "remains of your grandfathers" (Kari 1986:13).

has assumed or taken on much of the power that once rested with upper Tanana leaders and society. Examples include the enculturation of young people that has been assumed by schools; social practices such as marriage and adoption; the power to resolve disputes; and access to and strategies for using land and resources. In short most aspects of life now either are influenced or directed by the state.

## SUMMARY

Upper Tanana sociopolitical organization was typical of most hunter/gatherers, as people lived in small, autonomous, groups of closely related kinsmen. Political organization was decentralized and informal, with most decisions affecting the group reached by consensus. Kinship affiliations were extensive, reaching beyond the immediate group and providing people with a network of kinsmen from which to seek assistance when food became scarce. For most of the year people lived in small, autonomous groups, called local bands. Two or more local bands shared a region or territory and under certain conditions might temporarily join together to hunt or fish. In times of food shortage the clan based kinship system provided people with multiple linkages to other groups and allowed them the latitude to seek assistance from a variety of kinsmen. Band exogamy (marrying outside the band) and a preference for cross-cousin marriage (so that people married outside of their clan) reinforced connections to other bands.

At the same time, the Athabascan bands of east central Alaska were distinctive from some other hunter/gatherers by having an extended kinship system that was based on matrilineal clans organized into moieties. Anthropological theory suggests that such a complex social organization is more typical of societies with large populations that inhabit rich ecological areas, such as the Northwest coast of North America. In fact, some anthropologists (Swanton 1905:670-671; Lowie 1920:176; Macleod 1924:254-257) have suggested that Athabascans in Alaska may have adopted matriliney from the Tlingit in the protohistoric or early historic period, although most Athabascan specialists now think that matriliney in interior Alaska is very ancient (McClellan 1964:7-11; VanStone 1974:52). Some anthropologists have also argued that Athabascans adopted ideas about status and wealth from the Tlingit (McKenna 1959:128). Although Athabascan society was generally egalitarian and leadership informal, both the Ahtna and the Natives of the upper Tanana area had rich men or *Hak'ke* who attained high status and became leaders based on their ability to accumulate and redistribute wealth.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century all upper Tanana people lived permanently in small villages whose residents are usually the descendents of one or more regional bands. The extended family and the village are the centers of social life, although the clan based kinship system continues to function, especially during potlatches. Leadership is generally in the hands of an elected village council that is responsible for making decisions and running the affairs of the community. There are no more rich men but in many communities there are older men and women known as "tradition bearers" who the community looks to for guidance in maintaining and passing down traditional values.

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## CHAPTER 5

### RELIGION AND RITUAL

#### INTRODUCTION

The traditional religion of the upper Tanana people has several characteristics common to most Northern Athabascan groups. First, it is non-doctrinaire and highly individualistic (cf. McKennan 1959:159; Ellanna and Balluta 1992:280). This derives from two main themes in Athabascan culture: 1) that firsthand personal experience is the foundation for all true knowledge; and 2) the value placed on individual autonomy. There is no standard authority or dogma but a wide variation in what people believe. While not systematized, Athabascan religious beliefs are neither arbitrary nor illogical but based on a rich oral tradition that informs the knowledge people gain from personal experience.

A second feature of Northern Athabascan religion is the central focus on the relationship between humans and animals. For hunters, a major concern is how to maintain the goodwill of powerful animals that people needed to kill and eat in order to survive (Cruikshank 1990:340). In the Athabascan tradition animals are considered sentient beings with similar emotional characteristics as humans. If treated with respect, animals will freely give themselves to hunters; if not, they will become angry and vengeful, which will have dire consequences for the hunter (Nelson 1983:31).

A third feature of the Athabascan tradition is its holistic view of nature. This contrasts with the Euro-American view in which nature and humans are clearly separated. The Euro-American view derives, in part, from a religious perspective that human beings have been created in God's image and are different from animals because they have a soul; and from a scientific view that animals are instinctual beings, as opposed to humans who are cultural beings. No such distinction is made in the Northern Athabascan tradition. In the distant past, humans and animals were equivalent beings, and even after they became separated, animals were left with some aspects of their humanness (Slobodin 1981). Furthermore, everything in nature is considered to be sentient and to have a soul. Rocks, plants, and animals are not objects governed by instinct, but are social beings that possess power or a "spiritual potency" (Martin 1987:34), are controlled by spirits, and protected by an elaborate system of taboos or rules (de Laguna 1969/70:18). People are always cognizant of the intersection between the material world and the spirit world. Nothing is as it seems and a thoughtless action can trigger a negative response from the spirit world. The word *njii* (translated as taboo or sanction) provides the link between this belief and the activity of living. Every thing in nature, from animals, to plants, to stones, to tools, has a degree of *njii* associated with it and if not treated with the proper consideration, the power or force inherent in these things can disrupt the balance between humans and nature and create havoc.

#### COSMOLOGY OR WORLD VIEW

In traditional Northern Athabascan cosmology there is the concept of a supreme being, an entity that is distant from human affairs, takes no particular form, and is not approached through an intermediary (Sullivan 1942:17). Time is thought to be cyclical so that patterns,

events, and relationships are continuously repeated (Slobodin 1981:526).<sup>1</sup> Christian cosmology, by contrast, is based on a linear concept of time, a progression with no returning in any guise, a movement towards a goal (Slobodin 1994:144). Time begins with God's creation and ends with the last judgment, with the goal being man's redemption. In this context the earth is "provisional" or "preparatory" (Grant 1984: 24) because the Christian's real home is in heaven with God the creator. In the Athabascan tradition, the souls of both humans and animals are constantly recycled so there is no notion of movement towards an end.

In Athabascan culture, time is classified into two broad types, loosely termed "mythic time" and the human present. Mythic time (*yanidqat'a* in the Upper Tanana language) is of a different order than the time in which we now live. In distant time, there was no distinction between animals and humans. Language was pure and free of distortion so that both humans and animals could speak directly to one another (Krupa 1999). Events that occurred in distant time are told in oral narratives that one Native elder has called "the Bible of the Athabascan people" (Attla 1990:ix). Some narratives are simply utilitarian, conveying specific kinds of information that show people how to protect their health and survive in an uncertain and difficult world; others are private knowledge, such as those that have to do with hunting magic, and told only to certain people. Then there are epic narratives or mythic charters that explain how this world came to be and set out the proper relationship between human beings and the natural world.

There are two epic narrative cycles concerning the activities of Raven and the Northern Athabascan culture hero known as *Tsa'Wushyaa'* or *Yamaagh Telch'eegh* – literally "The One who Goes Angrily Around the Edge of the Sky" (Mishler and Simeone 2006:156). The stories about *Tsa'Wushyaa'* are told only during the long, dark, cold months of December (McKenna 1959:105). One person from Tetlin explained that the elders told stories and if you did not listen then you would not be smart.

Oldest one tell stories. Old ladies tell stories. They watch who is listening. Who does not listen, they know. My uncle he told us, "Don't laugh; you are going to be sorry." They hit us hard with stick. We have to shut up. You don't listen and you're not going to be smart (quoted in Guédon 1974:201).

Raven is the world maker and *Tsa'Wushyaa'* the transformer. As the creator, Raven is neither perfect nor inscrutable, but imperfect, full of trickery, and a great manipulator. As one man put it, "The Creator made all things good, but Raven introduced confusion" (Chapman 1914:4 quoted in Krupa 1999:128). According to Chisana Joe, an Upper Tanana man interviewed by Robert McKenna:

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<sup>1</sup>For the Koyukon, Jetté (Jetté and Jones 2000:101) wrote that humans have an inner soul "a soul that is close to our body," and an outer soul. The outer soul is considered a protecting spirit, is mortal, and in the natural course of events, dies before the body. The inner soul animates the body. This soul is immortal and after the death of an individual migrates to the other world where it waits to be reincarnated. Some souls transmigrate into animals' bodies for a time but eventually all souls move into the 'children's house' where they wait to be reincarnated. The reincarnated soul often brings to its new body characteristics of the former one, and then those who have known it in its previous life easily recognize it.

Raven was very wise. Almost as wise as Tsa-o-sha [Tsa'Wushyaa']. Unlike Tsa-o-sha he was not always doing good. He was an awful liar. He would tell a man that he was his father's uncle. In this way he would make friends with him. Then he would kill the man and eat him. No one knows how old Raven is, nor where he came from. Tsa-o-sha grew old and died. No one knows what became of Raven (McKenna 1959:189-190).

Chisana Joe told McKenna a number of stories about Raven including "Raven Builds Alaska" and "Raven Procures the Sun and the Moon" (McKenna 1959:190-191). In the first story, Raven flies south with a family of swans but becomes tired and lands on a little pile of rocks. There he encounters a large fish (McKenna speculates it is a whale) and her baby. Raven steals the child and refuses to give it back until the big fish has dived to the bottom of the sea and brought up rocks, gravel and moss to build Raven an island. In this way Raven creates Alaska.<sup>2</sup> Once Raven has made the land he brought light to the world by stealing the sun and the moon from an old man and his daughter. In Chisana Joe's version of the story, Raven turns himself into a spruce needle that the daughter swallows. She becomes pregnant and soon has a male child. Eventually the child asks to play with the sun and the moon. As soon as he has them the child turns back into Raven and flies away. Raven then puts the sun and moon into the sky and with a long stick cuts a path through the sky for them. With his stick he moves them over this trail, and that is the way they move today.

While Raven formed the land and brought light, it was Tsa'Wushyaa', or the Traveler, who set things in order and made the world safe for human beings. It is the Traveler who, after great difficulty, brings knowledge to the human world where it can benefit the entire community. This knowledge ranges from how to build a canoe or a pair of snowshoes to instructions about how people should behave to ensure the proper relations between hunters and their prey and between other humans.

In Raven's world humans and animals were undifferentiated. Animals could appear and speak as humans, and they ate humans. Humans could turn into animals. On his journey around the world Tsa'Wushyaa' names the different animals, thus distinguishing them from each other and from humans, takes away the animals' power of speech, subdues those animals that prey on humans, and transforms them into their present form as the legitimate prey of human hunters (Krupa 1999:225). Although now separate, humans still recognize their similarity to animals, and animals still retain aspects of their humanness that enables them to know and understand the deepest of human intentions. In essence Tsa'Wushyaa' established a new moral order in which humans become distinct beings, but remain a part of nature and reciprocally obligated to animals not just in the economic sense, but as beings with a common origin and equivalent natures (Schieffelin in Sahlins 1996:403).

Arthur Wright produced the earliest published version of the Traveler epic. Wright was a deacon of the Episcopal Church and fluent in at least one Athabascan language. While working for the church, Wright translated several Athabascan narratives into English and made the translation of the Traveler epic while at Tanacross in either 1924 or 1925. The story was subsequently published in the periodical *Alaskan Churchman* in four installments

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<sup>2</sup> Maggie Isaac and Doris Charles of Dot Lake and Frank Sam and Lilly Northway of Northway told versions of this story in 1966 (Rooth 1971:229-231; 294).

between 1926 and 1930 (Wright 1977:56). Wright called the story “First Medicine Man: the Tale of Yobaghu-Talyonunh” or *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* in the Upper Tanana language. In the following discussion we use the name *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg*.

Several of the stories translated by Wright reveal the genesis of Athabascan culture. For example, in one story *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* encounters a Fish Hawk who shares his catch with the Traveler. After eating his fill *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* caches the remainder of the food in case he returned this way and needed something to eat. But the Fish Hawk tells *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* that he must never leave or waste any food because if he did so he would go hungry (ibid.:21). One of the principal themes of Athabascan culture is that you never waste anything.<sup>3</sup>

Another story tells how *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* received supernatural power. The acquisition of supernatural power is another important theme in Athabascan culture. *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* believed animals had mysterious powers that helped them gain their livelihood and asked himself why he could not acquire the same power of willing things to be? As he walked *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* became weak from hunger. He kept saying, “If I do not eat I will die.” Suddenly a voice said “what do I see following behind you?” Turning quickly, *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* observes two moose crossing his trail, and kills them, thus saving himself from starvation. In this way, *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* learns that by his words he has the power to communicate with the spirit world and to get help in time of starvation (ibid.:25). The belief in the powerful efficacy of words, such as the hunting magic Andrew Isaac received when he was boy, is widespread in Athabascan culture and is still evident today in the many rules associated with talking about animals, spirits, and people. Soon after *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* kills the moose, Fish Hawk man and Wolverine man visit him, and *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* notices that they are both tired and hungry so he treats them to a sumptuous meal. As they are eating *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* realizes that they have come to him for help and that he has robbed them of some of their power. He now knows that if he wanted to, he could completely dominate the animal people’s minds. From then on the animal people began to fear humans more and more.

As noted above, *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* is credited with making the first canoe. During his travels he decides he wants to follow a river, but wonders how he could travel on the river. He then kills a grouse and, looking at the breastbone of the grouse, he visualizes the bow and stern of a canoe. *Yamaagh Telch’eeeg* figures out the skeleton of the canoe and then wonders

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<sup>3</sup> There has been considerable debate among anthropologists as to how beliefs that emphasize respect for animals and non-wasteful use of resources are reconciled with commercial hunting and fishing introduced in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is no indication that commercial trapping went against traditional beliefs (Jetté 1911; McKennan 1959; Nelson 1986). After all, as Jetté writes, it was desirable that humans kill animals as long as the humans treated the remains with respect. In his dissertation on *The Ten’ a Food Quest*, Sullivan (1942:88-123) devotes a full chapter to trapping and there is no mention of a contradiction between traditional beliefs and trapping for the market. As long as people followed the rules and treated animals with respect, commercial trapping was acceptable. For example, Sullivan (ibid.:99) writes that if a hunter found a trapped lynx still alive he must strangle it and not kill it with a club. If he killed the lynx with a club the animal’s spirit would become angry and the man would not catch any more lynx. Later on Sullivan (ibid.:121) writes that many magico-religious beliefs connected with trapping have disappeared because of the influence of the missionary, but he adds that the reason people give for the scarcity of animals is that “all of the medicine-men have died off: there are no longer any medicine-men who ‘know’ the spirit of these animals, there is no one to summon the animals so people can catch them in their traps.”

how to cover it. He takes pieces of bark from various trees and watches to see which floats the best. Birch bark is the only bark that floats downriver without sinking so he uses birch bark to cover the canoe. He then tries to figure out how to caulk the seams in the canoe. After trying several options, four spirits in the form of women come out of the water and show *Yamaagh Telch'eeg* how to stitch and caulk the seams. *Yamaagh Telch'eeg* then tries to take one of these women for his wife but she escapes and these spirits have never been seen again (Wright 1977:36-37).

On another occasion *Yamaagh Telch'eeg* encountered Otter Woman who was very mean and cunning. Eventually *Yamaagh Telch'eeg* was able to kill Otter woman and from her sprang the mink, the weasel, the marten, and the ermine. *Yamaagh Telch'eeg* named these animals and then placed a value on their skins, so to this day humans hunt these animals for their fur (ibid.:38-39).

### **THE ANIMAL-HUMAN RELATIONSHIP**

The proper relationship between humans and animals is a central concern of the traditional Athabascan belief system. Animals were not only a source of food but powerful spiritual beings that must be treated with respect. As described earlier, animals and humans share an essence of personhood. Both are sentient and volitional; that is, they act on their own values and choices, and they share the same fundamental organization in that each has a soul, a language and family life, and both have similar emotional characteristics – including anger and a desire for vengeance. Animals and humans exist in a reciprocal relationship in which it is desirable for humans to kill animals and for animals to give themselves to humans, but on the condition that humans treat the animals' remains with respect. In this regard, humans exist in an abject condition entirely dependent on the good will of animals and other natural forces. Hunters, for example, are never to assume they will kill an animal. As elder David Paul remarks, it is bad luck or *njii* for a hunter to “brag” that he is going to kill a moose or to say that he will successfully cross a river.

Don't brag...Boy say, “I kill moose today!” Man say ‘injee [*njii*]!’ Don't say that. Say instead, “Maybe today, I see moose.’ Boy say ‘I cross river now.’ My grandfather say, “injee!” Maybe you fell in river, drown. You say that. Say, instead, “Maybe, I try cross river today” (Paul 1957b:3).

If humans do not meet their obligations, the spirit of the animal has the power to visit great misfortune on humans. Small mammals such as mice and muskrats cache tender shoots and other vegetable matter to eat. These are sometimes taken by humans to eat. In this quote a woman from Tetlin explains described how people should behave toward muskrats, especially if they take their food cache:

When you find *ni'tsiil*, muskrat food, you got to give a little piece of cloth. You got to give something to that rat. You got to pay for muskrat or mice food. Speak to them as to Indian: “This is for you, don't bother, this I give so you feel good.”

When I was a little girl I didn't know...I found mice cache. “Mom, I said, I find mice cache.” My mom told me, that way: “You got to pay for it.” I laughed: “How do they know us?” My mom told me, “They know us.” My mom told me, “You got to pay for what you take. They do lots of hard work



for that cache.” “Mom,” I said, “what if we don’t pay?” She said, “If you don’t pay, they’ll go inside our cache...and take our meat.”

When I was small, I used to look for mice caches, rat caches too. Now, I don’t like to bother those little animals. I feel sorry for them....It’s too cold....I know how you feel when somebody takes your food.... I don’t want them to starve (Quoted in Guédon 1974:29).

Not all animals are believed to have equally powerful spirits, but to avert calamity all animals have to be treated with respect. Some animals, such as bears and otters, require special treatment and are surrounded by an extraordinary number of taboos because they are considered very dangerous (McKenna 1959:162). When a hunter kills a black bear, he is supposed to mark the forehead of his children with charcoal to safeguard them against the bear’s spirit. The killing of an otter is regarded as very dangerous and a hunter is supposed to purify the gun used to kill the otter and the knife used to skin the otter.

In contrast to the multitude of taboos surrounding bears and otter, caribou and moose were treated rather casually. Nevertheless they were thought to have powerful spirits that have to be placated. Caribou hunters, for example, are not supposed to feed the head of a caribou to a dog lest they anger the animal’s spirit and make the caribou “aloof,” or hard to find.

## **OBTAINING AND USING SUPERNATURAL POWER**

Before discussing power it should be understood that the upper Tanana conceive of power as the ability to accomplish one’s own choices without the implication of having to control the actions of others. In other words, to obtain and exercise power does not necessarily include the idea of controlling someone else, and in fact this idea goes against one of the principal themes in northern Athabascan culture, the autonomy of the individual.

Individuals obtained spiritual power through dreams. Visions or dreams are not self-induced as the result of fasting or self-mutilation, as is often the case among other American Indian groups (McKenna 1959:150). Once a young person begins to dream it is evident he or she has a special gift. During the dream the person is believed to leave his or her body and visits the land of the spirits.<sup>4</sup> Follet Isaac, a shaman from Northway, explained it this way to McKenna:

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<sup>4</sup> According to the anthropologist Robin Ridington, dreaming is thought by the Dunne-za or Beaver, an Athabascan group living in British Columbia, to be an integral part of sentient experience; the natural consequence between physical reality and imagination, body and mind (Ridington 1978:6). During a dream the person’s soul or shadow is believed to leave his or her body and travel away from it. Ghosts are considered souls that have become permanently separated from their bodies. In a state of dreaming a person’s soul is believed to be like a ghost, but unlike a ghost, the dreaming person maintains a body to which he can return. The return of the dreamer’s soul to his body is symbolized by the return of the sun to the morning sky (ibid.).

To insure that their soul will return to their bodies, hunters sleep with their heads toward the place of sunrise. The hunter’s soul is believed to travel in imagination along the trail that lies ahead of him. In order for the soul to safely return to the body there must be no human trail between the dreaming hunter’s pillow and the place in which the sun is anticipated to return. The trail of a menstruating woman, in particular, is believed to paint a red band across the soul’s trail and to cut off the hunter from the dream trail that lies ahead of his body (Ridington 1978:7).

The young man begins his dream. He travels all over in his dream, seeing every kind of animal and talking with them. He gets all worked up. He wakes up feeling tight and stirred. He is like a crazy man. Then he begins to sing. As he sings he feels better. Gradually the tight feeling turns into a song. When it has all left him he is limp like rag. Now he is a doctor (McKenna 1959:151).

According to McKenna (1959:150), most spirit helpers were associated with a particular animal but could also be natural phenomena such as the sun or the moon. During the dream the shaman travels to the spirit world where he converses with the spirits of the animals. Supernatural power can be used to prevent or cure disease, although today people prefer western medicine. But when McKenna (1959) visited the upper Tanana region in 1930, shamans were still active and he was able to attend a number of curing ceremonies. Disease was caused by tangible objects such as piece of string or a bullet or by an invisible spirit that was used by a bad spirit to penetrate the body. A shaman could prevent or cure disease by frightening away or confronting the bad spirit and extracting the object that was causing the affliction. In confronting a bad spirit, the shaman employed a spirit helper, which was the source of the shaman's power.

In addition to acting as healers, shamans had the ability to find animals, predict the future, and foretell changes in the weather, the coming of strangers, or the appearance of caribou. The importance of songs is expressed by the fact that even today some Athabascan elders view songs as a direct communication from God and a form of prayer. According to Minto elder Peter John, animal spirits make the songs, and communicate them to humans. In Peter John's view, the songs are a direct communication from God and are made to remind people that they live by what God gives them (John 1996:25). In Chapter 4 we described how young men receive hunting songs from their relatives. McKenna (1959:165-166) reported that hunters had words or songs for different animals such as the moose or sheep, but also songs to prevent bad weather and songs for wrestling and gambling.

Nabesna John, an upper Tanana man from Nabesna, told McKenna the origin of the sheep song (McKenna 1959:203-205). A man and his wife were camped in a high mountain valley. One day when the men were out hunting, a thick fog rolled into the camp and invisible hands seized his wife by her shoulders. This happened several days in a row so one day the man hid in camp. When the fog rolled in, the man rushed out to seize it and to his surprise he caught a man. He was Cloud Man. The Indian asked Cloud Man to stay and be his hunting partner. Cloud Man was a very successful hunter but the man could never figure out how Cloud Man managed to kill so many sheep. One day the man decided to follow Cloud Man. When Cloud Man got near some sheep he stopped and sang a song and then took from under his coat a short, red-pointed thing and aimed it at the sheep. But the sheep did not die so Cloud Man knew that the man had followed him. Cloud Man became angry and he and the man returned to camp. The next day the Cloud Man was gone. The man followed him and tried to persuade Cloud Man to return but he refused. The man went home and on the way home he saw some sheep. It occurred to the man that he might try the song, so he sang the song and immediately the sheep fell over dead. After that the man always had good luck hunting. When the man got old he passed the sheep song on to his son. Nabesna John concluded the story by saying now that the white man has come, the Indians have departed from the old ways and the sheep song has been lost.

## HEALING CEREMONIES

In upper Tanana culture there are very few explicit acts of worship. This is because almost every activity is tied to some aspect of religion so acts of worship become embedded in daily life (cf. Jetté 1911:95). Most rituals associated with hunting, for example, were small, personal matters performed without display. Healing ceremonies, on the other hand, were social events performed in public. It should be noted that because of pressure from missionaries, healing ceremonies, such as those described by McKennan, are no longer performed publicly, if they are performed at all.

As noted above, McKennan (1959:152-154) attended a number of healing ceremonies during the fall of 1929 when he was on the upper Nabesna River. These ceremonies lasted for only a few hours and were attended by all Native members of the community. They involved various healing rituals that were often accompanied by singing and drumming. McKennan (1959:153) described one such ceremony that occurred on December 20, 1929:

John was treating Corinne for pulmonary hemorrhages. Corinne sat at the far end of the woman's side of the cabin, i.e. the side to the left of the door. John placed stave in center of floor. Started song while others held the chorus he went dashing counter clockwise around the circle. Would take a series of quick, short, shuffling steps, stave held out in left hand, right hand held behind back. Would stop suddenly, then jump forward uttering a spluttering exclamation and bringing his right hand around to the front as though to drive away some bad spirit. More singing and gesticulating. Then John knelt before Corinne with hand on her head while others sang. Finally spat on her head and then went on to Polly. Same procedure and then to Lulu Bell; then to Ed; and then to Lucy.

The ceremony continued in the same vein for a while longer and then ended with John kneeling on the floor and apparently talking to the spirit. The reason for the ceremony, according to John, was that a bad medicine man had died somewhere the summer before and his spirit was skulking around the village. That was the reason there had been so much sickness. The healing included everyone in the community except McKennan because he was the only person who had not been sick (ibid.).

By 1929, aboriginal healing rites like the one described by McKennan had been largely pushed underground by the presence of the missionaries. Mrs. Arthur Wright, who was a missionary at Tanacross from 1922 until 1927, said the Episcopal Church was primarily interested in "stamping out medicine men by trying to make the people feel guilty about seeking out the services of such fakers" (Baggen n.d.).

## THE POTLATCH

Athabascan people now living in east central Alaska memorialize certain life transitions and mediate certain conflicts with a ritual distribution of gifts called a potlatch. Today all upper Tanana communities, along with every Ahtna community, and Athabascan communities as far away as Minto, Nenana, and Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory, take part in the potlatch. In some of the anthropological literature the potlatch is considered primarily a social event (cf. VanStone 1974; McKennan 1959), but it also has spiritual or religious overtones. Life transitions ranging from the celebration of a young person's first successful harvest of food

to memorializing the death of an individual are commemorated by a distribution of gifts. In the past an offence as grievous as murder could be mediated by a ritual distribution of gifts. A person now can make amends for lesser offences by giving away gifts and hosting a feast (cf. Guédon 1981:577). Potlatches, such as those held to commemorate a young person's first harvest, are usually small events attended by just a few people. The death of an older person requires having a much larger potlatch that includes inviting participants from multiple communities. Currently, a potlatch, commonly referred to as a funeral potlatch, is held immediately following the funeral, while another potlatch, called a memorial potlatch, may be held years later. The following description concerns mortuary rituals that are practiced today.

The structure of the potlatch exchange is rooted in traditional Athabascan social organization. In Chapter 4 we described how upper Tanana society was divided into matrilineal clans arranged in two halves or moieties. During a potlatch, the principals are the hosts (including the deceased), who belong to one clan, and the guests, who belong to the opposite clan. People in opposite clans have a reciprocal obligation to marry one another and help one another during life crises, such as the death of an individual. Death produces bereavement affecting all members of the community and creates a particularly dangerous and contradictory emotional situation. There is also a danger that the deceased's spirit may try to take another soul with it.<sup>5</sup> Members of the opposite moiety have the obligation to prepare the corpse and grave, and provide comfort to the grieving relatives of the deceased. In return, the hosts prepare a feast, and accumulate gifts, which they then distribute to those who have fulfilled their obligations.

Consisting of a sequence of activities over three days, the potlatch provides what may be called a dramatic frame for the expression of grief and eulogizing the deceased. Potlatch events include feasting, dancing, singing, and oratory climaxed by a distribution of gifts during the final night.

***Feasting:*** One of the primary obligations of the hosts is to feed their guests. The hosts are expected to provide three meals a day, including large feasts that are held every evening. As soon as the decision is made to have a potlatch, the hosts begin to accumulate stocks of food and hunters are sent out to kill a moose. The meat from the moose is cooked outdoors in huge pots over open fires. Meat from the head, including the nose, is cut up and made into soup. Ducks, salmon, and other wild foods, such as beaver, are also prepared. In addition to wild foods the hosts prepare a variety of store-bought foods such as spaghetti (which is considered children's food), salads, cakes, pies, jello, and bread. When the food is ready it is brought into the community hall where everyone is gathered. The guests sit on benches along the wall. The best seats are reserved for the elders. Dishes, plates, and eating utensils are laid out on the floor, which is covered with long strips of brown wrapping paper that form table cloths. The meal always begins with prayer while the host's helpers serve the food.

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<sup>5</sup> The Koyukon believed that a soul recently departed from the other world wants a companion with whom to travel to the afterlife and will endeavor to take along some other soul from the place. To prevent this, they grease the deceased's hands with fat so should it grab another soul, this may slip through the hands and thus escape, or else they put a piece of fish into the deceased's mittens so they catch nothing but fish (Jetté and Jones 2000:383).

Only young men are allowed to serve food. Young women, because of their menstrual cycle, are not allowed to serve food. Elder guests are given the choicest foods, such as boiled moose meat. All the guests are provided with more food than they can possibly eat as a gesture of generosity. At the end of each feast all of the remaining food is distributed to the guests.

**Oratory:** Oratory is an important part of any modern potlatch (Simeone 1991:162-165). Both the hosts and the guests are expected to give speeches. Guests offer public condolences that are aimed at transforming the experience of the mourners and removing their grief. For their part, the hosts are expected to explain their reasons for giving the potlatch and to express their gratitude for the guests' participation. Often these speeches are traded back and forth, each side using expressions of love and respect that are supposed to strengthen the harmony and cooperation among the participants. Older men who understand how to use the metaphors that can assuage the grief of the mourners and establish a tone of harmony and cooperation offer traditional condolence speeches. For example, in offering condolences, the speaker might refer to a local landmark (see Chapter 2) as a symbol of strength and fortitude that the mourners should emulate. In return, the hosts give very emotional speeches expressing their gratitude for the guests' participation and assistance in the potlatch.

**Dancing and singing:** Dancing and singing are integral to the potlatch. By dancing and singing the guests are expected to both entertain their hosts and support them in the grieving process. Two kinds of songs are performed at a potlatch, each accompanied by the beat of a drum. "Sorry songs" are dirges made especially to eulogize the deceased. Sung in a monotone, sorry songs fill the community hall with excruciating emotion, often bringing people to tears. As the immediate family of the deceased rises to dance, others rise with them, and gather tightly around to offer both physical and emotional support. Heads bowed, hair falling over the faces of the women, the dancers sway their upper bodies to the beat of the drum, shuffling their feet in short abbreviated steps. For a time the mourners are allowed to freely express their grief but after awhile the mourners are drawn away from their grief by joyous dancing and singing that emphasizes life over death.

"Dance songs," are used to excite the dancers and create an atmosphere of celebration. Dancing rapidly, the participants are supposed to forget themselves and loosen up. As one man from Tanacross put it "...Sing Wu Wu back and forth, singing the sadness away and then out comes the calico!" In other words, after they have expelled their grief, the mourners' mood changes and they dance joyfully with long strips of cloth that represent a good time (Simeone 1991:162).

**Distribution of gifts:** Today an assortment of gifts is distributed at potlatches, including money, beaded items such as mittens, gloves and necklaces, rifles, and blankets. As potlatch gifts these items are more than mere objects; they are the objectification of the host's most deeply felt emotions (Simeone 1991:165). By giving away guns, blankets, and beads infused with feeling the host can express or discharge his or her grief and symbolically dissolve the corpse, thus "letting go" of the deceased and ending the period of public mourning (Simeone 1991:158). As one person from Northway put it,

It makes you feel good to give away gifts to the people that are with you. A lot of times that's why they have a second potlatch to bring back the dead and completely put the person away. I mean you'll still remember the person, but

the potlatch helps to get rid of the rest of the feeling (quoted in Yarber 1987:12).

Once the dancing and singing is over, the floor of the community hall is swept, and large pieces of fabric or sheets of plastic are laid down. The gifts are then brought through one of the widows in the hall. A Tetlin resident explains that it would be bad luck to bring the gifts through the door because young women have been walking through the doors.

That door, young girls come. Some women they are not careful. Young girls [during their puberty] – that’s why they got to use the windows. That way, good luck. Potlatch things you have to be careful. You cannot take through where women are walking (quoted in Guédon 1974:224).

This is also the reason that the gifts are not placed directly on the community hall floor. Once the gifts have been laid out, several elders and the hosts sing a song over the gifts. This is the potlatch or “giveaway song.” Intimately connected to the gifts, the song is sung just before they are distributed throughout the room. It is sung by the hosts supported by clan leaders who are strong singers and who know the song very well. The intent of the song is to spiritualize the gifts so that they will bring good luck to the hosts and convey appropriate feelings. The song is sung behind a beat of the drum which is very distinctive. It has to be sung precisely, without faltering or making mistakes, since making a mistake is considered extremely bad luck (Simeone 1995:145; Guédon 1974:220).

If you make potlatch song, you have to stay good for a little while. You have to be careful. You miss, maybe two times, bad luck, endji [*njii*]. Right here you have to give up for a while [i.e., stop singing] till you really remember it all. You got to make no mistake. Just this one – endji [*njii*] That’s why you have to learn. We call luck song (quoted in Guédon 1974:220).

After the song is completed the host then distributes the gifts one by one. Important elders from the opposite clan, and those who have been actively involved in the preparation of the corpse and burial, are given the first gifts, usually a rifle, several blankets, a beaded necklace, and some cash. Those men and women who dug the grave (usually young people who have done the manual labor) are given a rifle and blanket in addition to shovels, ropes, and other equipment used in its excavation. If the hosts have amassed enough gifts, practically every adult guest will receive a blanket. Children and young people are seldom acknowledged with a gift. Eventually all of the gifts are distributed. At that point everyone who has received a gift is supposed to dance one final dance, holding the gifts in the air and singing. The potlatch is then officially over.

## **SUMMARY**

Traditional Athabascan religion is non-doctrinaire and highly individualistic, with no standard authority, but a wide variation in what people believe based on a rich oral tradition that informs the knowledge gained from experience. A major theme of the traditional belief system is the relationship between humans and animals. Animals are considered powerful sentient beings that, if not treated with respect, can be vengeful, leaving humans hungry and desperate. An additional feature of the Athabascan tradition is its holistic view of nature. Everything in nature is considered sentient, possessing a spiritual energy, or *njii*, and

protected by an elaborate system of rules, that if not carefully observed, could upset the balance between humans and nature, causing havoc.

Time is cyclical rather than linear, and is classified into mythic, or distant time, and the human present. The two epic narrative cycles concern the mythical activities of Raven, the world maker, and *Yamaagh Telch'eeg*, the transformer. These epics are what one elder has called "the Bible of the Athabascan people" (Attla 1990:ix). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century most northern Athabascan people consider themselves to be Christians and many of the beliefs and rituals described in the preceding pages are no longer practiced. Yet traditional beliefs have not simply disappeared or gone underground, out of the sight of disapproving missionaries. Christianity and the traditional belief system have become fused and in many places exist simultaneously in a single system. Many Athabascan people do not see a contradiction between Christianity and traditional beliefs and they point to such stories as *Great Raven Who Shaped the World* as proof that Athabascans had knowledge of the great flood before the arrival of Christian missionaries.

## CHAPTER 6

### UPPER TANANA MATERIAL CULTURE

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief overview of upper Tanana material culture. In the past almost everything people used was constructed of materials that were locally available. Tools were made from stone, bone, antler, and native copper, while clothing was fashioned from the skin and sinew of caribou and moose, and the furs of rabbit, lynx, wolf, and marten. People lived in skin tents or semi-subterranean houses covered with bark. Over a hundred years ago, men and women filled their long hair with grease, and decorated it with chopped up feathers and red ocher. Both men and women wore earrings and pierced the septum of their noses. Their skin shirts were daubed with red ocher, and decorated with feathers, animal claws, and dentalium shells obtained in trade from the coast. Currently only a few old men and women remember the old technology or items of clothing. Everyone wears modern clothing and cuts their hair in the latest fashion. They live in houses with most of the conveniences, hunt with high-powered rifles, drive pick up trucks and snowmachines, and watch cable television.

#### HOUSING

Most of the Native residents of the upper Tanana region now live in houses with running water and electricity, but as recently as 1970, a majority lived in small log cabins without modern conveniences. Log cabins were introduced into the region at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century and by the 1920s had replaced most traditional forms of housing construction. Some families had a series of log cabins situated along traplines or lived in canvas wall tents purchased from the traders. These tents had a hole in the roof to accommodate a small wood stove, often made from a five-gallon can. The floors were covered with spruce boughs that were fitted together to provide a smooth, fragrant carpet on which to sleep.

Prior to the introduction of log cabins and canvas wall tents, Native people in the upper Tanana region built several different types of houses or structures according to activity and season of the year (see Pitts 1972:179-193 for details on all types of housing). The most substantial houses were semi-subterranean structures constructed of a wooden frame and covered with spruce bark. Such houses were occupied during the winter months (cf. McKennan 1959; Pitt 1972). Laura Anderson's mother (Anderson 1956:5), who was born along the Goodpaster River around 1866, described the construction of a winter bark house. First a large hole was excavated and then a frame consisting of spruce poles was set up over the hole. The frame was covered with birch bark, which was then covered with a layer of moss and dirt. A fireplace was set in the middle of house under a smoke hole in the roof. Either a caribou or bear skin was used to cover the entrance. Around the interior walls were benches made of poles for the men to sleep on. Women and children slept underneath the benches. Wealthy men and their families occupied large bark houses, some of which were 20 to 40 feet long and 10 to 25 feet wide (Pitts 1972).

When on the move, people lived in domed tents consisting of a wooden pole frame covered with either caribou or moose skins. Usually two families shared a tent and a common hearth. Tappan Adney, a journalist who traveled with the Han during the gold rush of 1898, provided the best description of these tents. According to Adney (1900:499), the women first cleared a space about 18 feet in diameter. Some of the women then laid down spruce bows within the space



while others erected the tent poles. These were about an inch thick and had been previously bent and seasoned to form a curve. Between 16 and 20 poles were set up with the upper ends pointing toward the middle to form a dome about ten feet high. They were stiffened with two arched cross-poles underneath. The frame was then covered with a caribou skin, tanned with the hair on and sewn to fit the dome. The skins completely covered the frame except in the middle where there was a smoke hole and at the doorway over which was hung a piece of blanket. In the 1960s a person from Tetlin described the interior of the tent:

Both sides are same looking. Right in the middle we burn wood. Beds all around, skin bed; we call caribou skin bed '*udjic tel*'. Sometimes two families stay together. One on each side of the fire. Everybody got his own blanket (quoted in Guédon 1974:55).

When traveling during the summer, people lived in conical shaped tents covered with bark or double lean-tos covered with skins, and later, canvas tarps. Brush shelters were also used when young boys and girls were secluded during puberty (see below).

## TRANSPORTATION

People carried loads on their backs that were secured by a breast strap or tumpline, which is a strap that fit across the forehead (McKenna 1959:88-94). During the summer, dogs carried packs made of skin and later canvas. Particular attention was paid to how the pack was loaded in order to insure the comfort and endurance of the animal. The packs had to be evenly balanced. Soft items were placed on the inside next to the dog's skin, while hard items were placed on the outside of the pack (Simeone and VanStone 1986:20).

The snowshoe is such an integral part of Upper Tanana culture that its invention, together with that of the toboggan, is ascribed to the mythical culture hero *Tsa'Wushyaa*' (McKenna 1959:90). Typical trail-breaking snowshoes were about 4-1/2 feet long by a foot wide and extremely light and well balanced. Anyone familiar with snowshoes will know the general shape with a rounded toe that was bent upwards. The toe and heel of the snowshoe frame was filled with thin babiche or rawhide string in a crisscross pattern. The holes in the pattern had to be the correct size so that snow would fall through rather than pile up on the shoe. According to Tanacross elder David Paul (1957b:3), the construction of snowshoes was subject to certain rules or taboos. For example, snowshoes had to be put together in the direction that the sun circles the earth. Snowshoes were critical to successful winter hunting and most men were trained to run and maneuver through thick woods on a pair of snowshoes.

Basket- sleds, such as the style used in dog races like the Iditarod, were introduced at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before that, people used toboggans made from two thin boards turned up at the end (Plate 1). Toboggans were about 10 to 12 feet long and 2 to 4 feet wide. According to McKenna (1959:91), the boards were thinned with an adze while the tree was still upright. Before dog traction was introduced at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, men pulled the toboggans while the women pushed from behind.



Plate 1. Tanacross people with basket style sledge and toboggan, circa 1919.  
(Photo by F.B. Drane, courtesy of the University of Alaska).

Snowmachines began to replace dog teams in the 1950s but not until the 1960s were they reliable and affordable enough to become the dominant form of transportation in the bush. The machines are now fast and relatively comfortable, and have extended the range of hunters and trappers. Trips that once took days, if not weeks to accomplish with a dog team are now completed in a day or matter of hours. The ease in travel has practically eliminated the need for hunters and trappers to remain away from home for long extended periods. While snowmachines have replaced dog teams as the primary means of off-road transportation, some people still use dog teams for recreation and sport. Sled dog racing is a popular winter activity and spectator sport in the upper Tanana region.

Two types of boats were used by Native people in the upper Tanana region. The first was a flat-bottomed, birch bark canoe that weighed about forty pounds and measured between 12 and 16 feet long and two feet wide. The canoe was propelled with a single bladed paddle or poled upstream using two short sticks. Bark canoes were constructed in the spring, when the bark was easily removed from the trees (McKenna 1981:537). Men built the frame out of birch or spruce, while the women fitted the bark to the frame, sewed up the seams with spruce root, and sealed them with spruce pitch. In more recent times canvas replaced birch bark as a covering (Plate 3-2). Canoes were used in both rivers and lakes. The upper Tanana also used skin boats to carry heavy loads. These were both deeper and wider than the canoe. The usual skin boat was covered with either moose or caribou skin and was about 12 feet long and 4 feet wide (McKenna 1959:93). Aluminum river scows powered by powerful outboard engines are currently used extensively for river travel.



Plate 2. Canvas canoe in Tetlin, circa 1950. (Photograph courtesy of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art).

## TOOLS

Of all the tools employed by Alaska Natives living in the upper Tanana region to harvest wild food, snares were certainly the most efficient, and probably more important than the bow and arrow. Snares were used to take small and middle-sized animals such as mountain squirrels, hares, lynx, and beaver. Large animals like moose, caribou, and Dall sheep were also caught using heavy snares made from strands of moose hide that were twisted or braided together. Snares to catch moose and caribou were used in conjunction with a barricade or fence constructed of brush and wooden poles. Two types of fences were used. One was a single fence with a series of snares set into openings and was used to catch either moose or caribou. David Paul (1957b:14) described such a fence that ran between two hills and had snares “every little way.” Dogs were used to drive the moose toward the fence and when the moose tried to break through its head became entangled in the snare. The other was a set of two long fences that converged to form a corral or pound. The purpose of these fences was to guide or channel herds of caribou into a corral where they could be easily killed with a spear or knife. McKennan (1969a:100) thought the caribou fence was the most important technological device used by the upper Tanana.

A particularly elaborate caribou fence has been reported in the vicinity of Ketchumstuk at the head of the Fortymile River. This fence was used as recently as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to intercept the Fortymile Caribou Herd that migrated through the area in the spring and fall. Game fences, such as the one described below were used throughout the upper Tanana region.

David Paul (1957b:15-16) of Tanacross described a caribou fence used by his grandfather near the Mosquito Fork of the Fortymile River. According to David Paul, the fence was about four and a half feet high so that the animals could not jump over it. The rails of the fence were braced

so the caribou could not knock them over. This fence was small when compared to the one at Ketchumstuk. David Paul pointed out the dangers in working with a caribou fence.

My grandfather and uncle have caribou camp on tundra at Long Cabin. This fence maybe 4.5 feet high so animals not jump over, and it won't upset because this fence braced against run of these caribou. Each brace maybe six inch at bottom. This top maybe two, three inch. This only small fence at Long Cabin. At Ketchumstuk, old chief Isaac had caribou fence with just trap part mile deep. People go out all around and spread out and start driving caribou to trap. Only two or three stay there. They shoot big, fat caribou and let thin ones go.

People tell this man not go by caribou fence. Everyone say, "Get out! Get out!" but this man not get out and caribou come and pound him down. No one know how many pound him down but he die.

In 1904, L.L. Bales wrote an article called "Caribou Fences in Alaska" that provided general description of fences he had seen, including the fence at Ketchumstuk. The rails of the fence were about seven feet high and built leaning away from the trail so that the caribou could not jump over them. The fence was secured to trees in order to stabilize it. Where two trees grew at the right distance apart to create an opening in the fence people placed a rawhide snare. At desirable camping places along the fence people built side loops, pens, and chutes. The openings at these places narrowed, similar to a fish trap, so the caribou became constricted in their movements and easily killed. The fences usually led to within two or three miles of a village where people built a pound with turns and angles where the caribou could be efficiently dispatched with arrows, spears, and knives.

Several explorers noticed the caribou fence in the vicinity of Ketchumstuk. In 1890, E. H. Wells (1975) wrote that this caribou fence resembled a rail fence used by farmers to protect their crops. The fence extended for miles and converged into U-shaped corrals. Lieutenant Billy Mitchell described a caribou fence he observed in the Mosquito Flats in the late winter of 1902:

These Indians had a clever scheme for killing caribou. For miles along the low range of hills bordering the Mosquito Flats they had constructed a series of fences about eight or nine feet high. These led into pens something like a fish trap. When the caribou began to come into the vicinity of these stockades, Indians posted on eminences would signal to other[s] waiting on each flank where the caribou herd was located. They signaled by means of smoke from a fire built in a hole, alternately holding a blanket over the pit and pulling it away, thus allowing puffs of smoke to escape. The Indians would then run out on their snowshoes and surround the caribou, driving them along the fences and into the pens.... (Mitchell 1982:50).

Mitchell went on to explain that women and children attacked the penned caribou with bows and arrows and spears, and then butchered the animals.

Every bit of the caribou is saved, his hide, his feet, horns, entrails, and even his skeleton. From the hides they make clothing. What meat they cannot eat immediately, they dry, and the bones are used to make all sorts of implements (Mitchell 1982:50).

During the spring of 1921, the naturalist O. J. Murie (1935) visited the upper Tanana region and reported that there were several game fences on different tributaries of the upper Fortymile River. Five miles southwest of Ketchumstuk there was a corral with a small pocket located half way up one side. Across from the mouth of the corral was a straight guide fence that was about six miles long. Murie inquired about the fence at Tanacross and was told that when the caribou filled the corral, the entrance was blocked and the Natives went along the edge of the corral shooting the caribou with bows and arrows and spearing them with a knife attached to a long pole. Trees located on the brow of a hill and shorn of their branches were used for lookouts, and wooden lookout towers were also constructed (Plate 3).

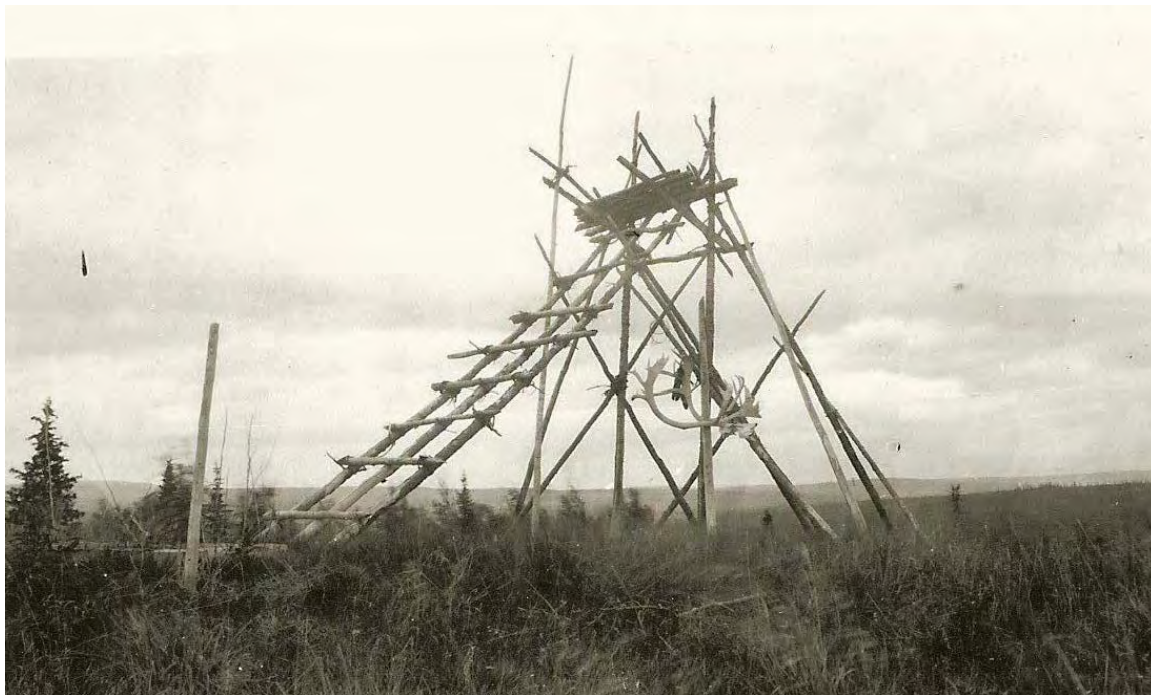


Plate 3. Caribou lookout, upper Fortymile River. (Photograph courtesy of Gaither Paul)

Murie (1935) also described how moose were taken with snares. When hunters spotted a moose they constructed a snare fence and drove the moose toward it. Moose would not fight a snare and they died relatively quickly when caught, whereas caribou fought and usually survived much longer in a snare. Snares were made of babiche cut from the summer or fall hide of moose. The winter hide of moose and caribou skin was too thin to use in making snares. People from Tanacross told Murie that they stopped using the caribou fence around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century after they had obtained repeating rifles. But at the time of Murie's visit in 1921 they were still using snares made out of telegraph wire to capture both moose and caribou. Snare fences were especially important to older hunters who were not strong enough to travel or stalk an animal.

Silas Solomon, an elder from Tanacross (1984), explained that there was a continuous fence between Ketchumstuk and Birch Lake (Figures 3 and 4). Silas drew a map of the fence showing the route and the different villages located along fence. According to Silas, corrals were located near each of the villages, including Ketchumstuk, Flint Hill, Crows Nest, and Red Sand Village. On his map Silas drew a corral constructed in the shape of a Figure 8, which enabled caribou coming from both the north and the south to be captured. Silas said the local chief or leader

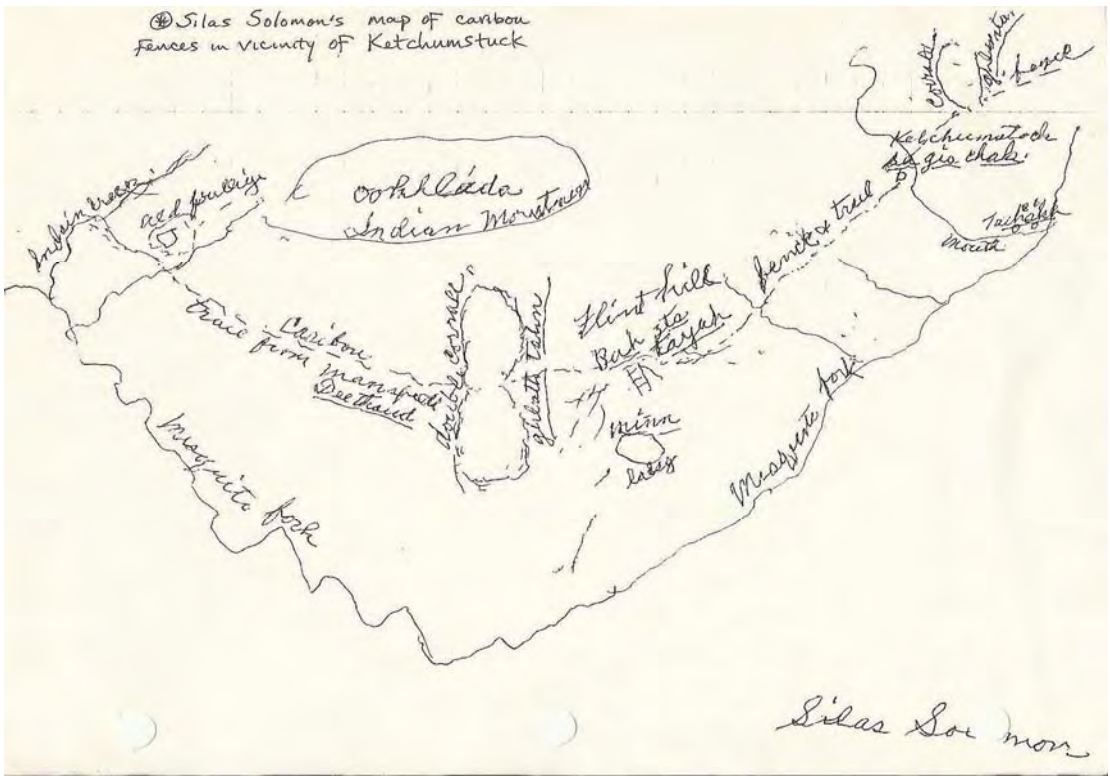


Figure 3. Hand drawn map of caribou fence by Silas Solomon. In the center of the map is the figure 8 corral. (Bureau of Indian Affairs 1987).

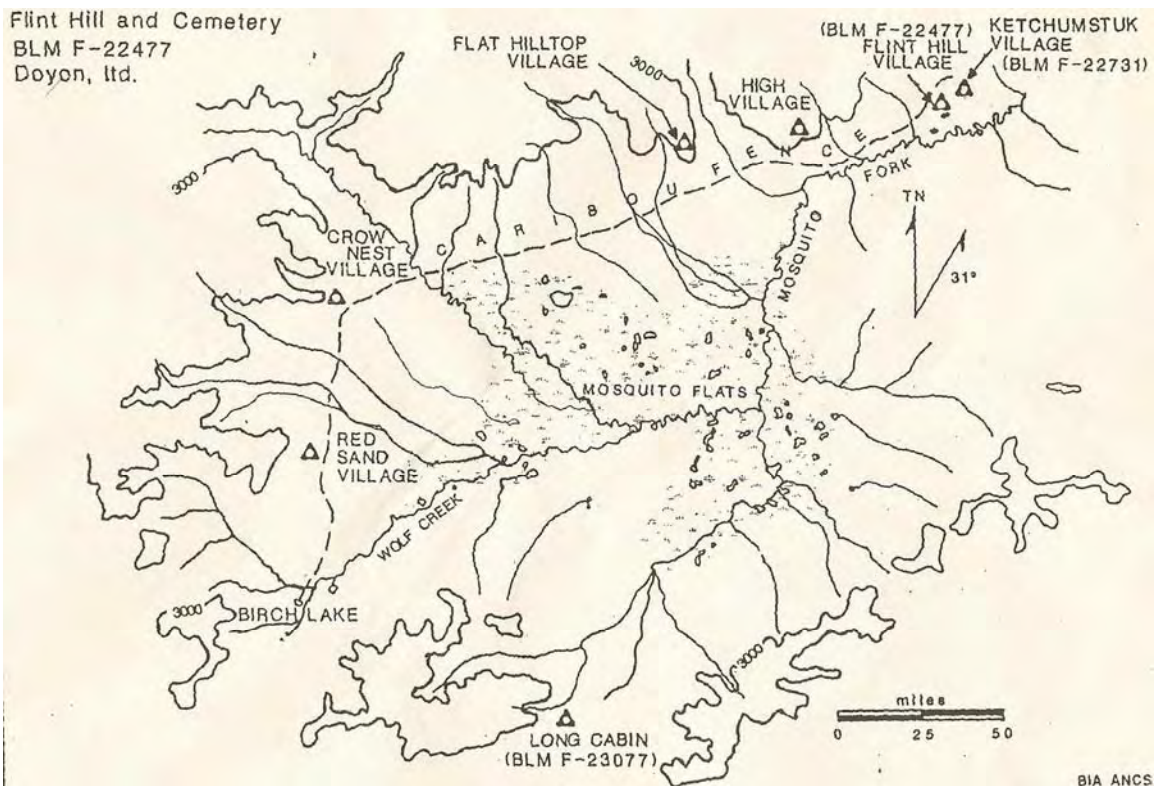


Figure 4. Cartographer's interpretation of Silas's map (Bureau of Indian Affairs 1987).

managed the corral and had assistants to help maintain it. In addition to the fence there were a series of underground food caches, lined with birch bark and used to store meat. Silas said that underground caches were used before the introduction of the high cache.

In addition to caribou, the other important food resource harvested by the upper Tanana people was whitefish. Whitefish inhabit and spawn in large lake systems. Most whitefish over winter in rivers and migrate into lakes during the spring or early summer. In late summer they return to the rivers where they spawn. To intercept the whitefish migrations, the upper Tanana people built weirs out of spruce poles and brush to block up a stream (Plate 4).



Plate 4. Frank Sam of Northway standing on a whitefish weir near Northway. (Photo by Robert McKennan, courtesy of William Workman.)

In the center of the weir was an opening where either a fish trap or dip net was placed. The whitefish weir was built at angles to the stream and had two platforms on either side of the weir openings. A fisher stood on one of these platforms and inserted the dip net into the opening of the weir. When a fish was caught, it was either dumped on to the platform or into a pit. These types of weirs and dip nets were used at Tetlin, Northway, and Mansfield (McKenna 1959:62).

Fish traps were constructed in the shape of a cylinder with an opening like an inverted funnel that allowed the fish to easily enter the trap but made it hard to escape. The dip net used to catch whitefish was generally much larger than that used for salmon, which was designed for use in a strong current. The whitefish net was intended for slow moving water and the rim was large enough (between 35 and 48 inches in diameter) to fill the opening of the weir (McKenna 1959:62). Thin roots from small spruce trees were used to make the net. When fishing, the whitefish dip net was wedged into the opening of the weir. Fisherman could not see when fish enter the net so they set a small wooden wand in the net. When a fish entered the net, its tail struck the wand and the fisherman knew he had caught a fish (Paul 1957:19).

The upper Tanana used bows and arrows to kill big and small game and as a weapon of war (McKenna 1959; 1981:535; Simeone and VanStone 1986:18). Bows were between 5 and 6 feet in length and made from birch wood that was heated in a fire to straighten the shaft and harden the wood. A bow guard, or projecting tang of wood about three inches long, was lashed to the inner surface of the bow to take the impact of the string. Bowstrings were made of twisted sinew. Arrows ranged from 22 to 26 inches in length, the shaft being slightly larger at the fore end and made from spruce, hewed from a block of wood and straightened with fire, much like the bows. Before people had easy access to iron and steel, arrowheads were made from bone, antler, and copper. The shape of the arrowhead depended on the type of game being hunted. Blunt points were used to kill small game; heads with sharp thin edges and serrated shoulders were used to hunt large game, while arrows with pronged heads were used to kill waterfowl. The arrowheads used for big game were designed to separate from the shaft on impact.

The first guns were introduced into east central Alaska sometime in the mid-19th century, and were muzzle loading flintlocks (McKenna 1959:57). Guns did not immediately replace bows and arrows, which remained in use until the 20th century because ammunition was often hard to obtain. Muzzle-loading guns probably had little effect on Athabascan subsistence activities because they were inaccurate, unless fired at very close range, and unreliable; if the firelock or the powder got wet the guns were apt to misfire. Not until the introduction of breech-loading rifles in the 1870s did a single hunter become particularly lethal. With a lever-action rifle, a solitary hunter could shoot a relatively large number of caribou at a considerable distance. The introduction of breech loading rifles, and increased availability of ammunition, eliminated the need for caribou surrounds and snare fences because a single hunter with a rifle could be so effective. Rifles did not eliminate the use of snares to catch rabbits and other fur bearing animals, because in this case snares were much more efficient and did not damage the animal's pelts.



In 1929, Chisana Joe, an Upper Tanana man who lived along the upper Chisana River, told McKenna (n.d.) that the first firearms came from the Yukon River. First there were flintlocks, followed by .45-.70, then .44 and .38 Winchester, and finally .30-.30 Winchester. Charlie James, who was born along the upper Copper River in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but raised in Tanacross (Simeone field notes n.d.) recalled that his father had a muzzle loader and a .44 Winchester but many people still had bows and arrows, which they preferred because lead (to make bullets) and shells were difficult to obtain. The accouterments for muzzleloaders included a pouch hung around the neck that was used to hold percussion caps, a pouch for bullets that hung on the hip, and a powder horn, which hung on the opposite hip. Powder was measured into the hand, emptied into the barrel followed by a bullet, which was held in the mouth, and rammed home. The powder adhered to the wet bullet, which was one reason it was kept in the mouth. Charlie James said that his father could fire a muzzleloader quite quickly, almost like a .30-.30.

Plate 5. Copper Knife (Photograph courtesy J.W. VanStone, Field Museum of Natural History)



Other tools used by Native people in the upper Tanana region included knives, adzes and mauls, crooked knives, beamers made from caribou or moose tibia, bone awls, and a cord drill that was used to make fires (cf. McKennan 1959:65; 1981: 535-536; Simeone and VanStone 1986:21-22). Before iron was available the Native people of the region made knives from hammered copper. Some knives were double edged and had flaring fluted handles (Plate 5). Adzes were used for cutting, scrapping, and planing wood. The handle of the adze was fashioned from an elbowed willow root while the blade was made of flint or copper and after the introduction of iron made from files or the discarded blade of a wood plane. Stone mauls were used in the construction of fish weirs and houses. Crooked knives were used to carve snowshoe frames and canoe frames. The knife consisted of a short metal blade curved at the end and set into a bone or wooden handle. Beamers were used to remove fat and flesh from skins while awls were used to push holes through wood or skin.

## **DRESS AND ADORNMENT**

Aboriginal summer clothing for both sexes consisted of a tunic made of tanned skin of caribou or young moose and a pair of trousers with attached moccasins (McKennan 1959:78). In place of the moccasin trousers people sometimes wore knee high skin boots. Men's shirts differed from those worn by women in that they came to a point in front and back while the women's was cut straight or rounded off at the hem. Women's tunics were also longer, reaching somewhere just below the knees or almost to the ankles. To protect themselves from mosquitoes, adults wore separate hoods and gloves or mittens made of caribou skin. Children's summer clothes were similar to the adults except their hoods were usually attached to the garment.

Winter clothing followed the same general pattern as that worn during the summer except it was usually made from either tanned caribou or sheepskin with the hair left on. Winter clothes and sleeping robes were also made of hare or rabbit fur cut into strips and twisted so that the hair was on all sides. The strips of fur were then woven into blankets of garments. Rabbit skin clothes were warm but tended to be heavier and tore more easily than clothing made of caribou skin. People also wrapped their feet with rabbit fur before putting on their moccasins.

Frederick Whymper and William Healy Dall's descriptions of Tanana Indians that they met at the mouth of the Tanana River during the summer of 1866 are perhaps the earliest accounts of Tanana River Athabascan dress and adornment. Whymper described the Native people as "...gay with painted faces, feathers in their long hair, patches of red clay at the back of their heads covered with small fluffy feathers, double tailed coats and pantaloons of buckskin much adorned with fringes and beads and elaborately worked fire-bags and belts" (Whymper [1868] 1966:210). Later on during his trip, Whymper met another group of Tanana River people at Fort Yukon (ibid. 223) who wore ornaments in their noses made of dentalium shells.

Dall's description provides further detail. The Tanana River people were distinguished by having "their clothes and bodies smeared with red clay" (most likely red ocher mixed with fat). They wore their hair long and "taken up in strands which are thickly plastered with grease and red clay one by one, and finally the whole...load weighing at least 20 lbs. in an adult - is bound with a fillet and hangs to the shoulders." The hair was then powdered with finely cut swan's down. Their clothing was decorated with bear and wolf claws, wolf ears, small ermine skins, hawk and eagle feathers, beaver teeth (which they used to sharpen their knives), the bright green scalps of mallard ducks, sable tails, beads, pearl, dentalium shells, dyed moose hair, and brass

buttons, which were suspended from belts worn either around the waist or over the shoulder (Dall [1870] 1970: 95).

It is not known exactly to which Tanana River people Whymper and Dall's descriptions applied, but information collected by Laura Anderson (1956:3) fits with these earlier descriptions. According to Anderson's mother, both men and women wore their hair long, and pulled back so that it hung down the back in a ponytail. To this length of hair they added grease and duck down until the tail became quite large. Some people also added 'wampum' or dentalium shells to the tail. During a potlatch both women and men daubed their faces with red ocher. The men made two long streaks below each eye and across their nose. Women applied streaks across their forehead and on the ridge of their nose. Wealthy men and women decorated their clothing with dentalium shells and wore wide collars of shells around their necks and long earrings that hang down to their shoulders. At a potlatch the chief wore a wide necklace of dentalium shells that covered his chest.

To prepare the necessary skins for a suit of clothes, the excess flesh and fat were removed from the skin using a scraper or fleshing tool made from the lower leg bone of a moose. If required, the hair was also removed from the skin. The skin was then submerged overnight in a mixture of water and either caribou or moose brains. The following day the skin was wrung out. A large skin had to be twisted and worked by several women until it was completely dry. If the skin was not soft enough after this process, it had to put back into the tanning solution and scraped and worked again until it was soft (Anderson 1956:7). Finally the skin was lightly smoked for four of five days using a smudge fire made of rotten, yellow stumps. Sometimes skins were smoked so they became a deep golden brown but most garments were made from the bleached skin. To cut out the pieces of a garment women used a sharp knife and stitched the seams with sinew using a bone awl to punch holes in the skin. If moose or caribou brains were not available, skins could be tanned using the urine of small children (ibid. 8).

Well-made clothing, sewn with very fine stitches, not only indicated a woman's ability as a seamstress but demonstrated how well she had been trained. Men would not marry a woman who sewed with large stitches (Tyone 1996:19). Clothes reflected a person's social status. Fine clothing was associated with competent, moral people who took care of themselves and others, and refrained from gossip, boasting, and dishonesty. These people were often distinguished by the profusion of porcupine quillwork and fringes on their clothing. Amulets or charms, such as animal bones, teeth, or claws were sewn into clothing to ward off evil or to impart the particular characteristic of that animal to the wearer. For example, a beaver shoulder blade sewn into a child's coat or strung across the chest was supposed to impart strength, the talon of a hawk made a person swift, a bear claw meant you would not be afraid, and weasel skin was supposed to enable a person to walk lightly on snow.

Changes in dress and adornment accelerated after Alaska was sold to the United States in 1867. American trading companies were able to expand the trade into interior Alaska and import a relatively large quantity and assortment of goods, including cheap manufactured clothing. Another source of manufactured clothing were prospectors and miners who poured into east central Alaska during the Klondike gold rush of 1898.

Lt. Allen reported that in 1885 the people along the upper Tanana River were wearing a mixture of aboriginal styles and trade clothing. According to Allen (1900:476), frequent trips to trading stations on the Yukon River had considerable influence in modifying people's styles of dress and

personal adornment. By 1885, most people had ceased to wear ear or nose rings and many of the men had cut their hair to shoulder length. Allen also noted that the Tanana River people had more beadwork and were “perhaps more skilled in its manufacture than any people seen by us in the territory” (Allen 1900:477).

Men, more often than women and children, adopted the new styles, probably because men came into contact with the traders more often. Women and children continued to wear older styles of clothing and especially traditional winter clothing, which was far superior to anything the traders had to offer. People adopted the new clothing for a variety of reasons. Trade clothes, in addition to being easier to wear and care for, reflected a man's competence as a hunter trapper and trader, and probably represented a particular kind of sophistication. People also felt pressure from the missionaries who discouraged the old styles of personal adornment. At the same time, people retained a proclivity for "finery and bright colors," represented in the colorful bead embroidery that was used to decorate moccasins, mittens, gloves, and coats. This technique spread down the Yukon River and eventually throughout most of interior Alaska (Duncan 1989).

One item of the clothing introduced at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and still worn today is the “chief’s coat” (McKenna 1959:79; Simeone 1983) (Plates 6 and 7). Though basically replacing aboriginal styles of clothing, the garments and decorative materials introduced by the traders enabled the Native people to create entirely new styles combining elements that reflected Native esthetics and values. In its most classic form the chief’s coat is an open fronted jacket made of either moose or caribou skin, trimmed with beaver or otter fur, and decorated with beaded strips down the front and a beaded yoke that covered the shoulders. Variations include



Plate 6. Peter Thomas, Sam Abraham, unknown, and David Paul each wearing a different style of chief’s coat, 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1930. (Photo by E. A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul)

coats made from old suit jackets that were trimmed with fur and decorated with buttons and dentalium shells. On the upper Tanana River, chief’s coats were symbols of wealth and prestige

and only women and men of wealth and could afford to gather the necessary materials to make such a coat. Occasionally coats were made for the first-born child; but aside from prestige value, coats did not hold any social significance such as clan identification.

Today certain pieces of traditional clothing are worn only during special occasions, such as the potlatch. Items worn during a potlatch include moose skin, and cloth chief's coats, such as those described above, moose skin vests, beaded straps worn around the shoulders, dentalium shell necklaces, and beaded moccasins. These objects stress and symbolize cultural values that are understood internally by the people themselves and are directly associated with historic Athabascan culture. As noted above, well-made, highly decorated clothing was associated with high social standing, indicating a competent, moral person who had the capability to provide for themselves and their dependents. At the same time, these objects have become a part of the modern cash based economy because all of the items are made to sell as art or handicrafts. And as objects for sale to the non-Native community they also represent Athabascan cultural identity (Simeone and VanStone 1986:8-9).



Plate 7. Andrew Isaac, Walter Northway and Lily Northway dressed in potlatch clothes. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 8. Andrew Isaac (left) in birch bark canoe, Tanana River, circa 1930. Birch bark canoes were used for transportation both rivers (like the Tanana) and smaller streams(Photo by E.A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 9. David Paul and Joe Joseph of Tanacross maneuvering a raft made of firewood on the Tanana River, circa 1935. Men stockpiled fire wood for when they were away from home trapping during the winter months (Photo by E.A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 10. Tanacross boys practicing with bow and arrow, circa 1930. Bows were commonly used to kill small game. (Photo by E.A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 11. Tanacross people during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, circa 1928. Everyone is dressed in their best for the celebration. From this, and the following 3 photos, you can get some idea of the size of most local bands during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Photo by E.A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 12. Northway people about 1915. Chief Sam and his wife are standing in the middle of the group (Photo by F.B. Drane, courtesy of the University of Alaska).



Plate 13. Mansfield people gathered to meet the new Episcopal Missionary, August 1911. The missionaries are standing to the right of the group. Some of the people hold cabbages picked from the garden. (Photo by Charles Betticher, courtesy of the Episcopal Church Archives, Austin Texas).



Plate 14. Tetlin people gathered for the funeral of Chief David, 1919. (Photo by F.B. Drane, courtesy of the University of Alaska).



Plate 15. Tetlin in about 1919. By 1920 most Native people in the upper Tanana region were living in log cabins such as these. (Photo by F.B. Drane, courtesy of the University of Alaska).





Plate 16. Old Paul and his family at Mansfield, circa 1930. The family is standing in front of a smoke house used to store whitefish. Old Paul is holding his bow and has his arrow quiver slung across his stomach. (Photo by E.A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 17. Healy Lake people, circa 1930. The photographer and missionary E.A. McIntosh is standing next to Little Whiteman. (Photo by E. A. McIntosh, courtesy of Gaither Paul).



Plate 18. Healy Lake Potlatch, circa 1900. In the background is a fence made especially for the display of blankets that are to be distributed to guests. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of John P. Cook).



Plate 19. A load of Potlatch blankets from the Pendleton Woolen mills at McCarty or Big Delta, circa 1920. Blankets became and form of currency and families invested money earned in trapping in wool blankets which they gave away at potlatches. (Photographer unknown, courtesy of Candace Waugaman).



Plate 20. Potlatch at Chistochina, 1987. Kenneth Thomas Sr. of Tanacross is in the center of the photo. To the left of him, with his back to the camera, and holding a blue scarf is Charlie David Sr. of Tetlin. Titus David of Tetlin is to Kenneth's right. (Photo by Wm E. Simeone).



Plate 21. Potlatch at Tanacross, 1987. Singing the potlatch song. Singers include, from the right, Oscar Isaac (Tanacross), Andrew Isaac (Dot Lake), Huston Sanford (Mentasta), Kenneth Thomas Sr. (Tanacross), Walter Northway (Northway), Laura Sanford (Tanacross), and Ada Gallon (Northway). (Photo by Wm E. Simeone).



Plate 22. Potlatch at Tanacross, 1987. Blankets are stacked in the center of the hall, to the right are a row of rifles tied with scarves, and to the left are the tools used to dig the grave. These will be distributed to those persons who dug the grave. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 23. Women's "Dance with the Guns" at a potlatch ceremony in Tetlin, June, 1984. This dance takes place at the end of the potlatch, after everyone has received their gifts. (Photo by Libby Halpin).



Plate 24. 28. Foreground, left to right: Ahtna elder Huston Sanford, along with Upper Tanana elders Chief Andrew Isaac, Kenneth Thomas, Charlie James, and Abraham Luke. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 25. Left to right: Long-time Tok resident Doug Euers along with Upper Tanana elders Chief Andrew Isaac, Charlie James, Steven and Emma Northway. Mr. and Mrs. Northway are wearing tunics made of cloth cut in the old style of Athabaskan clothing used today for potlatch ceremonies. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 26. Stephen Northway making a drum. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 27. Stephen with the completed drum. (Photo by Terry Haynes).



Plate 28. One method of harvesting whitefish in Tetlin. A weir or “fence” made of spruce and willow branches and platform is used in combination with a large hand-made dip net. Photo by Libby Halpin.

**Portraits of Upper Tanana Elders by Terry Haynes**



Plate 29. Jessie and Joe John, Tetlin.



Plate 30. Alfred and Lucy Adam, Tetlin.



Plate 31. Doris Charles, Dot Lake.



Plate 32. Gene Henry Dot Lake.





Plate 33. Ellen Thomas, Tanacross.

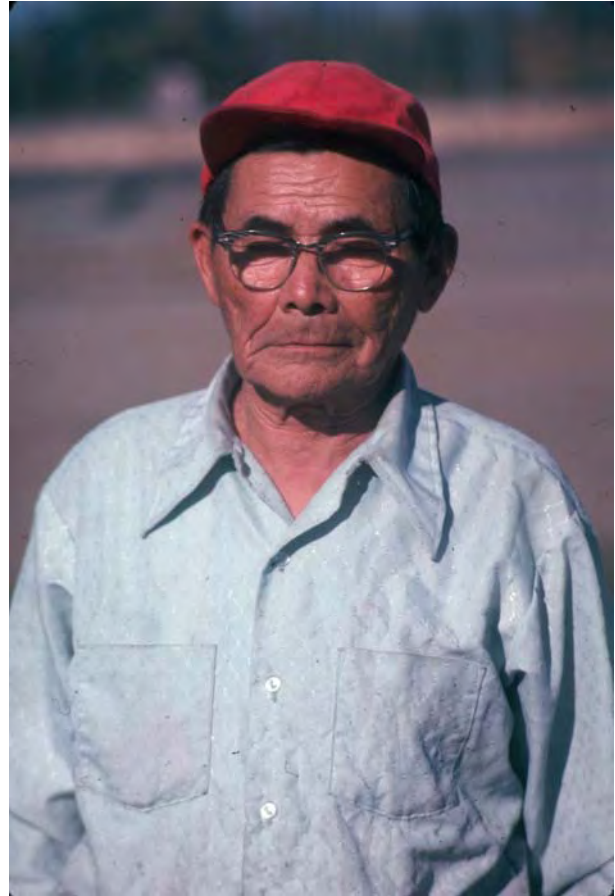


Plate 35. Andy Frank, Northway.



Plate 34. Ellen Demit, Tanacross.



Plate 36. Walter Northway, Northway.



Plate 37. Charlie David Sr., Tetlin.



Plate 38. Jessie Mark, Tetlin.

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## CHAPTER 7

### 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AGENTS OF CHANGE

#### INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters have described upper Tanana Athabascan culture as it existed prior to sustained western contact in the upper Tanana region at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The growing Euro-American population in the upper Tanana region and an ever-increasing reliance on western trade goods during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century represent agents of change that began transforming the aboriginal hunting and gathering economy into a mixed, subsistence-market system. This transition intensified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, spurred by a series of historical events in and around the upper Tanana region that led to the creation of permanent villages and resulted in significant changes to many customary practices. We examine these key events and their impacts on the upper Tanana Indians in this chapter.

#### GOLD RUSHES

The first gold rush in interior Alaska occurred in 1886 with the discovery of gold on Franklin Creek, a tributary of the Fortymile River at the northern end of upper Tanana territory. This strike was noteworthy as being the first coarse gold discovery on the Yukon River or any of its tributaries (Buteau 1967:92; Yeend 1996). For the next decade, hundreds of prospectors either staked claims on rivers and streams in the Fortymile River drainage or passed through the region enroute to gold strikes in adjoining areas, thereby exposing many upper Tanana Indians to Euro-Americans for the first time. The Fortymile gold rush was short-lived and most miners moved on to seek their fortunes at Circle (1893), the Klondike (1896), Nome (1898) and Fairbanks (1902).<sup>1</sup> However, a few diehards remained to prospect on smaller creeks in the Fortymile River drainage, including Chicken Creek and Jack Wade Creek. Contacts between the Ketchumstuk Indians and Euro-Americans persisted after small settlements emerged nearby at Franklin and Chicken, where the Indians went for “trade and diversion” (McKenna 1981:567). A few Indians from Mansfield found summer jobs at the mining camps and the Alaska Commercial Company store at Steele Creek, located northeast of Chicken (Simeone 1995:23). In the final analysis, the Fortymile gold rush had profound impacts on the upper Tanana and Han Indians:

Miners increased the hunting and fishing demands on the countryside. The first party of sixteen prospectors on the Fortymile in 1886 killed forty caribou to last the winter. In 1894 (before the Klondike Rush) the miners of the Fortymile area killed more than 5,000 caribou...(Ducker 1983:870).

With the advent of the Gold Rush period, villagers from small upstream communities (such as Joseph and Kechumstuk) gradually migrated downstream to participate in the cash/barter economy offered them by supplying wood for the thousands of prospectors, servicing steamboat requirements, and the expanding need for more fur.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about these gold rushes and related historical events, see Melody Webb’s detailed history of the Yukon Basin, *The Last Frontier* (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1985) and Herbert L. Heller’s *Sourdough Sagas* (Ballantine Books, New York, 1967).

During the Gold Rush period changes in lifestyle took place. The impact of feeding up to 700 prospectors and miners in the Fortymile area made wildlife resources hard to find. Big game animals were harvested to the extent that populations were almost extirpated. The indiscriminate use of fire also severely affected wildlife numbers and distribution. Fish became the mainstay of the Native diet. Stream valleys and hillsides were dug up, new settlements were made and formal transportation routes evolved for the movement of men, mail, and supplies.... The Fortymile River and its gold occupied a pivotal place in these events (Alaska Planning Group 1973:41).

Gold mining ventures at Chisana, Slate Creek, and Nabesna in the upper Tanana-Upper Ahtna borderlands area were another source of culture change among the upper Tanana Indians from the early 1900s to World War II, although the Upper Ahtna probably experienced more of the direct impacts. The combined effects of these mining operations on the local Ahtna bands have not been fully documented, but they were not insignificant. Market hunting to supply the camps with fresh meat became a lucrative enterprise, while some Upper Ahtna men were for the first time introduced to wage labor. Whether or not the opportunity to earn cash that could be used to purchase food and other commodities offset the negative effects of competition for wildlife during this period is open to debate.

Placer mining at Slate Creek on the headwaters of the Chistochina River began around 1900, started to decline in the mid-1940s, and ended in the mid-1950s. Some Upper Ahtna men from Batzulnetas, Mentasta, and other upper Copper River villages worked as laborers at the mine, while Upper Ahtna and upper Tanana Indians sold moose, caribou, and sheep meat to the mining camps for 25 to 50 cents per pound or accepted western commodities in trade. The Indians reportedly were treated fairly at Slate Creek, because of the high demand for fresh meat coupled with an efficient freighting system that reduced the cost of western goods shipped to the camp (Strong 1976:211-213).

A hard rock mining operation on the upper Nabesna River was active from 1907 to the early 1940s and in the later years was an economic center in the region. Beginning in the 1930s, a few Indian families resided at Nabesna Bar, while some men from Batzulnetas and Mentasta worked as laborers, sold meat and fish to the miners, or had contracts to cut wood. A store operated by the mining company sold groceries and other commodities to the Indians for prices below those charged by traders in the area (Strong 1976:216-218).

The Chisana stampede in 1913 was the last major gold rush in this region and attracted thousands of prospectors to the upper Chisana River area. An upper Tanana Indian named Chisana Joe led white prospectors to a promising quartz lode that held gold on Chathenda Creek, near the mouth of Bonanza Creek.<sup>2</sup> Strong (1976:214) believes that Athabascans in the Chisana area had historically extracted gold from this deposit for use in making tools and arrowheads.

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<sup>2</sup> See Bleakley (1996) for a detailed history of the Chisana Mining District. In his recently published field notes, Robert McKennan described Chisana Joe as one of his best informants when he conducted ethnographic research in Chisana and Nabesna in 1929-30 (Mishler and Simeone 2006).

The Chisana boom subsided within a few years but mining continued in the Chisana district until World War II. The geologist Stephen Capps commented on the status of wildlife in the Chisana area as the mining boom began declining in 1914:

Game was formerly abundant throughout the region but has now been greatly thinned out in the immediate vicinity of the mines. Elsewhere sheep are plentiful in the more rugged hills and mountains and furnish a valuable food of fine quality in this country where provisions are so difficult to obtain. Caribou, while less numerous, are easier to hunt and are fairly plentiful in the rolling country between Beaver Creek and White River. Moose are numerous in the White River valley near the boundary and occasionally range in other parts of the district. Black and grizzly bears are sometimes seen. Both rabbits and ptarmigan have been unusually abundant during the last few years and have been killed in great numbers to supply food for both men and dogs. Some fur-bearing animals, notably fox, lynx, mink, and marten, are trapped each winter (Capps 1914:197-198).

Capps later estimated that 2,000 sheep were killed within 20 miles of the Chisana mining camps during the winter of 1913-1914, which essentially extirpated the species in that area (Capps 1916:22). McKennan said the effects of overhunting were still being felt in the greater Chisana area in 1929:

At the time of my visit the white population of the area was negligible, being confined, with the exception of a resident mining population of about a half a dozen at Chisana, to a few transient trappers, traders, and prospectors. As a result, the Indians had suffered no diminution of their territory. Nevertheless, the White River was practically unvisited by Indians whereas formerly it had been a popular hunting territory. The basins of the Beaver and the Chisana, formerly the best hunting territory in the area, also were much less frequented due to the depletion of the game following the Chisana stampede of 1913 (McKennan 1959:17).

## **EAGLE CITY AND FORT EGBERT**

Disenchanted American prospectors who objected to Canadian mining laws and customs fees, and who were concerned about the food shortage at Dawson, abandoned the Klondike gold fields in the winter of 1897-98 to stake claims on American and Mission creeks and establish a townsite at nearby Eagle City on the Yukon River. By the summer of 1898, this new community had more than 500 cabins and a population of 1,700 (Webb 1985:137). A concerned U.S. War Department ordered Captain Patrick Henry Ray and Lieutenant Wilds P. Richardson to investigate the situation there. Captain Ray recommended that military posts be established at various points along the Yukon River, including one on Mission Creek. In 1899 the U.S. Army opened this new post, Fort Egbert, to maintain law and order and to establish roads and communications in the area.

Dr. Ferdinand Schmitter was assigned to the hospital corps at Fort Egbert from 1906 to 1908 and also attended to the medical needs of the Han Athabascans living upriver in Eagle Village. Not only had the Han been displaced from their traditional territory around Mission Creek by prospectors and the army base, they also were suffering from tuberculosis and other medical

problems that were at least partially attributable to the Euro-American population influx (cf. Mishler and Simeone 2004). Dr. Schmitter gained the trust of the Han people and was able to interview several elders and record traditional stories and some of the limited ethnographic information available for the Han in the early 1900s (Schmitter 1910).

Among the recommendations Captain Ray submitted to the War Department, in response to the continuing influx of miners and other newcomers to Alaska at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he proposed that “all-American” routes to the Yukon River goldfields bypassing Canada be surveyed. The military expeditions charged with this task set courses north from Port Valdez and Cook Inlet; some mapped potential routes through the Copper River Basin and the upper Tanana region, and recorded their observations of and interactions with the Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans. Their reports and those of geological reconnaissance parties also revealed that many of the routes surveyed had been or were being used by the Native people and miners.

Judge James Wickersham established the first Federal court in the Alaskan interior in 1900. A year later Eagle became the first incorporated city in interior Alaska. By then the mining boom there had faded and many miners had departed for Nome. Eagle City continued to prosper, however, as it had the military post, government officials, and three large trading companies to shore up its economy.

Between 1901 and 1903, the U.S. Army Signal Corps constructed the 1,506-mile long Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS), as was discussed in Chapter 2. Lieutenant William “Billy” Mitchell hired Chief Joseph from Joseph Village as a guide and interpreter, and recorded his observations and dealings with local Indians in the area between Fort Egbert and Tanana Crossing and along the Goodpaster River (Mitchell 1982). Stations with a telegraph office, cabin, stable, and storehouse were built at 10-20 mile intervals along the route, most notably at Kechumstuk and Tanana Crossing. Fort Egbert closed down in 1911, following conversion of the telegraph system to a more efficient and reliable wireless operation.<sup>3</sup>

## **FUR TRADE**

In Chapter 3 we discussed the 19<sup>th</sup> century fur trade and its effects on the aboriginal upper Tanana hunting and gathering economy. Participation in the fur trade following western contact did not immediately generate significant changes to the traditional seasonal round, although the acquisition of metal tools and implements enabled people to perform some routine tasks in the camp more efficiently. Over time, however, the use of firearms acquired in trade began to supplant communal hunting practices. By the mid-1880s, when Lieutenant Allen passed through the region, the Indians were using firearms and wearing western clothing (Allen 1887). As reliance on western trade good increased, men began spending more time trapping furbearers in the winter months, often using metal traps and wire snares that had replaced traditional gear.

Establishment of trading posts near seasonal Indian encampments in the upper Tanana region beginning in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided alternatives to and competition with more distant posts, thereby removing incentives to embark on long and expensive trading expeditions. If local traders charged inflated prices for their goods, as has been reported, the

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<sup>3</sup> Webb (1985:143-170) describes in more detail the history of Fort Egbert and the life of soldiers stationed there.

upper Tanana Indians retained the option of selling them outside the region or negotiating for the best deal with multiple traders in the region.

Resourceful entrepreneurs did find ways to illegally obtain furs from and exploit the Indians. An example from the early 1930s in the Alaska-Canada borderlands area is a case in point. Four white men invited Indians from an unnamed village inside the Canadian border near the Snag Trading Post to their cabin for a “Christmas party” and to purchase their furs. The Indian leader accepted the invitation only after the hosts agreed to keep this quiet, so as to avoid angering the owner of the trading post where they usually sold their furs and obtained supplies. After the furs were sold, a week-long party ensued involving dancing, drinking, and gambling. The white men supposedly paid higher prices for the furs than the Indians would have received at the Snag post but they also charged for the liquor consumed. “We made good money and we really had a lot of fun,” concluded one of the hosts (Peterson 1980:75-81), adding that the Indians also enjoyed the party. We can only speculate about how profitable the trip was for the Indians but they probably were shortchanged.

U.S. Commissioner and trader John Hajdukovich had a good reputation among the upper Tanana Indians. He employed several local men and according to one woman, “He carried the best goods: good-quality washtubs, washboards, and stovepipe” (Ferguson 2005). Hajdukovich also disparaged exploitation of the Indians in advocating establishment of a reservation in Tetlin:

A reservation also would make it possible to keep out certain white men who call themselves trappers, but who are really professional gamblers. These men gamble with the Indians for their furs. Liquor also could be kept from coming to the Indians from the Canadian side and the Indians, themselves, might be prevented from learning how to make liquor by going into the other districts. The reservation would also safeguard certain trapping grounds for the use of the Indians alone so that they could build up the fur and get a dependable crop for the following season. As it is now, all sections are open to the professional white trapper who goes in and cleans up all the fur and takes it out with him and never returns (Hajdukovich n.d. [b]:2.).

Traders in the upper Tanana region also extended credit to trappers, which opened the door to manipulation of the prices they charged for trade goods and paid for furs. By the late 1920s, the practice of extending credit at the trading posts was contributing to changes in Athabascan social organization:

Now that the institution of credit has come in, a woman may run two accounts with the trader, one in her name and one in her husband’s. All in all the position of an Upper Tanana wife is far from a subjective one (McKenna 1959:116).

In addition to elevating the status of women, the institution of credit significantly affected other features of traditional Athabascan social and economic organization, as is illustrated in this description of the role of traders in the Ahtna region that emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Market hunting and fishing were important economic activities for the Native people. Because most mines were located in the far reaches of the high mountains, market hunting also meant that the hunter had to leave home. Other Natives remained on home soil and hunted sheep, caribou, goat, and moose, which they bartered at the Copper Center trading post. The game was then sold



by the pound to shoppers, both Native and non-Native. Apparently, little money was exchanged. The trading post operator maintained a running tab, which helped the Native people bank against hard times, but also tied them in a patron-client relationship to the trader. For this reason, the trading post operator took over many of the economic functions of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century *denés*.<sup>4</sup> The position of *dené* became obsolete once the trader lived permanently in the community. The need to organize the production of furs, the subsistence quest, the trading party, and the redistribution of trading goods as well as subsistence resources no longer existed (Reckord 1979:39).

This elevation in the status of traders and the declining influence of traditional leaders in economic dealings also occurred in the upper Tanana region, beginning in the areas bordering Han and Ahtna territory, where the combined influences of mining and trading posts first took hold, and then moving into the heart of upper Tanana territory.

Walter Goldschmidt and Theodore Haas investigated land use patterns and possessory rights in Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin in the late 1940s. They characterized the economies of these villages as being “a combination of production for home use and production for export” (Goldschmidt 1948:10), with the Indians being equally reliant on both. Most adult men were active trappers and fur sales constituted an important source of income for many households. At the same time, village leaders strenuously objected to the encroachment of white trappers on traditional traplines and complained that the poor stewardship practices of these interlopers were depleting the furbearing animals in the region. Although a few white trappers had traplines in the upper Tanana region prior to World War II, construction of the Alaska Highway opened up a vast area of interior Alaska to newcomers unfamiliar with local Athabascan land use practices. Their intrusion on Native lands created both competition and conflicts with Indian trappers.

## MISSIONARIES<sup>5</sup>

Upper Tanana Indians were first exposed to Protestant missionaries during the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at trading posts on Canadian soil. Some boys from Nandell’s Village (Last Tetlin) reportedly learned the alphabet from the Reverend V.C. Sims at Fort Reliance, while the Reverend William Bompas of the Protestant Episcopal Church baptized people from Kechumstuk and Mansfield when he was stationed at Fortymile beginning in 1891. While visiting Healy Lake in 1910, Chief Isaac told the Archdeacon Hudson Stuck that as a boy he had been baptized by Bishop Bompas at the town of Fortymile on the Yukon River (Stuck 1914:262).

In 1895, Peter Trimble Rowe was consecrated as Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Alaska. From his base in Fairbanks, the bishop set out to expand the presence of the church in Athabascan territory along the Tanana River. He established St. Timothy’s Episcopal Mission at Tanana Crossing in 1912, the location strategically selected due to its central location to the upper Tanana Athabascan bands and because buildings abandoned by the U.S. Signal Corps

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<sup>4</sup> Reckord (1979:26-27) describes the Ahtna *dené* as a kind of chief or “big-man” who was the economic head of the village. He had the ability to organize the villagers and provide them with security. A rich *dené* was allowed to have several wives, who were shown deference and usually became leaders in female-dominated activities.

<sup>5</sup> This section is derived from a more detailed examination of Christian missions and their influence on Alaskan Athabascans in Simeone (1982:85-96), and is supplemented by other sources cited in the text.

were available after a wireless system had supplanted the WAMCATS telegraph line in 1911. One missionary later described the mission as “the hub of a wheel and the Indian villages of Mansfield, Tetlin, Last Tetlin, Nebesna, Ketchumstock, and Mentasta form the spokes” (McConnell 1920:73). Contact with people from the Northway area was more limited. The relative isolation of the mission also enabled the staff to “carry on our work unhampered by frequent intrusions from outsiders and occasional riff-raff whites” (Drane 1917a:47).

Articles in the Episcopal Church publication, *The Alaska Churchman*, reveal how the church framed its agenda and set out to indoctrinate the upper Tanana Athabascans in western and Christian values and to discourage the continuation of their traditional practices. Writing in 1913, one missionary described the Indians as “extravagant” and “beggars” and resolved to “teach them to make gardens” in order to improve their diet and thwart the effects of tuberculosis (Graves 1913:73-74). That same year, the Archdeacon Hudson Stuck proclaimed that “A foothold had been secured; the confidence and support of the natives had been gained”:

The people are gentle and docile and eager to be taught. The coming of the Mission has been a great event in their history. The field is white to the harvest; the reapers are on the spot. Let us pray to the Lord of the Harvest that the reaping not be delayed, but let us wait His good pleasure and advance as He opens the path (Stuck 1913:85-86).

The influence of missionaries at St. Timothy’s was limited in the early years, as the Mansfield-Ketchumstuk band still resided several miles away and people spent most of their time in seasonal camps. Most traveled to the mission only for services at Easter and Christmas, although in its first year the mission reportedly held 46 services in 25 weeks (Graves 1913:72). Band member and Layreader David Paul recalled the early days of the mission prior to his ordination as a deacon in 1957:

We always walk seven miles to church until we all build home here at Tanacross. The missionaries stay with us all winter and next spring it was time to plant things. The missionaries want to show us how to plant vegetables. We want to break up the ground and we had some plow and we got no horses to pull plow. So we hitch up eleven men like double harness and the pull plow and we plant turnips, potatoes, and carrots in community garden. Since then we always make gardens here at Tanacross (Paul 1957a:8).

The potlatch ceremony figured prominently in the mission’s agenda. In describing a potlatch at Tanacross he attended in 1918 honoring Chief John of Mentasta, who had died two years earlier, a missionary at St. Timothy’s was struck by the ability of the Indians “to work in harmony and to make extended sacrifices to accomplish their aims” (McIntosh 1918:49).

But the mission staff soon vowed to abolish potlatches, considering them a drain on the Indian economy and an impediment to the integration of the upper Tanana people into the larger society. Arthur Wright, an Episcopal deacon of Athabascan ancestry, led the charge in the 1920s and convinced the Tanacross Village Council to adopt a resolution to not participate in potlatches between October and May. Although Reverend Wright derided the potlatch ceremony in an article in *The Alaska Churchman* (Wright 1926), many years later Mrs. Wright said her husband had a change of heart regarding his harsh critique of the potlatch (Baggen n.d.). Ironically, mission staff apparently did not object to a potlatch held at Tanacross in July 1955, “to celebrate

the near-completion of the beautiful new rectory at the village,” which replaced the old structure that had been destroyed by fire earlier in the year (Lilley 1955). This at least symbolically put to rest any doubt about the persistence of this important traditional ceremony and illustrates its adaptability to changing times.

The mission staff also encouraged families to spend more time at Tanacross so their children could attend school. Menial summer jobs were one inducement and provided some adults with a temporary source of cash income, but prevented families from spending time at seasonal camps and putting up food for the winter.

During his short tenure in the region in 1929-30, Robert McKennan made only one brief visit to Tanana Crossing, but recorded his impressions about the effects of the mission on the upper Tanana Indians:

When the mission was established the Mansfield Indians were induced to move their village there, and an attempt was made to persuade the Tetling and Nabesna Indians to locate there also. Undoubtedly such a concentration would have made mission work easier, but since the natives must live by hunting, trapping, and fishing, a nomadic life was imperative. There were no fish to be had at the Crossing, and neither game nor fur animals were abundant enough to support a large population.<sup>6</sup> The few families who had moved in from the upper river left in disgust, and when I was at Tanana Crossing a good portion of the population had moved back to Lake Mansfield where food was more plentiful.

There had been no missions on the upper Tanana proper. Undoubtedly the mission at the Crossing had had some effect but in my travels I met no Indian who showed much influence from mission contact. Some traits such as the erection of a cross over a grave had crept in by diffusion, just as previously the use of the Russian cross had come in. A few Biblical names were in evidence, bestowed gratuitously when the native was trading at the Crossing. By and large, however, the natives were singularly free from mission influence, and on the upper Nabesna and Chisana rivers, entirely so (McKenna 1959:25-26).

## EDUCATION

Prior to settlement in permanent communities, upper Tanana Athabascan children were instructed by their parents in the culture of the group and the skills essential for survival. Boys played with small bows and arrows, learned to make tools and weapons, and at a young age accompanied their fathers on hunting trips. Girls learned to tan skins, sew, and cook, played with dolls, and were expected to look after smaller children. Laziness was not condoned and children underwent rigorous physical training. Storytelling during the long winter months conveyed to children the traditions and taboos and other important information about the group.

As noted previously, some children were exposed to rudimentary western education long before schools were established in the upper Tanana region. Lieutenant Allen made the following observations at Nandell's Village (Last Tetlin) in 1885:

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<sup>6</sup> In his field notes for June 10, 1930, McKenna wrote, “Spiritual man may be necessary to these people, but it will hardly fill hungry stomachs” (Mishler and Simeone 2006:151).

A few of the boys, to their great pride and our surprise, repeated, with various degrees of accuracy, the letters of the alphabet. They had received instruction on the Yukon from Mr. Simms, the zealous missionary sent out from England. He was highly esteemed by the natives, who were much benefited by his worthy example and instruction (Allen 1887:75).

The ability to recite the alphabet obviously had little practical value at the time, but illustrates the diverse ways in which western society was beginning to permeate the traditional culture.

At the time of McKennan's visit in 1930, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, had for several years funded a school teacher but not a school building in Tetlin. McKennan either was unimpressed with the educational achievements of the children or chose to criticize their accomplishments because the move toward modernity promoted by the teacher and Chief Peter would affect his ethnographic work:

Since there was no school building, and the nomadic habits of the natives made regular sessions difficult, it might be said that the school existed in name only. Lessons consisted largely of singing; the brighter pupils knew their alphabet, but could not read; nevertheless, the influence of the schoolteacher, John A. Singleton, with the assistance of the local leader, Chief Peter, was evident, and a perceptible sophistication distinguished a Tetling Indian from other members of the Upper Tanana group. A definite attempt had been made to eradicate the customs and beliefs of the past, so that I found the Tetling group my least fertile source of information (McKennan 1959:27).

At the same time, in his field diary McKennan appeared to temper his criticism of Singleton, a sourdough who arrived in the north during the Klondike gold rush, with at least grudging admiration. Singleton had adopted a crippled Indian boy in Tetlin and taught the women and children there to be well-mannered (Mishler and Simeone 2006:88, 90).

Upon their arrival in the upper Tanana region, the Episcopalian missionaries began combining religious instruction with schooling and emphasizing the former. In contrast, U.S. Commissioner and trader John Hajdukovich favored instructing the students in practical skills as well as traditional subjects. In 1927, he urged the territorial governor to open a boarding school or industrial school to replace the mission school slated for closure at Tanana Crossing. The governor rejected this request but agreed to ask the Bureau of Education, to send a representative to the region to investigate the need for a school (Brown 1999:5-6).

This task fell to the bureau's Anchorage-based superintendent, E.J. Beck, who toured villages in the upper Tanana and Copper River regions in the winter of 1929-1930 to determine the feasibility of opening government schools there. His trip report described the status of existing educational facilities and education in several upper Tanana villages (Beck 1930). Census and educational data for that same time period indicate that several adults up to the age of 55 could read or write English, most of whom had not attended school. How and where these adults acquired their fluency in English is not reported.

Beck concluded that too few people were living at George Creek, Sam Creek, Paul's Cabin Village, Kessler's Camp, and Scottie Creek to warrant establishment of schools at these small encampments, so he presented very little information about them in his report. Beck (1930),

whose views appear to have been influenced by John Hajdukovich, submitted the following recommendations for the other villages:

- **Healy River:** The village had petitioned unsuccessfully for a school several years earlier. The population of 15, only four of whom were school-age children, did not warrant expending funds for a school.
- **Tanana Crossing:** Beck reported that the Episcopal mission had closed its school several years earlier due to the high costs of operation. Village residents were “all very desirous of obtaining a school” but were divided over having a mission or government-operated facility. Some residents “wanted their children to learn to read and write in preference to learning so much about religion, as religion was not such an important thing with them as they had a good one before the white men came to the country.” With 42 of the 86 residents being children of school age, Beck recommended that a school be established if the Episcopal Mission withdrew its activities “in every way” and agreed not to reopen a school or send a missionary there who might be “antagonistic to the Office of Education.”
- **Tetlin:** Perhaps in deference to John Hajdukovich and his political influence, Beck saved his most glowing report for Tetlin, calling its residents “...by far the best natives I have ever met in my travels in Alaska or elsewhere. They are thrifty, honest, industrious, homeloving, and a self-respecting people.” This he attributed to John and Milo Hajdukovich keeping liquor out of the village of 55 residents, including 14 of school age. Beck also credited John Hajdukovich with establishing the government school in Tetlin, which had operated without a building since 1925 under the tutelage of John A. Singleton, described as “an old prospector and miner and has a fair education.”<sup>7</sup> In previous years, Singleton also had taught school for a few months in the summer at the “Nabesna village fishing grounds” about five miles from Nabesna.

Having waited too long for the government to construct a school building, the village was constructing one itself, for which Chief Peter sought the government’s assistance in obtaining supplies and building materials. Beck responded by asking that a teacher’s quarters be added to the school and agreed to recommend government support for the facility. He also requested that a government nurse be stationed in Tetlin “to render medical aid to the Tetlin, Tanana Crossing and Nabesna people on the upper Tanana River.”

- **Nabesna:** The 54 residents of Nabesna, 16 of school age, were “very anxious to have a school at this place.” Beck said a school was not warranted due to the “migratory habits of these people,” and recommended they spend the summer fishing in Tetlin so their children could attend school there. He left with impression that the Nabesna people planned to take his advice.
- **“Bansanetta” [Batzulnetas]:** Because the people in Batzulnetas “are given over to making and drinking liquor,” Beck considered them “much inferior to the natives living

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<sup>7</sup> McKennan visited Tetlin in February 1930 and reported that Singleton “held night school in the evening,” but did not indicate where classes were held (Mishler and Simeone 2006:88).

in the upper Tanana valley.” He considered the population (30 total, 7 of school age) too small to justify government expenditures for a school.

## **WORLD WAR II AND THE ALASKA HIGHWAY**

World War II was a time of profound socioeconomic and cultural change in Alaska and especially in the upper Tanana region. In 1930, the U.S. Congress authorized President Hoover to create a three-member commission to study the possibility of building a highway to Alaska, but the idea gained no traction until the war intervened. Twelve years later, in February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized construction of the Alaska Highway to support the war effort. More specifically, a land transport route was needed to supply airfields from Grande Prairie, Alberta, to Fairbanks, Alaska, through which military aircraft would be ferried to Russia as part of the Lend-Lease Program.

Construction began in March 1942, with regiments of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assigned to blaze trails and civilian contractors charged with building the Alaska segment of the road. Work on the “Pioneer Road” was completed in late September 1942, when Canadian and Alaskan construction crews met at Contact Creek near the British Columbia-Yukon Territory border. By October 1943, the Public Roads Administration had upgraded this road to a standard highway by rebuilding bridges, shoring up the roadway, and cutting 200 miles from its total length. Construction of the Tok-Slana Cutoff passing through Upper Ahtna territory and leading to Glennallen also was completed during this period.

The impacts of World War II on the upper Tanana Athabascans are not well documented, but we can surmise that they resembled the experiences of Native peoples elsewhere in Alaska and western Canada. Put simply, the presence in Canada and Alaska between April 1942 and December 1943 of more than 34,000 construction workers with radically different lifestyles simply overwhelmed the Native people (Cruikshank 1977:11). Yukon Indians queried about construction of the Alaska Highway identified both positive and negative impacts:

People express considerable ambivalence about the effects of the Alaska Highway. Problems of alcohol abuse increased, animals were needlessly slaughtered; but there were more possibilities for earning money and some positive relationships developed between Indian families and soldiers.... The Army also brought major flu epidemics; Indian people who had no immunity to influenza, diphtheria, measles, and other diseases became seriously ill and some died (Cruikshank 1979:53-54).<sup>8</sup>

A few Yukon Indian men earned wages as laborers and guides, while some women took in laundry and worked as housekeepers at construction camps. A temporary lucrative market for Native handicrafts among the soldiers and civilian workers building the road enabled some families to purchase automobiles and other western goods (Cruikshank 1990:249-250). This economic boom ended abruptly and Indian families became increasingly reliant on government subsidies. Over time, the expanding presence and influence of government agencies in Yukon

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<sup>8</sup> See Cruikshank and McClellan (1976) and Cruikshank (1977) for a more detailed discussion of the impacts of Alaska Highway construction on Indians in Yukon Territory.

villages contributed to the breakdown of functions traditionally performed by kin groups (Cruikshank 1977:21-24).

More significantly, any short-term benefits realized by the Yukon Indians were more than offset by the ravages on their families and villages of infectious diseases introduced by soldiers and construction workers. A physician stationed with the U.S. Army near Teslin in southeastern Yukon reported the devastation there resulting from outbreaks of measles, dysentery, jaundice, whooping cough, mumps, tonsillitis, and meningitis (Marchand 1943). Measles and influenza epidemics are thought to have touched every Indian settlement in the southern Yukon, and the mortality rate among infants less than one year of age in the territory reached an astounding 47 percent in 1942 (Coates 1985:158-159). Cruikshank (1985) cites several vivid examples of the “horrible results” these epidemics had on Indian settlements along the highway, which were compounded by problems with alcohol abuse and a breakdown of social norms associated with the presence of large numbers of single white men.

In the Copper River Basin, Upper Ahtna men found seasonal jobs during the war years on survey crews or as laborers, truck drivers, and equipment operators. They worked long hours from spring to fall but earned wages of \$300 to \$760 per month. Demand for Native handicrafts increased at the same time fur prices were rebounding on the world market, after having fallen precipitously during the Great Depression and into the late 1930s. Upper Ahtna Indians in Mentasta, Suslota, Batzulnetas, and Chistochina all named the years 1942 to 1945 as the first time more than half of their diet consisted of purchased foods (Strong 1976:302-303). This transformation of the Upper Ahtna economy probably mirrored changes taking place in the upper Tanana region during the 1940s.

The Ahtna Athabascans also experienced other significant impacts. Those living at Dry Creek were forced at gunpoint to abandon their homes without compensation to allow construction of the Gulkana Airfield. The aforementioned low fur prices in the 1930s lured even more people into wage employment if jobs could be found. Native men who had worked for mining operations in the late 1930s lost their jobs when heavy equipment was diverted to the war effort and the mines closed down. Many of them subsequently found seasonal employment with the Alaska Road Commission or other government agencies and moved to villages along the road system (Reckord 1983a:71-72). Wage earners often redistributed their money within the village, in ways consistent with traditional practices and kinship rules.

The Natives worked for one another as well. In this way funds as well as subsistence resources coming into the villages were redistributed throughout the Native population. For example, if an unemployed woman “built” a steambath, she was paid for the service. Cash was redistributed from employed to unemployed Natives. People who fished often bartered or sold their catches to people who were working and unable to fish themselves. Sharing was informal. Someone might take fish to a friend or relative who had given him automobile rides throughout the year. Most sharing of this sort followed traditional lines defined by kinship and marriage. In this way, social life in the village maintained a traditional cultural base which carried through the 1970s (Reckord 1983a:72).

Construction of the Alaska Highway through the upper Tanana region and military airfields at Northway and Tanacross lured thousands of newcomers to the territory, with as many as 5,000 personnel being housed at a major construction camp in Tok (Simeone 1995:40). This camp and

similar facilities established along the highway at Dot Lake and near the Northway airfield became the sites of permanent communities after the war.

The first airplane landed at Old Tanacross in the winter of 1922 and continued to deliver mail there until a strip was cleared at the present site of the Tanacross airfield in the early 1930s. This field was upgraded in 1934 to accommodate commercial aircraft flying between Fairbanks, Juneau, and Nome (Simeone 1992:46). In 1941, the military obtained approval from the Tanacross Village Council to upgrade and use this airstrip as an emergency airfield during World War II, and it was designated as one of the airfields on the Northwest Staging Route linking the continental U.S. and Alaska. Lohr (1979) says several thousand military and civilian workers were based at Tanacross during World War II, while other sources set the number at around one thousand (Simeone 1992:52).

The impacts of wartime activities on the Indians at Northway were mostly negative and ranged from disruption of the traditional seasonal round to the introduction of infectious diseases and debilitating illnesses:

During the recent war an air base was established at Northway with dire results to the village. The men of the post engaged in hunting of game which resulted in a serious reduction of the wildlife population. Natives whose very life depended upon the fur and meat animals were filled with resentment at soldiers who shot for mere pleasure, frequently not even picking up the carcasses of the animals so destroyed. Even more serious was another direct effect of the establishment of the air base. For centuries the natives have used the stream waters as a source of drinking water and for bathing. With literally nobody above them on the stream, there was no danger in this practice. The army post was placed, however, immediately up stream from Northway Village, and the sewage from the barracks allowed to flow into the river. Decimation of the village population was the inevitable result of this practice.

In addition to those influences, the building of the Alcan Highway and the establishment of an army outpost has had a demoralizing effect upon the community itself. Here the weakening influence is that of whiskey.... (Goldschmidt 1948:47).

Similar effects were reported in the Tanacross, whose residents viewed favorably the economic opportunities associated with road construction and “were also moved by patriotism and support for the war effort” (Simeone 1992:46).

The large influx of both military and civilian workers and the availability of jobs distorted the local hunting and trapping economy. Older outlying villages such as Healy Lake, Ketchumstuk, and Mansfield were abandoned as people seeking employment moved closer to the road. Men worked as guides for survey crews or as construction workers, while women served as domestic help or made money selling mittens, moccasins, and beadwork to the workers. Some Tanacross people believe that during construction of the highway the Native economy involved approximately 50 percent wage labor. That is, while hunting was still considered the “regular life,” almost everyone in the village devoted at least half his or her time to earning cash for the purchase of food....



Although the war and road construction created a boom economy, it produced no lasting economic benefits for the majority of Native people. Furthermore, the road ended the isolation of the Upper Tanana Region so that after the war people could not simply return to the old seasonal round of hunting and trapping. Between 1939 and 1950, the non-Native population of Alaska doubled and the number of resident hunting licenses more than tripled.... The road opened the region to many of these hunters, who came from Fairbanks and Anchorage. Increased hunting pressure brought more stringent government regulations.... (Simeone 1995:41).

The upper Tanana Indians also were ravaged by infectious diseases like those that beset the Yukon Indians. For example, a diphtheria epidemic that struck the Healy Lake band reportedly killed entire families and most of the children (Kirsteatter 2002), including people already weakened by tuberculosis:

In 1939, a school was needed for the 75 children in the area. By 1943, the population was so devastated by either tuberculosis or diphtheria, a school would have been pointless. Exposure to white soldiers building the wartime highway sparked an epidemic, invading every cabin, touching every person. A doctor traveling by boat to the remote Healy area arrived too late to save the sick. Houses were filled with the dead, necessitating fast, shallow graves. The misinformed notion that purifying steam baths would help the sick only spread the infection. Those who escaped fled farther up the river (Ferguson 2001c).

These significant negative impacts notwithstanding, highway and airfield construction did provide employment opportunities to local villagers. Walter Northway, the long-time traditional chief of Northway, earned \$1 an hour working as a laborer clearing brush for the airfield at Northway (Patty n.d.) and recalled this period in his biography:

In 1940, they started building the airport. The first plane came in with four guys and they surveyed the ground.... They hired local people to cut brush.... The airstrip was built right over the Indian cemetery. They dug up the graves and burnt them at the end of the airfield. There are still beads around there at the Moose Creek end.... Around the same time the army started building the Alcan Highway. They set up an army base camp here (Yarber and Madison 1987:45).

Kenny Thomas, Sr., a decorated World War II veteran and the only upper Tanana Native who served in the army at that time, commented on changes he observed upon returning home to Tanacross in 1946 after a four-year absence:

One thing I'd like to say, is, after I came back from the army I see lot of changes.... A lot of people were still trapping when I got back. But in the summer they always looking for job. When I was kid we didn't even know what *work* is, but what a change when I got back from the army. People always looking for job. Everybody works in the summertime. So that's a big change for the people. We getting away from the subsistence life. The law is coming in.... (Thomas 2005:110).

... When I left, most of the people used to live like Native people a long time [the subsistence way of life]. But when I got back from the army there was a lot of changes. They live mostly like the white people, trying to live like the white people. More money, more money for the food, more money for the different things. Lots of people is working on the [air] field, about 50-60 percent working on the field and brings in the money for their family... (Thomas 2005:111-112).

By the end of the 1940s, the remnants of the Healy River, George Creek, and Ketchumstuk bands had relocated to Tanacross or Dot Lake. The few remaining members of the Upper Chisana-Upper Nabesna band had settled in Northway or Chistochina, as explained by Jack John Justin, Jr.:

We could not live any longer in Nabesna 'cause game commission had too many laws, and not enough food. People moved to the road where they could live (cited in Pitts 1972:196).

Simeone summarized the impacts on the Native people of World War II and road construction in the upper Tanana region as follows:

While the fur trade and missionary activity transformed aspects of Athabaskan culture, life in the region before World War II was characterized by an equality based on interdependence between Natives and Whites. Both shared a similar universe. Natives came to rely on goods supplied by the traders and services, such as medical care, provided by the mission. In turn traders and missionaries relied on the Native people's ability to provide the fruits of the land. The construction of the road completely altered these existing relationships and recast Native people as strangers in their own land (Simeone 1992:45).

...competition over resources brought more stringent government regulations that completely undermined the traditional seasonality of the old hunting life. After 1950 Native hunters were restricted to short seasons and specified bag limits. These regulations created an antagonism between Native and non-Native that is still apparent today in the debate over subsistence. Instead of providing a secure economic base for Natives, the road threatened the land, which was the very basis of Native life, and it undermined the people's ability to maintain their seasonal way of life.

In undermining the seasonal life, the road adversely affected the health of the people. As hunting was restricted and commercial foods more plentiful, the people were no longer able to live completely from the foods they knew or were used to. More significantly, however, Native people were exposed to alcohol on an unprecedented scale. Where alcohol had been relatively rare in the upper Tanana region before the war, it became common place afterward. Bars sprang up along the road, particularly at Tok. Alcohol became a health problem that has devastated Native communities over the fifty years since the highway was built (Simeone 1992:49-50).

## MID- AND LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SEASONAL ROUND

The upper Tanana Athabascan annual cycle from World War II through the 1960s is not well documented, but during this period it changed substantially from the aboriginal and early contact periods. Most people now were settled in permanent communities and no longer moved between seasonal camps throughout the year, although some families did relocate temporarily to fish camps in the summer and some men continued to operate traplines in the winter. Full-time or seasonal employment and mandatory school attendance for children reduced the time many families could spend out on the land. Government regulations now dictated when fish and wildlife could be taken legally; although enforcement was uneven, game wardens issued citations to anyone caught breaking the rules. This did not prevent people from hunting out of season, if necessary, to provide for their families and to avoid the steadily increasing number of non-local hunters with whom they otherwise had to compete during regulated hunting periods.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping continued to fuel the village economies following World War II. Walter Goldschmidt visited Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin in 1946 and recorded detailed information about contemporary land and resource use practices in these villages, and also made these general observations:

... whatever division may have existed in prehistoric or early historic times, there are now extremely close interrelationships between the three villages. They are closely intermarried, go hunting together, and permit one another to use their own territory when circumstances warrant Goldschmidt 1948:12).

The ancient mode of getting fish has been little altered by time. Regulations [governing use of a weir at Tetlin] appear to be the same, since this weir is used by all members of the village, each having a turn at its use. There is no current evidence of a "royalty," but sharing of the catch is quite common (Goldschmidt 1948:8).

Each village maintains certain territories which are used in common; others to which individuals have property rights. The distinction is not always clear, for certain trails are used in common, with separate trapping lines off the trails held by individuals or groups of two or three individuals who are close relatives or friends. Other areas which are referred to as areas of common use may in fact be divided into smaller areas of separate use right...

Private rights to hunting territories and traplines are in the nature of use right. An individual might originate a new trapping line or inherit one, either from his father or his wife's father. Such rights are recognized by all and are respected.... Their traplines and hunting territories are improved by creating regular camping places and by building caches and even houses at which the owner can spend a longer time in reasonable comfort...(Goldschmidt 1948:14).

Unfortunately, the observations of other anthropologists following World War II reflect their apparent disinterest in contemporary Native culture and reveal very little about resource harvest practices and the upper Tanana Athabascan economy. Ivar Skarland (1956) revisited the upper Tanana region in 1955 after an absence of 16 years and noted only that in the interim most people had relocated to communities on or near the road system. While conducting fieldwork in the Ahtna region in 1960, Frederica de Laguna and Catharine McClellan spent two days in the

Dot Lake and Tanacross recording traditional stories and information about kinship and social organization (de Laguna and McClellan 1960). The Swedish folklorist, Anna Birgitta Rooth, recorded myths and stories during trips to Dot Lake, Tanacross, and Northway in 1966 (Rooth 1971 and 1976) but, again, reported almost nothing about contemporary village life. Finally, Marie-Francoise Guédon (1974) directed her research to upper Tanana Athabascan social organization and the potlatch ceremony, and devoted little attention to resource harvesting practices of the late 1960s.

Two University of Alaska graduate students conducted anthropological research in the upper Tanana region in 1969-1970 and recorded their impressions of life in the contemporary villages. Roger Pitts investigated changes in settlement and community patterns, and as we reported in Chapter 3, concluded that settlement in permanent communities resulted in the Upper Tanana people having “completely abandoned the remnants they had retained of the old seasonal hunting patterns and adopted a complete cash and welfare economy” (Pitts 1972:197). Fellow researcher Ramon Vitt was documenting changes to the upper Tanana Athabascan hunting culture and reached a similar conclusion: “Hunting, which was once the mainstay of the natives, has taken on the aspects of sport. Many of the younger men no longer hunt or fish” (Vitt 1971:188). A more likely explanation is that the local people were circumspect in their dealings with Pitts and Vitt, who conducted fieldwork during the summer months when few harvest activities could have been observed.

One of the authors arrived in Tanacross a short time after Pitts and Vitt had conducted fieldwork there and recorded very different observations:

Pitts and Vitt were in Tanacross just before I arrived in August of 1971. They reported that few people were hunting and that the elders complained that the young men did not hunt as much as they should. My experience was a bit different. When I arrived almost all of the men and boys had just returned from firefighting, which was about the only way they could make any money. Only two men had jobs, one was the custodian of the local school and the other was a custodian at the school in Tok... The only other persons who had some regular income were the health aide and the postmistress.

During the state sanctioned hunting season (which took place in the fall) almost everyone hunted moose upriver and went hunting for caribou along the Taylor Highway. At this time of year the village had to compete with urban hunters, either from Fairbanks or from the military bases near Fairbanks. Competition made it more difficult to kill a legal moose. For this reason, most of the young men hunted at other times of the year, and especially during the winter months when they could use snow machines to travel into the back country north of the village. Later, in the 1980s, the State of Alaska sold housing lots on land along the Tanana River in an area that Tanacross had long used for moose hunting, which impacted the ability of Tanacross people to harvest moose in that area.

In addition to hunting for moose, many women had rabbit snare lines around the village and many of the boys hunted rabbits with .22 rifles. Young men also hunted waterfowl in the spring and trapped for beaver. During the winter a number of the men had traplines that they tended by snow machines. Prior to construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline in 1974, the local economy offered

very little employment and people had to hunt and fish to make ends meet. Because they often hunted illegally, the village's relationship with enforcement personnel and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game was not very cordial.

Alaska Native land use surfaced as a significant statewide and national issue in the late 1960s. This debate culminated in passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which paved the way for construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline System (TAPS). The upper Tanana region was not directly impacted by this project, but the pipeline corridor passed through Ahtna territory. The Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Office, implemented an ambitious socioeconomic research program linked to offshore oil and gas lease sales in coastal areas in the 1970s and wisely funded a research project to examine the impacts of the TAPS project on the community of Copper Center and the processes of cultural and social change in small communities (Reckord 1979). This study described many of the positive and negative effects of a "boom-and-bust" economy on one small Ahtna community, some of which involved land and resource use patterns, and offered some insights into the potential sociocultural impacts of a natural gas pipeline project that had been proposed for construction through the upper Tanana region in the early 1980s.

The Division of Subsistence in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game began documenting contemporary hunting and fishing patterns in the upper Tanana region in the early 1980s. These studies were designed to provide socioeconomic and cultural information for application to resource management and land use planning issues. In a typical research project, staff conducted household interviews and recorded information on when and where resources were harvested and on their use in the community. Technical reports for Dot Lake (Martin 1983), Northway (Case 1986), and Tetlin (Halpin 1987) described the findings of these studies and provided some information on both historical and contemporary resource use patterns in those communities. A report prepared for presentation to the Alaska Board of Game discussed uses of caribou in Tetlin and Northway to address a regulatory issue that surfaced when large numbers of Nelchina and Mentasta caribou migrated to the region in the winter of 1982 for the first time in nearly 40 years (Haynes 1983). The use of migratory birds was the focus of one recent study (Andersen and Jennings 2001), while Koskey (2006 and 2007) conducted community baseline surveys documenting resource harvest and use patterns in upper Tanana communities during a 12-month period in 2004-05.

Two Division of Subsistence studies were designed in part to examine resource-related linkages between residents of the upper Tanana region and Copper River basin. The first described uses of the Copper River salmon fishery by Upper Tanana residents in 1983-1984 (Haynes et al. 1984) and presented examples of enduring inter-regional relationships based on kinship and friendship ties. For example, in addition to catching salmon with fish wheels belonging to friends or relatives at Copper Center, Chistochina, and Slana, residents of Tanacross and Northway also were given salmon from people in Chistochina, Gakona, and Copper Center. In return, the Copper River households received moose, caribou, ducks, dried whitefish, porcupine, muskrats, berries, jams, jellies, and beadwork from their Upper Tanana neighbors.

One Tetlin resident was given salmon from a cousin in Gulkana in exchange for dried whitefish. Another Tetlin resident who reported receiving 25 salmon from a cousin in Tazlina noted that years ago her grandfather had walked from Last Tetlin to Mentasta to obtain dried salmon from his sister. A woman in Northway used her cousin's fish wheel at Gulkana and gave some of the

harvested salmon to her married daughter in Tetlin and in return received moose meat and whitefish. A man from Northway who used his brother's fish wheel at Copper Center allowed the brother to hunt muskrats in his traditional use area.

The second project, designed to address multiple data needs, was conducted jointly by the Division of Subsistence with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC). This study described contemporary resource harvest patterns for five upper Tanana communities and asked about their use of 13 geographic areas within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (Marcotte et al. 1992). AEIDC used data from this study to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed Alaska Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System on upper Tanana subsistence practices (McMillan and Cuccarese 1988), while the NPS used selected findings for a report that described customary and traditional resource use patterns of Upper Tanana communities, including their activities in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve<sup>9</sup> (National Park Service 1994).

Upper Tanana residents were asked if they had harvested resources in any of 13 defined areas in the park and preserve, either in 1987 and 1988 or at other times while living in their current community of residence. The findings revealed use of five of these areas, all of which are located in the northern part of the park unit: Chisana, Nabesna, Upper Copper River, Boulder Creek, and Kuskulana Drainage. For upper Tanana Athabascans represented in the sample population, these uses reflected continuation of a long-term use pattern established by older family members and/or through ties with their Upper Ahtna neighbors.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES**

Passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) resulted in creation of four new federal conservation units in the upper Tanana region: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, and the Bureau of Land Management-administered Fortymile Wild and Scenic River. All or parts of these federal enclaves are located in traditional upper Tanana Athabascan territory that local residents continue to use to varying degrees for subsistence purposes. Title VIII of ANILCA ensures that rural residents retain the opportunity to conduct subsistence activities on these federal public lands, as long as those uses are consistent with recognized principles of fish and wildlife management. The State of Alaska regulates subsistence fish and wildlife harvests on these federal lands, although the National Park Service determines who is eligible to hunt and fish in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and the Federal Subsistence Board promulgates regulations that may supersede State regulations governing the subsistence harvest of fish and wildlife on federal public lands.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> One purpose of this study was to provide information to the Federal Subsistence Board for making regional customary and traditional use determinations, rather than on a species by species basis. In the end, however, the board opted not to make regional findings.

<sup>10</sup> The Federal Subsistence Board first implemented federal subsistence hunting and trapping regulations in 1990 and federal subsistence fishing regulations in 1999.

## *Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge*

In December 1982, thousands of Nelchina caribou interspersed with a smaller number of Mentasta caribou unexpectedly migrated into the Tetlin Lake area near Tetlin and later moved to the Northway area. Although a few caribou routinely wintered in a remote part of Game Management Unit 12, not since the 1940s had so many caribou ventured so close to these two communities. Although the hunting season was closed, Tetlin residents harvested some caribou and were cited for taking caribou out of season. They later explained that because their harvest of whitefish was unexpectedly low the previous summer and few moose had been taken in the fall, they were opportunistically taking another resource that was available—just as they would have done historically. In addition, the wandering caribou had damaged traplines, sprung traps, and trampled muskrat caches (Haynes 1983), thereby disrupting other seasonal subsistence and income-producing activities important to local residents. The Alaska Board of Game denied the community's petition to emergency open the caribou season but invited Tetlin to submit a proposal to establish a winter season for consideration at the board's March 1983 meeting.

At that meeting, the board concluded that uses of caribou in Game Management Unit (GMU) 12 by residents of Tetlin and Northway were customary and traditional uses. Up to 85 subsistence registration permits (up to 35 in Tetlin and up to 50 in Northway) for a December 1 – February 28 season would be issued by emergency order if sufficient numbers of caribou migrated into the area west of the Nabesna River and south of the Alaska Highway and if a request was submitted to the Department of Fish and Game.

No hunt was held in the 1983-1984 regulatory year but a season did open in 1984-1985 when sufficient numbers of caribou wintered in the Northway area to warrant issuance of some permits. Seven of the ten permittees from Northway successfully harvested caribou. Several hunters without permits took caribou and some residents from Tetlin and Northway complained about the manner in which permits were issued. Tanacross and Tok residents also said they should qualify for this hunt, since it occurred in areas they commonly used to harvest fish and wildlife.

The regulations for this hunt have changed several times in subsequent years, in part to protect from overharvest the smaller Mentasta Caribou Herd that mingles with Nelchina caribou during the winter migrations north from the Copper River Basin. The State closed its winter season after the federal government began regulating subsistence hunting on federal public lands in 1990, then reopened the hunt in the mid-90s for several years before closing it again because of conservation concerns for both the Nelchina and Mentasta herds.

Winter caribou hunting in GMU 12 currently is authorized only on federal lands in the Tetlin Refuge and only if federal and state managers determine that the proportion of Nelchina caribou is high enough to reduce the potential for overharvest of Mentasta caribou. Eligibility for this hunt is limited to residents of GMU 12, Dot Lake, Healy Lake, and Mentasta.

The Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge has strengthened its working relationship in Upper Tanana villages by hiring local residents to support its management efforts. The current refuge liaison coordinated the first "Upper Tanana Cultural Resources Summit Conference" in 2005, whose purpose was to assemble Native people, researchers, and agency representatives to discuss cultural sites and resources and develop guidelines for future research in the region.

## ***Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve***

The history of subsistence management on National Park Service (NPS) lands in Alaska through 2001 is detailed in *Alaska Subsistence: A National Park Service Management History* (Norris 2002). This informative report is essential reading for anyone interested not only in the genesis of subsistence management in Alaska, but also in the recent history of the still-evolving relationship of the NPS with its Alaska Native and other rural constituents.

The history of NPS dealings with the upper Tanana Athabascans and communities in the upper Tanana region aptly illustrates how this relationship changed following establishment of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in 1980. Because this relationship has directed attention to the historic ties between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans, we examine it in some detail.

NPS Alaska regulations limit subsistence eligibility on park and park monument lands to rural residents who either live in a designated park resident zone community or can demonstrate that they customarily and traditionally conducted subsistence activities in a national park or monument prior to its establishment in 1980.<sup>11</sup> Using information derived from public hearings and agency-sponsored research, the NPS promulgated regulations in 1981 delineating the resident zone communities for each park area in Alaska where subsistence uses were authorized. For the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, this included Tok, Yakutat, and 16 communities in the Copper River Basin.

Section 808 of ANILCA created subsistence resource commissions (SRC) in the park areas where subsistence uses were authorized and directed each commission to “devise and recommend to the Secretary [of the Interior] and Governor [of Alaska] a program for subsistence hunting within the park or park monument.” In 1985, the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC developed a hunting plan recommendation requesting that Northway be added to the park resident zone:

The village of Northway has always utilized the resources from the park and preserve for subsistence purposes. Their use was customary and traditional and this Commission believes their omission on the resident zone list was an oversight.

Three years later, the U.S. Department of the Interior rejected this recommendation for reasons explained in a letter to the commission:

Resident zone designation means that individuals who permanently reside within the identified community are awarded subsistence privileges as a community. In order to designate the community of Northway as a resident zone community, NPS would have to determine whether or not a significant concentration of people who permanently reside in this community have a history of customary and traditional subsistence use in the park. To date, the Service has no indication from the residents of Northway that they have any interest in subsistence hunting within the park or that they have a history of customary and traditional subsistence use within the park. At this time, NPS will not further explore designating it as a resident

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<sup>11</sup> Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 13, Subpart B.



zone. The residents will continue to be eligible to apply for subsistence hunting permits (Reece 1988).

After expressing some bewilderment at the failure of the NPS to conduct a hearing in Northway when the agency was soliciting input on which communities should be part of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park resident zone, the SRC held a meeting there in December 1989 to take public testimony regarding uses of the park area by local residents.<sup>12</sup> The SRC reiterated its belief that Northway should be added to the resident zone. An Ahtna member recalled traveling to Northway in 1942 and observing many residents of Nabesna Village trapping and hunting in the Cheslina River area just north of the preserve boundary. Another opined that Holly Reckord's subsistence and cultural resources research in the Copper River Basin (Reckord 1983a and 1983b), had served as a primary source for documenting subsistence uses of the park and was incomplete.

Several Northway residents then described their connections to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and use of park lands for subsistence purposes. One woman said her grandfather had for many years hunted in the Wrangell Mountains. Two persons giving testimony were born in the Nabesna area and two others had kinship ties to people in Batzulnetas. One man reported having operated a trapline in the Black Hills area for about five years and another had hunted sheep up the Nabesna River.<sup>13</sup>

Even after hearing testimony at this meeting, park officials remained skeptical that Northway would meet the test required to become a resident zone community. One official noted that some of the uses described at the Northway meeting occurred on preserve lands and not in the park; another said that individuals with a history of hunting in the park still could apply at park headquarters for an individual subsistence permit. This was viewed as an impractical solution, given the long distance from Northway to park headquarters—which greatly exceeds the distance from Northway to the northern part of the park that was part of the traditional hunting territory of former Upper Chisana-Upper Nabesna band members now residing in Northway. The NPS later acknowledged that the “invasive” permitting process would both be a burden to subsistence users and add to the administrative workload of its staff.

The Wrangell-St. Elias SRC resubmitted its recommendation that Northway be added to the resident zone in December 1991:

Testimony received at the December 4, 1989, meeting of the Subsistence Resource Commission demonstrates that residents of Northway have historically used portions of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve for subsistence purposes. After reviewing maps of the park and preserve, a number of Northway

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<sup>12</sup> This topic was discussed at more than one SRC meeting. Members believed that Tok was included in the resident zone because of a strong lobbying effort at a public hearing held in that community. An Ahtna member of the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC said Northway and the other Upper Tanana Athabascan villages may not have known about the hearings and their importance, or may have assumed the Ahtna people would look out for their interests. If that had been the case, he added that the Ahtna people would have been reluctant to lobby on behalf of the Upper Tanana villages without first having discussed the issues with them.

<sup>13</sup> Further evidence of Northway residents hunting sheep in the park area: Two Native men pleaded guilty to and were convicted on charges of taking a sublegal sheep in 1980 in the vicinity of Devil's Mountain at Mile 42 of the Nabesna Road.

residents testified to their use of several of the areas within the unit for subsistence activities.

Additionally, data compiled by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game Subsistence Division indicates that residents of Northway historically made extensive use of those areas which are now within the northern portion of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. While use of the park area appears to be less now than in the past, there is an unbroken pattern of use which exists.

The Subsistence Resource Commission has requested that the Federal Subsistence Board make a positive customary and traditional use finding [for Northway] for all subsistence species [in the park]. We are requesting the Federal Subsistence Board to support the recommendation that Northway be designated as a resident zone community for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

The Secretary of the Interior replied that the NPS must first determine that “a significant concentration of local rural residents with a history of subsistence use of the park’s resources currently resides within the community of Northway.” If this requirement was met, the NPS would then define community boundaries for resident zone designation and initiate rulemaking to add Northway to the park resident zone (National Park Service 2001).

As other upper Tanana villages learned of this process, they cited their historic ties to the park area and asked that they, too, be considered for addition to the park resident zone. The NPS concluded that, like Northway, the communities of Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Tanacross, and Tetlin had not been adequately represented at public hearings when testimony had been taken concerning resident zone community designations. Additionally, in the course of collecting information about customary and traditional uses of large mammals by residents of the Upper Tanana region (National Park Service 1994), park officials recorded sufficient new information to conclude that “addition of these communities into the resident zone had substantial merit” (National Park Service 2001).

Park staff subsequently prepared two environmental assessments which evaluated the potential impacts to cultural and natural resource values in the park by adding five new communities to the resident zone (Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve 1998 and 1999b). The public process involving review of various park reports yielded additional documentation that reaffirmed the long-term connections between the upper Tanana and Ahtna people, as is illustrated in comments submitted by the Dot Lake Village Council (1994):

Doris Charles, born 20 October 1903, was raised in Batzulnetas, Alaska, and has a Native Allotment there, which is within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. During her youth, she hunted, fished, trapped, and gathered within the area of Batzulnetas. She assisted her uncle, hunting sheep in the mountains of the area. At the present time, she is a party to the Law Suit of Katie John, et al., vs. United States of America, et al.... This suit is based on Traditional and Cultural use of the salmon fisheries in the Copper River at Batzulnetas. As a young girl, Doris moved to Tanacross and married Peter Albert Charles. She and her husband hunted moose, sheep, caribou, muskrat, and other small game within the Nabesna area and the area that is now known as the Tetlin Wildlife Refuge....

Gene Henry, born 15 November 1911, was also raised at Batzulnetas and has a Native Allotment in the area. Presently, Gene lives in the Native Village of Dot Lake, but has resided within the Native Village of Tanacross at different times during his life. He and his family also used the wild resources of the Nabesna area, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and the area that is now the Tetlin Wildlife Refuge until they were prohibited from using them by new laws and regulations that were placed into effect.

The NPS compiled similar documentation for Healy Lake residents in a report submitted to the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC. For example, current resident Logan Luke explained that he was born at Sand Creek and lived in Healy Lake until the community disbanded in 1944, at which time he moved to Tanacross. Mr. Luke described his kinship ties to Batzulnetas and said he had hunted and fished in the area at different times.

Logan stated that he had hunted with Ralph Sanford in Chistochina in 1978 before he died. Logan recalled using a fish wheel while staying with Lemmie Charlie in Chistochina. Oscar Ewan, an Ahtna native, taught him the Ahtna dialect when he was young. Logan described the location of two old caribou fences on the Mentasta flats and toward Gulkana. He spoke of being the driver for women coming from Tanacross to pick berries in Copper Center and Glennallen. Likewise, he recalled driving for his aunt Maggie Joe (from Chistochina), Long Lucy (from Nabesna), Short Lucy (from Mentasta) and Katie John (from Mentasta) to Polly Hill on the 40-Mile River to pick berries (Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve 1999a:14).

In February 2002, the NPS published a final rule in the Federal Register that added the Upper Tanana villages to the resident zone for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Included in this rulemaking was a directive that the park superintendent should consult with each community and designate community boundaries for each new resident zone community. This process was completed in 2004.

Adding these villages to the park resident zone is not expected to result in much increased hunting in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, but the action appropriately ensures that the upper Tanana Athabascans and other village residents can do so legally. The action also has cultural and symbolic importance because it acknowledges and reinforces the historic ties between the upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna people.

### ***Katie John v. United States***

Upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna Athabaskan connections are illustrated in an important legal case that has had significant implications for subsistence resource management in Alaska. In 1984, Athabaskan women Katie John (from Mentasta) and Doris Charles (from Dot Lake) submitted a proposal to the Alaska Board of Fisheries asking that subsistence salmon fishing be authorized at Batzulnetas<sup>14</sup>, a traditional village site located within the boundaries of the

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<sup>14</sup> The Ahtna name for Batzulnetas is Nataelde or “Roasted Salmon Place.” Lt. Henry Allen (1885) referred to the place as Batzulnetas, which was the name of the local shaman. Nataelde was an Upper Ahtna village that was abandoned in the mid 1940s when residents relocated to Mentasta so their children could attend school. However,

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park at the confluence of the Copper River and Tanada Creek. Fishing had been closed there since 1964, when the Alaska Board of Fisheries disallowed the use of nets and fish wheels for subsistence fishing.

After the board rejected this proposal, John and Charles enlisted the aid of the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and in 1985 sued the State of Alaska in federal court, asserting that allowing commercial fishing at the mouth of the Copper River but not permitting subsistence fishing at Batzulnetas violated provisions of ANILCA.

The parties reached an agreement in 1987 that authorized limited fishing at Batzulnetas, but the plaintiffs moved their case to federal district court and requested an injunction against the new regulations. The court granted a preliminary injunction and authorized subsistence fishing at Batzulnetas under one of two scenarios: Fishing either would be allowed from June through August or a limit of 1,000 sockeye salmon would be imposed. Eight permits were issued under emergency regulations in 1987 and local residents harvested 22 fish. The Board of Fisheries established a season and eliminated the quota in 1988 but no fishing occurred that year. In response to a subsequent suit filed by John, Charles, and the Mentasta Village Council, the U.S. District Court ruled in 1989 that the permit requirement must be eliminated and it directed the State to open the Batzulnetas fishery continuously from June 23 to September 1.

Before the Board of Fisheries could respond to this court directive, however, in 1989 the Alaska Supreme Court ruled in *McDowell v. Alaska* that the rural preference in state law for determining subsistence eligibility was unconstitutional. This decision put the State out of compliance with ANILCA because it could no longer administer a rural preference for subsistence hunting on federal public lands. In 1990, the newly-established Federal Subsistence Board implemented temporary regulations for hunting on federal public lands, and for the Batzulnetas salmon fishery adopted essentially the same regulations that the federal district court had ruled as being invalid. In response to a NARF petition challenging this action, the Federal board declared that the Batzulnetas fishery did not occur on federal lands and returned control over it to the State. This decision was based on an opinion issued by the Secretary of the Interior concluding that navigable waters were not included within the definition of “public lands.” Because both the Copper River and Tanada Creek are navigable waters, they were not subject to the subsistence priority in ANILCA.

In response to a host of new court filings by the *Katie John* plaintiffs, the State of Alaska, and others parties, the federal district court decided to address the issue of whether navigable waters are public lands before acting on other issues. The court agreed with Katie John and concluded that for purposes of implementing ANILCA, public lands include all navigable waters encompassed by the federal navigational servitude. This was a significant decision because the federal government retained jurisdiction for purposes of subsistence management that it did not generally have in navigable waters in other states. The state and federal governments both appealed this decision to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In December 1995, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court and ruled that the subsistence priority in ANILCA applies to navigable waters in which the United States has reserved water rights. The court reasoned that because subsistence fishing (1) is among the

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even after fishing was disallowed, former residents periodically returned to Batzulnetas to visit grave sites and renew their ties to this culturally significant site.

subsistence uses authorized in ANILCA, and (2) has occurred in navigable waters in the past, Congress must have intended that public lands include some navigable waters.

One result of this decision was establishment by the Federal Subsistence Board of a subsistence salmon fishery on waters of the Copper River and Tanada Creek located between National Park Service regulatory markers. Eligibility for this fishery is limited to residents of Dot Lake and Mentasta who obtain a Batzulnetas subsistence salmon permit from the National Park Service. Fishing currently is authorized from May 15 through September 30 or until the season is closed by special action.

In 2005, Katie John and other parties represented by NARF filed another lawsuit in federal district court alleging that in 1999 the federal government determined too narrowly the scope of reserved waters. Specifically, the plaintiffs claim that Native allotments and the waters adjacent to them are public lands because the United States possesses an interest in them within the meaning of public lands as defined in ANILCA.

## **VILLAGE CORPORATIONS**

Passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) dramatically altered the economic landscape in Alaska and paved the way for construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline. ANCSA provided for the formation of regional and village corporations and extinguished the aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives in exchange for title to 44 million acres of land and payment of nearly \$1 billion in compensation to these new corporations. Each Alaska Native born on or before December 18, 1971, with at least one-quarter Native ancestry, was eligible to enroll in a village and regional corporation. Enrollees were entitled to 100 shares of stock in both corporations. The settlement act has been amended several times to correct some problems and to allow the issuance of stock to persons born after 1971.

In the upper Tanana region, village corporations were established in Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Northway, and Tanacross. Each village corporation was entitled to receive between 69,000 and 115,000 acres of land, which typically was located near the village and often included lands considered important for subsistence purposes. Each Alaska Native resident of these villages became a shareholder in the village corporation and in the regional corporation, Doyon Limited. In lieu of receiving stock and participating in the cash settlement, Tetlin opted to retain lands that had previously been set aside for the Tetlin Indian Reserve and as a result secured surface and subsurface title to a substantially larger land base (743,000 acres) than it would have received as a full participant in ANCSA.

The village corporations in the upper Tanana region have pursued a variety of activities in order to generate revenue and create jobs for their shareholders. For example, in 1985 Northway Natives, Incorporated, developed a subsidiary corporation, Naabia Niiign, Limited, and constructed a campground, gift shop, and grocery store at Mile 1264 of the Alaska Highway. These business ventures employ shareholders and are a sales outlet for Athabascan handicrafts produced by local artisans. In 1987, Tanacross, Incorporated, created a subsidiary, Tanacross Information Services, to perform under contract to the U.S. Air Force research necessary to evaluate the potential cultural effects of construction of the Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System in the upper Tanana region. Tanacross, Incorporated, has more recently expanded its activities into other areas.

## NATURAL GAS PIPELINES

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter selected the Alcan Proposal as the route for a proposed natural gas pipeline running along existing utility corridors from Prudhoe Bay through Alaska and Canada, to markets in the Midwestern United States. One leg of this proposed route ran parallel to the Alaska Highway as it passed through the upper Tanana region and only a short distance from Tok and outlying villages. Varying degrees of sociocultural and economic impacts were projected for the predominantly Indian villages, which the project sponsor, Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company, planned to avoid or minimize through use of mitigation measures or expected to be offset by the socioeconomic benefits that the villages would derive from the project. Displacement from traditional hunting areas during the construction phase (and perhaps much longer), for example, might be offset to some extent by opportunities for wage employment.<sup>1</sup> Although this project was shelved in the early 1980s, communities in the upper Tanana region did engage in serious discussions about how they could derive maximum benefits and avoid the negative impacts that were expected to occur during the construction phase of the project.

Nearly a quarter of a century later, economic conditions and market demands for natural gas have improved and serious discussions about building a natural gas pipeline are again underway. As of May 2007, state officials were still negotiating with major oil producers on the North Slope and a pipeline route had not been selected. A Canadian company holding right-of-way leases to construct a pipeline along the Alaska Highway held a series of public meetings in communities along the corridor in 2005 to promote its proposal. At meetings in the upper Tanana region, local villagers generally embraced the project if it provided employment and contracting opportunities but also voiced concern about health and environmental issues and the importance of safeguarding fish and wildlife resources.

One persistent concern of village residents with potential construction of a new natural gas pipeline through the upper Tanana region involves both formerly used defense sites and remnants of the old Fairbanks to Haines pipeline built in the early 1950s to support the military.

While the creation of this military infrastructure was impressive, the environmental degradation has been persistent. The pipelines were plagued with fuel leaks. Other toxic substances, including pesticides, cleaning solvents, and PCBs were likely released. Troops and contractors deposited all kinds of debris, from tin cans to 55-gallon drums to broken-down vehicles, throughout the landscape. When facilities were no longer needed, many were simply abandoned in place. The contaminants appear to pose health threats to the native communities who have inhabited the Valley for thousands of years, since most people rely on fish and game for subsistence. The debris restricts their use of real property, property which was later formally transferred to native communities with no acknowledgment of any form of contamination (Siegel 2000).

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<sup>1</sup> Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is a sub-field of the social sciences that systematically examines the potential social consequences on human populations and communities of proposed large-scale projects, and suggests possible mitigation measures and other steps that can be taken to minimize negative impacts. More information about SIA is available on two informative websites: <http://www.socialimpactassessment.net/> and <http://www.iaia.org/>.

The Department of Defense has taken steps in recent years to inventory these abandoned and potentially dangerous military sites, and to begin remediation measures. Much work remains to be done.<sup>16</sup>

## THE CONTEMPORARY VILLAGES

A first time visitor to the upper Tanana region would see little evidence of the Athabaskan villages from the Alaska Highway, as they are either located some distance from the road or well-concealed by the topography. Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Northway Village are all road-accessible throughout the year, although the road to Tetlin is not maintained year-round. Ground access to Healy Lake is limited to the winter months when the Tanana River is frozen and can support highway vehicles. All communities except Dot Lake also have or are located near public airstrips. Riverboats and all-terrain vehicles are common modes of transportation for local travel and to access hunting and fishing areas. The upper Tanana communities are all unincorporated and part of the Unorganized Borough, and have no local taxing authorities. 2005 population and per capita income data for upper Tanana communities are presented in Table 5.

This section presents a short description of and socioeconomic information for each upper Tanana village and for Tok, the regional center and largest community in the region. This information is derived primarily from the Alaska Community Database Community Information Summaries, which can be accessed on the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and

Table 5. 2005 Population Data and Per Capita Income Statistics for Communities in the Upper Tanana Region.

Community	Estimated 2005 Population	Percent Alaska Native	Per Capita Income
Dot Lake Village	33	73.7	\$ 7,426
Dot Lake	27	5.3	19,406
Healy Lake	29	73.0	18,128
Northway Village	99	95.3	10,300
Northway Junction	78	58.3	16,440
Northway	87	82.1	16,429
Tanacross	149	90.0	9,429
Tetlin	150	97.4	7,371
Tok	1,459	19.0	18,521

Source: Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (2006)

<sup>16</sup> See a report prepared by the Tanana Chiefs Conference (1996) for an inventory of military sites near Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and other villages in the upper Tanana region, many of which contain contaminants. The report also discusses steps that were being taken at the time to address environmental contamination and other significant problems posed by these sites.

Economic Development website at: <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/commdb/>. Although dated, additional historical and socioeconomic information for these communities is available in a series of “community profiles” produced for Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company in the early planning stages for its proposed natural gas pipeline (Darbyshire and Associates 1980).

**Dot Lake** consists of two population clusters—the predominantly non-Native community located on the Alaska Highway, 155 miles east of Fairbanks and 50 miles northwest of Tok, and the Native Village of Dot Lake, which is situated about one mile east of the non-Native community between the highway and the Tanana River. The site, which was historically a seasonal hunting and trapping camp used by Indians from outlying areas, was the location of a work camp known as Sears City during construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942-1943. The first Athabascan family to settle permanently at Dot Lake moved there from Paul’s Cabin in the winter of 1946-1947, followed by a family from Tanacross in 1948 and one from the Sam Lake – George Lake area in 1950. A non-Native family also settled in the area in the late 1940s and by the early 1950s had constructed a lodge, post office, school, and church (Martin 1983:18).

The 5-member Dot Lake Village Council is recognized by the federal government as the official tribal governing body of the Native village and administers a variety of federal programs, including local health care, employment assistance, social services, and tribal operations. The village council, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the school are the primary employers in Dot Lake Village, while the family-owned Dot Lake Lodge is the only employer in Dot Lake. A few residents work seasonally as firefighters. The Dot Lake Native Corporation, created pursuant to ANCSA, received 69,120 acres of land as its part of the land claims settlement. The non-Native community has no formal government.

**Healy Lake** lies north of the Alaska Highway about 29 miles east of Delta Junction, on the shores of a lake by the same name. Archaeological excavations near the current village site at Old Healy Lake Village have yielded evidence of human habitation for more than 10,000 years (Cook 1989:115). After the community was nearly decimated by an epidemic in the early 1940s, Chief John Healy moved the survivors to a site on the Little Gerstle River near the newly-constructed Alaska Highway. Some families later moved to Dot Lake and Tanacross to comply with Bureau of Indian Affairs policies requiring that children attend school. By the late 1940s, a few families had returned to Healy Lake and others traveled there in the summer to go fishing.

More families returned to Healy Lake in the 1980s and during the 1990s substantial improvements were made to the community infrastructure. With limited services and few jobs available in the community, however, residents who live there year round rely heavily on fish and wildlife resources harvested in the local area.

The Healy Lake Traditional Council is the recognized tribal governing body and administers federal programs in the community that provide most of the limited employment opportunities available there.

**Northway** actually consists of three dispersed population clusters: (1) Northway Junction is located at Milepost 1264 of the Alaska Highway, about 42 miles from the Canadian border and 50 miles southeast of Tok; (2) Northway is situated near the airport, about five miles south of Northway Junction; and (3) Northway Village sits between the Nabesna River and Skate Lake, south of the airport community and about nine miles south of the Alaska Highway. All are predominantly Native communities, although most non-Natives in the combined population reside at or near Northway Junction.



The area around Northway was in the heart of territory historically associated with the Lower Nabesna and Scottie Creek bands. The first non-Natives in the area were traders who operated trading posts at several locations. Nabesna Village, the first permanent settlement in the area and located across the Nabesna River from the site now occupied by Northway Village, was abandoned due to flooding in the early 1940s. Some men secured jobs working on construction of the Alaska Highway and local airport during World War II.

Northway Natives, Inc. received 115,000 acres of land as its share of the ANCSA lands settlement. Village residents are governed by a 7-member traditional council that is recognized by the federal government as the official tribal governing body and administers a variety of federal programs.

Both public and private sector employment opportunities are available at Northway. An FAA Flight Service Station and U.S. Customs office are located at the airport, while a motel, cafe, grocery store, and electric utility provide some jobs. At Northway Junction, some people the State of Alaska employs a few highway maintenance workers and others work at the general store and motel. In Northway Village, the tribal office, school, clinic and other local services provide the only year-round job opportunities. Some residents earn income working seasonally as firefighters or in construction jobs.

**Tanacross** is located on the south bank of the Tanana River, 12 miles northwest of Tok at Milepost 1324 of the Alaska Highway. The village originally was located across the river from its present location and known as Tanana Crossing. The site originated as a station along the route of the WAMCATS telegraph line. Traders operated at this site beginning in the early 1900s and St. Timothy's Episcopal Mission opened in 1912. Members of the Mansfield and Kechumstuk bands began moving to Tanana Crossing permanently when a school opened at the mission in 1932. The village relocated to its present location in 1972 due to problems with water contamination. The original village site burned in 1979 when a grass fire spread out of control.

Tanacross residents work at the school, clinic, and tribal office, and some commute to jobs in Tok. Some young adults work seasonally as firefighters. Two profit making corporations, Orh Htaad Global Services and Dihthaad Construction, were formed in part to provide employment opportunities for tribal members.

Under provisions of ANCSA, Tanacross, Incorporated, received 92,000 acres of land. Some of these lands are important for subsistence activities, while others are located in and near Tok. The 7-member Tanacross Village Council is the governing body of the village and was established in 1942 under provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act.

**Tetlin** is located along the Tetlin River between the Tanana River and Tetlin Lake, about 20 miles southeast of Tok and within the boundaries of the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge. The Tetlin and Last Tetlin bands maintained camps in this area for many years, and several traders operated there from around 1913 to the 1930s. The first school opened in 1929, a post office was established in 1932, and an airstrip was constructed in 1946. The 786,000-acre Tetlin Indian Reserve was established in 1930 by President Herbert Hoover. Its status was revoked following passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971, at which time Tetlin opted to take surface and subsurface title to approximately 743,000 acres of land in the former reserve. Consequently, Tetlin residents and the Tetlin Native Corporation did not share in the monetary distributions provided for in the ANCSA settlement and are not stockholders in the regional corporation, Doyon, Limited.

Tetlin is governed by a 7-member Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) village council, which operates under an IRA constitution and transacts all business for the tribe. The IRA constitution, ratified in 1940, sets out the specific authorities of the tribal council, which is recognized by the federal government as the official tribal governing body of the village. The council regulates all activities on the former reserve and administers such federal programs as local health care, employment assistance, social services, and tribal operations. The school, tribe, clinic, store, and post office provide a few jobs. Perhaps more so than in other upper Tanana villages, seasonal firefighting jobs are an important source of income for some Tetlin households.

**Tok** is located at the junction of the Alaska Highway and the Tok Cutoff to the Glenn Highway, about 93 miles from the Canadian border and 200 miles southeast of Fairbanks. Often referred to as the “Gateway to Alaska,” by virtue of being the first major community visitors reach when entering the state from Canada, Tok originated as an Alaska Road Commission camp in 1942 during construction of the Alaska Highway. A branch of the Northern Commercial Company opened in 1944. The community was established as a Presidential Townsite in 1946 and a year later had a post office, roadhouse, school, and a U.S. Customs Office.

A pump station associated with the military fuel pipeline that ran from Haines to Fairbanks was located a few miles west of Tok from 1954 to 1979, at which time the facilities were obtained by the Bureau of Land Management. The U.S. Coast Guard constructed a LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) station near Tok in 1976.

Tok is the transportation, business, service, and government center for the upper Tanana region. In recent years the population has grown considerably and the community has expanded its emphasis on providing a wide range of services to tourists, highway travelers, and residents of the region. For this reason, some residents from nearby villages either commute to jobs in Tok or relocate there for employment purposes.

## **SUMMARY**

At the outset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the upper Tanana Athabascans were organized as local and regional bands that spent much of the year based in temporary camps from which they dispersed to harvest fish and wildlife resources in surrounding areas. By that time, gold rushes and the increasing availability of western trade goods in the region beginning in the late 1800s had left an indelible imprint on the traditional hunting and gathering culture. Hunting with firearms reduced the need for collaborative efforts required to operate caribou fences. To help meet the demand for furs on the world market, Native men were compelled to spend more time capturing furbearing animals during the winter months, which could be sold or traded for more western goods. Missionaries finally arrived in the Upper Tanana region to promote Christianity and western values among the Native people and to discourage the traditional potlatch ceremony. World War II and construction of the Alaska Highway introduced diseases and epidemics that devastated some villages and, by making the region more accessible from urban centers, created competition for fish and wildlife.

By mid-century, the formerly nomadic upper Tanana Indians were residing in permanent communities, adjusting to a very different way of life, and rapidly becoming the minority population in their homeland. Mandatory school attendance for children reduced the time people could spend hunting and fishing out of seasonal camps, and the areas used to procure fish and wildlife resources had shrunk considerably. Competition from white trappers impacted the

ability of upper Tanana men to earn income from an avocation at which many excelled and that had eased their transition into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Compounding these impacts were the limited employment opportunities available in the upper Tanana villages that made it difficult for local residents to participate successfully in the market economy. One result was a growing reliance on government services in the 1950s and 1960s.

Passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 injected new life into the upper Tanana villages, although this landmark legislation could be construed as a double-edged sword. People now had a land base and other resources, but along with it a western corporate structure with which most were unfamiliar and that conflicted with some Native customs and practices. The upper Tanana Athabascans are a resilient and adaptable people, however, and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were using their traditional cultural values to successfully adjust to the changing world and to work with outside entities for the benefit of their villages. This is exemplified in the successful effort made by the upper Tanana people to have the National Park Service formally recognize their traditional ties to their upper Ahtna neighbors and to lands in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The upper Tanana Athabascans retain a strong attachment to the land and that will serve the people well in the years ahead.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using a variety of published and archival source materials, this ethnographic overview and assessment has described the culture and history of the Upper Tanana Athabascans, as well as their enduring relationships with the Upper Ahtna Athabascans and to lands in and near what is now the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. We have portrayed the people as they lived early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a generation after sustained western contact in the upper Tanana region, but before key features of the aboriginal culture had disappeared or been altered. This overview has also examined the effects of the fur trade, gold rushes, missionaries, road construction, and other agents of change on traditional lifeways. All of this background information is essential for understanding the contemporary upper Tanana people, their way of life, and the challenges they face today.

However, much more can be done to enrich our knowledge of the upper Tanana Athabascans and of their relationships to the Upper Ahtna villages and the area in and around the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The opportunity to fill existing data gaps regarding early 20<sup>th</sup> century customs and practices is quickly disappearing, as direct knowledge of that period is retained only by a few elders or in the “memory culture” of middle-aged adults. The National Park Service can take a leadership role in this effort and by doing so both enhance its working relationship with the upper Tanana villages and ensure that the information needed to accomplish park management goals and objectives is available for these and other purposes.

To illustrate the importance of not delaying this needed work, we offer an example of the relationship of language to other features of traditional culture. Everyday use of the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages has continued to decline and, as was noted in an earlier chapter, in 1979 they were classified as “moribund” (Krauss and Golla 1981:76-77). One of the authors saw evidence of this during a Christmas celebration at Tanacross in the early 1980s at which Chief Walter Northway made a very animated speech to the holiday gathering. When asked later about this speech and its content, a Tanacross elder explained that some of it was difficult for most people to understand, as Chief Northway talked “in the old time way” and had spoken many words that “people don’t use any more.” A generation later, this form of traditional speechmaking has all but disappeared. Our point here is that as use of the language declines, other elements of traditional culture begin to disappear as well.

Because cultural and linguistic information is important—not only for documenting and preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the upper Tanana Indians, but also for educating park staff, visitors and the general public—we offer the following recommendations as priorities for future ethnographic and historical research in the Upper Tanana region:

- (1) Audio- and video-recorded oral history interviews with Upper Tanana elders currently available for public use should be catalogued and indexed, beginning with a review of materials on file at the Oral History Program in the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, then at local schools, government offices and Native corporations. This is an important step for identifying topics that are poorly documented and about which the current generation of elders can contribute new insights to complement the existing documentation.

New interviews can be designed to provide information of interest to local communities, park managers, and park visitors.

Consultation with village governments and potential respondents is an essential first step in this process. Garnering local interest in and support for oral history projects can be facilitated by working collaboratively with local schools and designing student projects. Some topics that could be explored in recorded interviews might involve sensitive cultural or other information that is considered inappropriate for dissemination to the general public. These subjects can be identified in consultation with local residents, but should not be ignored if respondents are willing to discuss them and if this documentation can be beneficial to the village. Consideration should be given to transcribing audio recordings to facilitate wider use of this important material.

The biographies of Walter Northway (Yarber and Madison 1987), Andrew Isaac (Yarber and Madison 1988), Ellen Demit (Callaway and Miller-Friend 2001), and Kenneth Thomas, Sr. (Thomas 2005) referenced in this report illustrate the diverse and creative approaches that have been taken to conveying in written form the rich information recorded in oral history interviews. Conducting additional biographical interviews should be considered a high priority.

The Northway and Isaac biographies follow a format like that used by Yvonne Yarber and Curt Madison in a series of Alaskan Athabascan biographies in the 1980s, whereby the subjects tell their life stories in their own words and not as interpreted by the recorders. The liberal use of historical and contemporary photographs enhances the value of these biographies. The Ellen Demit biography is presented in free form, which “captures more fully the cadence and meaning” of her narrative (Callaway and Miller-Friend 2001:viii). Transcribed interviews with several current Healy Lake residents supplement and enrich the Demit biography. Finally, the Kenneth Thomas, Sr., autobiography is presented as a series of interactive dialogues between Thomas and the volume editor, each focusing on specific periods of his life or on other specific topics.

(2) Another resource at the Oral History Program is Project Jukebox, an interactive, multi-media computer system that provides digital access to oral history recordings and associated maps, photographs, and text. Jukebox projects usually focus on a particular geographic area and involve close collaboration with the community involved.

The Oral History Program currently has more than 35 Jukeboxes representing communities across Alaska—including one for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve that contains oral history interviews and photographs from Natives and non-Natives who live near or have been associated with the park. In the early 1990s, the National Park Service funded the Oral History Program to conduct interviews with residents of several Copper River Basin communities and National Park Service employees about their lives and experiences related to the park, its establishment, and subsistence living in the area. Additional interviews were conducted from 1998 to 2002. The material is accessible at the University of Alaska and the park's visitor center at Copper Center.

Now that the five upper Tanana villages have joined Tok as park resident zone communities, we recommend expansion of Project Jukebox to include in-depth interviews with local residents who have ties to the park area.

(3) Historical and contemporary photographs in archival and private collections that put a face on the cultural heritage of the upper Tanana Athabascan people and villages should be identified

and catalogued. We have used some archival photos and images from our personal collections in this report, but believe that many more photographs are available and could be used to prepare a photographic record of upper Tanana Athabascan culture and history modeled after *Their Own Yukon: A Photographic History by Yukon Indian People* (Cruikshank 1975). This, too, would be an excellent educational tool and an invaluable cultural and historical record for local villages.

(4) Upper Tanana geographic placenames have been recorded for the upper Tanana-Ahtna borderlands and for the Tetlin and Northway areas (e.g., Easton 2005; Kari 1997; Halpin 1987). Some names for the Tanacross and Healy Lake areas appear in documents not generally accessible to the public (Andrews 1980a, 1980b, 1981).<sup>1</sup> Gaps in this documentation should be identified and filled, and contextual information for the names recorded whenever possible. Of particular interest would be a comparison of upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna geographic placenames for the same features in the borderlands area and northern part of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

(5) If visitor facilities in the upper Tanana region (primarily Tok) do not already disseminate information about the cultural heritage of Native peoples associated with the park, such materials should be provided there. Visitors traveling to the park via the Alaska Highway will first view the northern part of the park and preserve, where the traditional territory of the upper Tanana and Ahtna Indians overlaps. Their appreciation of this scenic area may be enhanced if they have the opportunity to view it after learning more about the longstanding connections of these Alaska Native groups to the parklands.

One interesting display that would appeal both to visitors and local residents is a large wall map or 3-D diorama of the trails and travel routes documented in Appendix A and in the Chisana Basin Ethnohistory (Easton 2005), especially those used for travel between the upper Tanana region and the Copper River Basin. Depicting all of these travel routes on a single map or diorama, in combination with maps portraying geographic place names, would reaffirm the connections of the upper Tanana and Ahtna peoples and demonstrate the intimate knowledge the Native people had of their environment.

(6) Residents of the upper Tanana region have experienced numerous sociocultural changes and fluctuating economic cycles following western contact and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, when planning began in the late 1970s for construction of a natural gas pipeline through the region (see Chapter 7), local communities and organizations voiced their concerns about the potential social and economic impacts of this project and how they could be mitigated at a public forum in Tok. Local residents and businesses also sought economic opportunities that could help to offset the negative consequences of the anticipated boom-and-bust economy (Haynes 1979).

Although this gas pipeline project was shelved in the early 1980s, negotiations started again in 2006 when rising prices made marketing Alaska's natural gas economically viable. One of the proposed pipeline routes would again parallel the Alaska Highway and intersect the Upper Tanana region. Local communities want a seat at the table and again rightfully insist that appropriate planning be done to avoid or mitigate the potential negative impacts associated with this project and to enhance the positive benefits it may bring to the region. As one step in this process and partially funded by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the Division of

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<sup>1</sup> Geographic placenames for the Tanacross-Dot Lake-Ketchumstuk area recorded by Elizabeth Andrews in interviews with Chief Andrew Isaac also are on file at the Alaska Native Language Center.

Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, recently completed a subsistence harvest survey in upper Tanana communities to update subsistence land and resource use data (Koskey 2006). This information and similar documentation recorded in previous studies are important tools that local people can use to inform government and industry officials about their longstanding uses of renewable resources in the upper Tanana region.

Local villages may have additional ideas for a research that could better enable them to derive positive benefits from a new pipeline construction project, or to document changes that might take place during construction and operation. A study modeled after Holly Reckord's work in Copper Center during construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline (Reckord 1979) should be given serious consideration. We recognize that such a project might only be of peripheral interest to park staff and not address its primary information needs, but the possibility of a collaborative effort with other entities should be considered.

One topic that would inform park management and perhaps should be done cooperatively with other resource management agencies and local communities would document local environmental and ecological knowledge. Glimpses of this important information sometimes is found in other reports and publications but it merits more attention.

(7) Finally, the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has in its archival collections numerous linguistic (primarily) and ethnographic materials for the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages. These collections should be reviewed for information that is not available elsewhere but that may be of interest to upper Tanana villages for educational purposes. An electronic catalog available at: <http://www.alaska.edu/uaf/anlc/> contains a list and brief descriptions of each item in the collection. Finally, compilation of upper Tanana and Tanacross Athabaskan dictionaries is long overdue and should be accomplished while fluent speakers of these two languages are still alive.

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## APPENDIX A

### TRAILS AND TRAVEL ROUTES IN THE UPPER TANANA REGION

This discussion of trails and travel routes within the upper Tanana region and leading into adjoining areas is derived from a variety of sources and is further evidence linking the upper Tanana Athabascans to their Ahtna neighbors and to the northern part of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. We first identify trails described by upper Tanana and Ahtna people and then discuss travel routes used and documented by adventurers, explorers, and military parties in scientific publications and expedition reports beginning in 1880s.

As will be shown, the available source materials verify the presence of an intricate trails network in and around the upper Tanana region prior to sustained western contact at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Selected trails and travel routes that were in use at that time are depicted in Figures A-1 thru A-5. Some of these trails appear on USGS topographic maps or have been described by military expedition, scientific and historical reports, and a few have been designated as RS 2477 trails by the State of Alaska.<sup>1</sup> When precision is lacking in the source maps or written descriptions, the approximate course of some trails is shown.

For several reasons, these maps are only a partial representation of the many aboriginal trails used by the upper Tanana Indians in the early 1900s. We were unable to translate the written descriptions of some travel routes into lines on a map. This is in part a product of the quality and accuracy of maps and written descriptions recorded by pioneer explorers and military expeditions, which were limited by the poorly documented topography of eastern interior Alaska in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Nature also reclaimed some trails after they fell into disuse later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although remnants occasionally can be located. Finally, little evidence remains of trails that followed ridge tops and natural corridors.

Trails were sometimes marked by blazing or cutting the bark off a tree to expose the underlying wood which was usually very bright in contrast to the darker tree bark. To maintain the right of way and keep it clear of brush people habitually broke off twigs and branches that had grown into the trail. Some tree blazes were marked with pictographs and one such picture was found in 1969 near Mile 93 on the Tok Cutoff near the Upper Ahtna village of Mentasta. The markings, made from animal fat and charcoal, depicted five people, an animal, and two mountain ranges (Kari 1987:156). Addison Powell, a 19<sup>th</sup> century explorer, provided information about trail signs. He wrote that when Native people moved from one place to another they often indicated their direction of travel by using sticks stuck into the ground that were leaned in the direction of

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<sup>1</sup> Revised Statute 2477 is found in section 8 of the Mining Law of 1866 and granted to states and territories unrestricted rights-of-way over federal lands not reserved for public uses. For purposes of this statute, “highways” refers to foot trails, pack trails, crude wagon roads, and other transportation corridors. R.S. 2477 rights-of-way could be established in Alaska from 1884 (when the Organic Act was enacted and extended general land laws to the new Alaska Territory) to 1968, when the federal government issued the first of several public land orders that remained in effect until passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 and withdrew all public lands in Alaska not already reserved from all forms of appropriation and disposition under the public land laws. The State of Alaska has documented hundreds of historic routes that qualify as R.S. 2477 rights-of-way. For more information, see “Fact Sheet, Title: R.S. 2477 Rights-of-Way. Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land, and Water, September 2001.

travel. The number of people traveling was represented by the number of sticks and the age of each traveler represented by the length of the stick. Gender was represented by a piece of masculine or feminine wearing apparel that was attached to each stick (Powell 1909:286-288).

### **TRAILS DOCUMENTED BY ETHNOGRAPHERS**

Easton (2005) compiled a map for his ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin depicting the network of trails in the Alaska-Canada borderlands that covers part of but not the entire upper Tanana region as defined for this ethnographic overview and assessment. Easton does not identify his sources but we surmise that local residents provided much of if not all of the documentation. If comparable information was available for the entire upper Tanana region, it would add substantially to the number of trails portrayed in Figures A-1 thru A-5. Easton appropriately characterizes trails as being the threads “which tie together the land and the animals and the people who live on it” (Easton 2006:70). He also explains that roads and highways were constructed over some trails because they were the most practical route across the land. One example of such a trail not portrayed on Easton’s map is the section of the Taylor Highway between Tetlin Junction and Chicken.

Roger Pitts (1972:104-105) documented eleven “important trail complexes” in the Upper Tanana region (Fig. A-6), but unfortunately did not depict them on a map. He considered these to be the “primary arteries that governed upper Tanana hunting camp movements,” but alluded to the presence of other “major trading trails” in the region.

In his inventory of upper Tanana Athabascan geographic place names, Kari (1997) recorded names for several trails in the region, further verifying their long-term use and significance as aboriginal travel routes (Fig. A-7). The map accompanying Kari’s report does not portray these trails.

Mishler (1986:21) described “a well-developed overland trail system” that connected most of the areas used for hunting and fishing by the Delta-Goodpaster band just beyond the western border of the upper Tanana region. These trails radiated outward from the primary habitation sites at Big Delta village and Goodpaster village. Although Mishler focused his discussion on the territory of the Delta-Goodpaster band, he did describe one trail that ran in a southwesterly direction from a spring camp on the Goodpaster River to Healy Lake. Other trails probably connected with routes leading to Healy Lake, Joseph, Kechumstuk, Mansfield, and Tanacross.

Figure A-1. Upper Tanana trails and travel routes in the USGS Big Delta 1:250,000 Quadrangle.

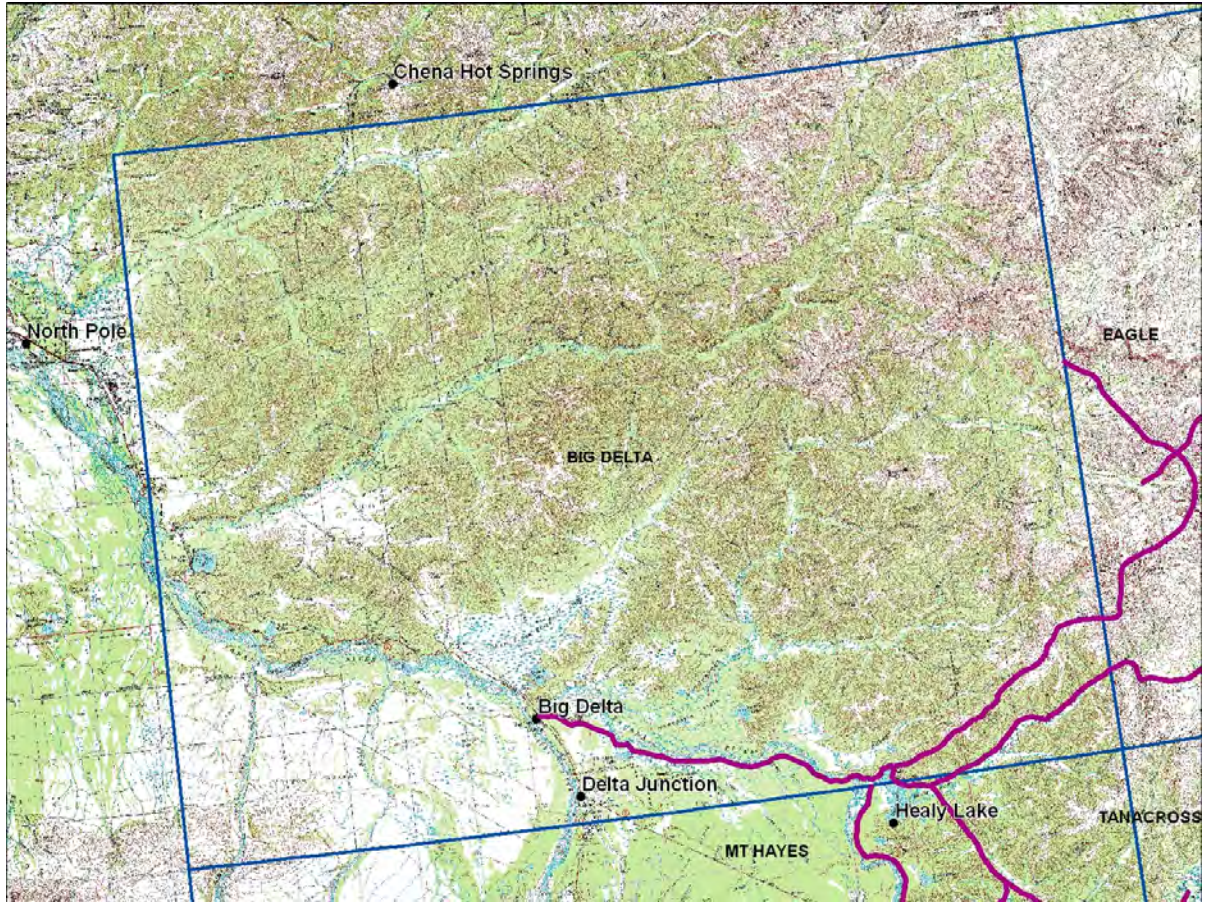


Figure A-2. Upper Tanana trails and travel routes in the USGS Eagle 1:250,000 Quadrangle.

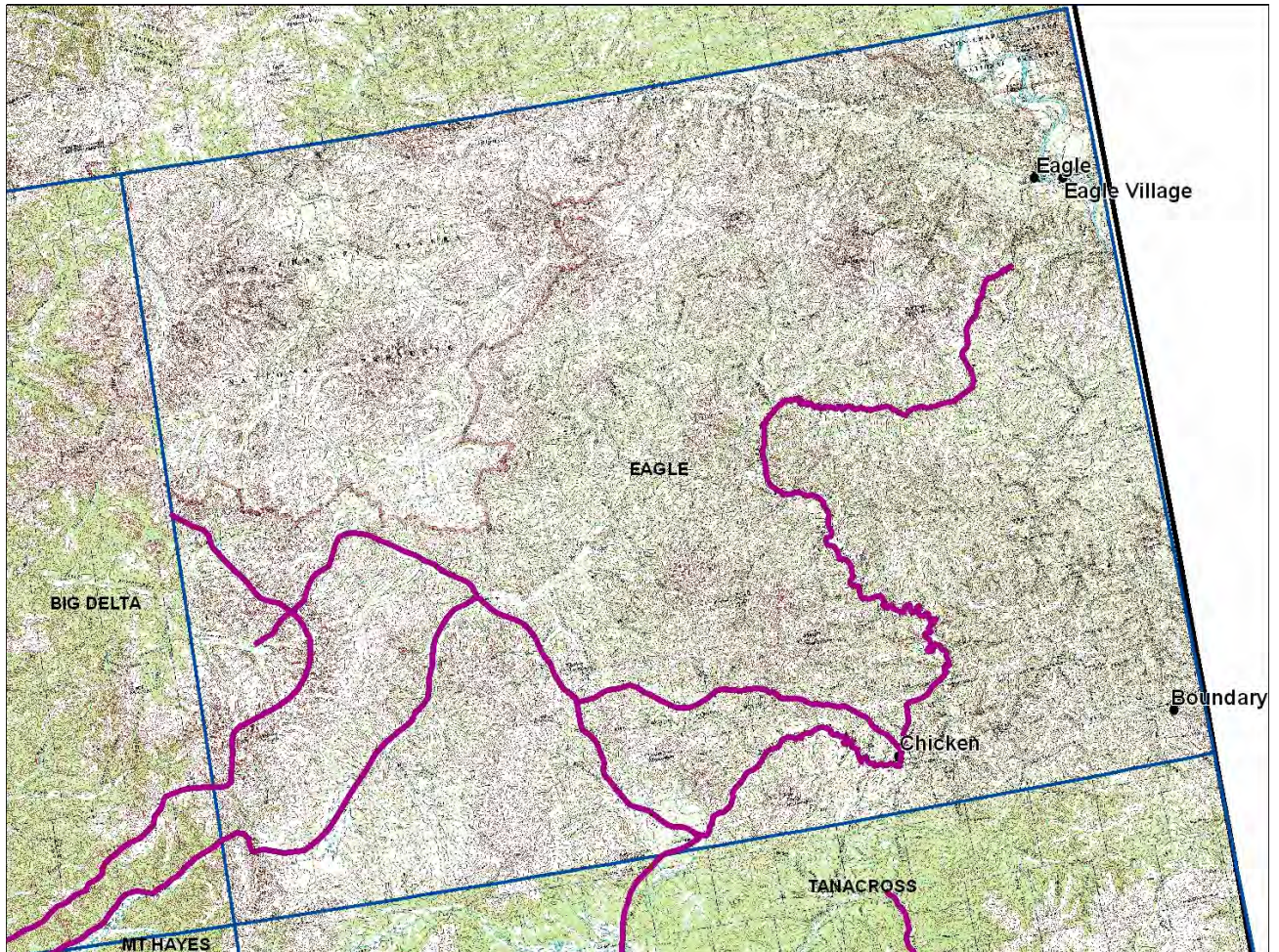


Figure A-3. Upper Tanana trails and travel routes in the USGS Mt. Hayes 1:250,000 Quadrangle.

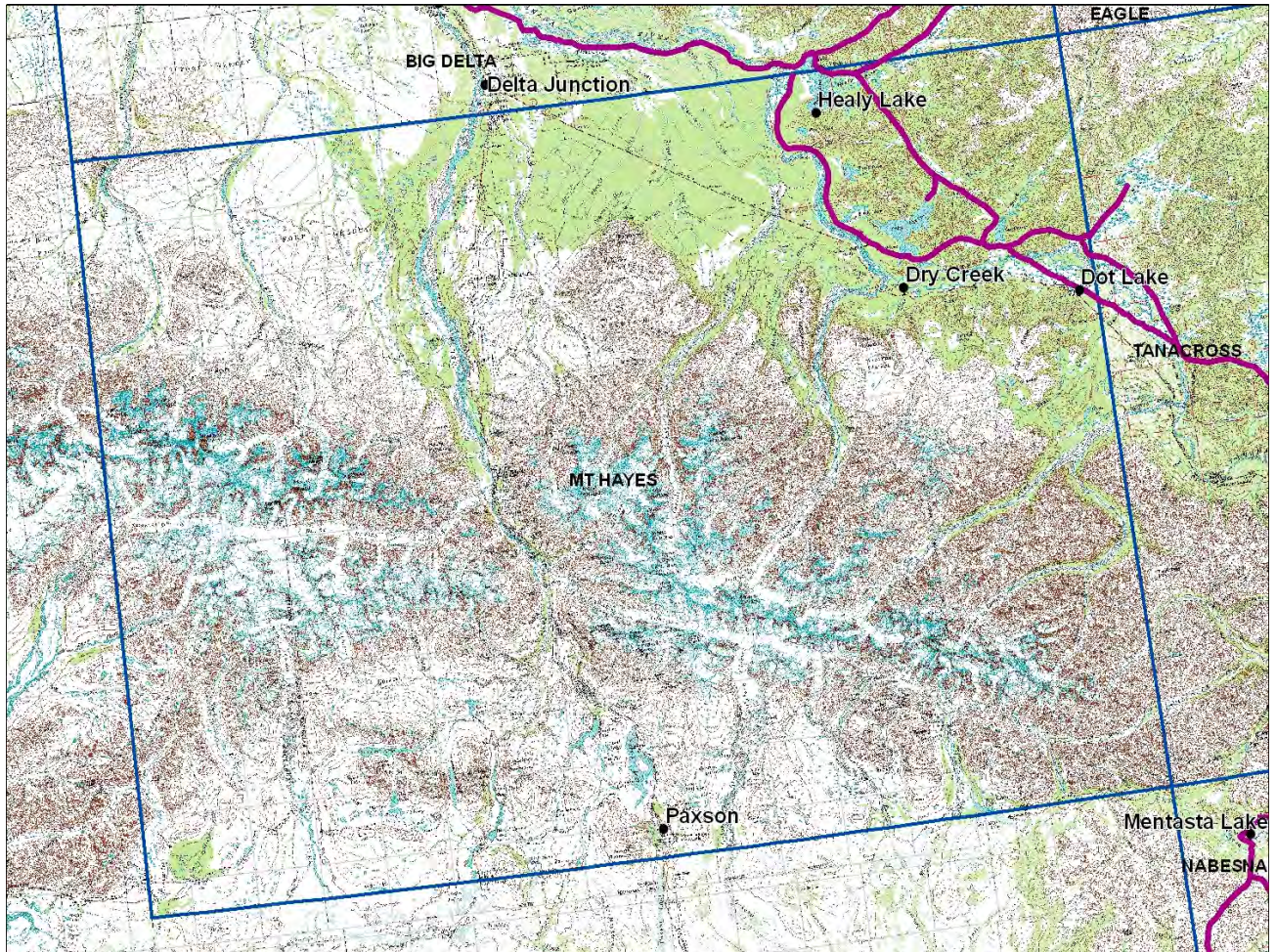


Figure A-4. Upper Tanana trails and travel routes in the USGS Nabesna 1:250,000 Quadrangle.

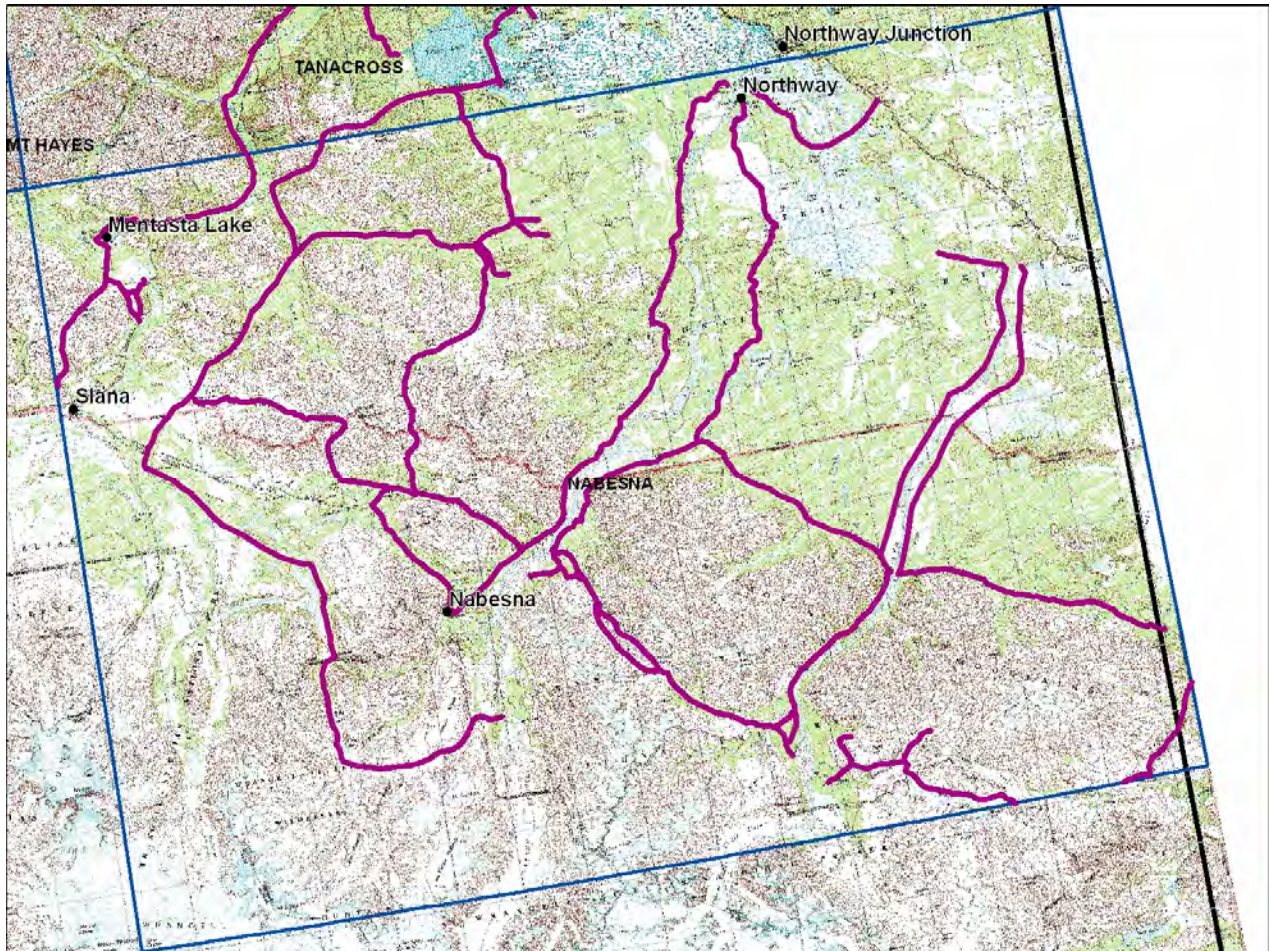


Figure A-5. Upper Tanana trails and travel routes in the USGS Tanacross 1:250,000 Quadrangle.

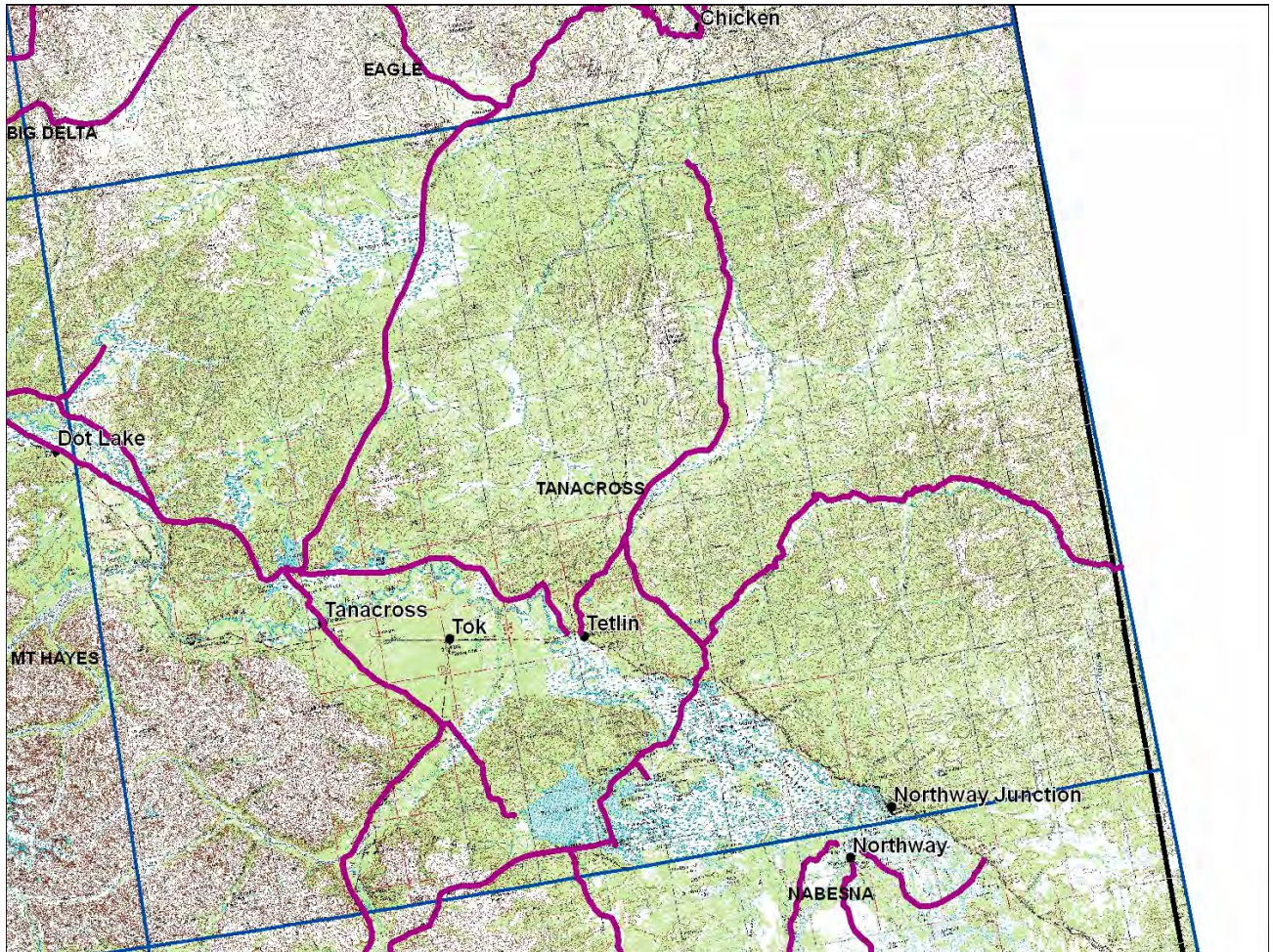


Table A1. Major trails used by the upper Tanana Athabascans within the region at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Trail Route	Description
Mansfield Village to Kechumstuk	Summer and winter hunting trail that included arteries connecting the Healy Lake, George Creek, Sand Creek, and the Goodpaster River bands to the Fortymile area and trading posts near Eagle City; also part of the Eagle-Valdez mail trail
Healy Lake to Joseph Village	Also ran to Healy River caribou complex
Mansfield Village to the Rainbow Mountains	Trail to a hunting area northwest of Paxson, south of Delta Junction
Mansfield Village to Tetlin and the mouth of the Nabesna River	Summer trail; also a potlatch and trading trail
Mansfield Village to Tetlin, to the foot of the Sikosina Pass, then southeast across Tetlin Lake to Nabesna	Winter trail that cuts above the summer trail to Tetlin
Mansfield Village northwest to the North Fork of the Robertson River	Old hunting trail connecting Mansfield to an abandoned village on the North Fork
<i>Kath Theel</i> (mouth of the Nabesna) southwest paralleling the right bank of the Nabesna River to its headwaters and Upper Nabesna Village	Major winter and summer trail used for moose and sheep hunting at the Nabesna River headwaters; also a potlatch and trading trail
Upper Nabesna Village to Fish Lake	Trail to summer fishing area
Chisana east to Beaver Lake and Beaver Creek	Trail to summer fishing area
<i>Kath Theel</i> to the Ladue River and northeast to Dawson	Trail leading to a caribou fence shared by the Han Indians from Dawson and Mouth of the Nabesna band
Chisana to McCarthy via the Chitistone and Chitina rivers and Skolai Pass	Trail to hunting areas and placer copper sites, and for trading with the Ahtna at Taral

Source: Pitts 1972:104-105.

To assist the Ahtna Corporation in identifying localities that should be set aside for historic preservation under provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, West (1973) compiled an inventory of trails and habitation sites in the Ahtna region. Her primary sources of information were the unpublished field notes of Dr. Frederica de Laguna and tape recorded interviews with elders from four Ahtna villages. West included in her inventory one travel route



that extended into the upper Tanana region. This trail extended,

...from Chitina all the way up to Batzulnetas going through the head of Sanford River and all the creeks.... It continued to Suslota, over to Tetlin (by Suslota Pass?) and eventually on to Dawson. People from Tetlin and Suslota used to meet halfway between their communities to hunt moose together... (West 1973:36).

Table A2. Selected Indian trails in the upper Tanana region.

Area	Location	Athabascan Name	Literal Translation
Tok River	Trail to Mentasta	Nahk'ädñ Ts'änh Mänh Diah ts'a Xay Tay	Winter trail from N. to M.D.
Lower Tetlin River drainage	Winter trail to Last Tetlin	Nahk'ädñ ts'ä' Xay Tay	Winter trail to Nahk'ädñ
" "	Summer trail to Last Tetlin	Nahk'ädñ it's' Shiin Tay	Summer trail to Nahk'ädñ
Around Tetlin Lake	Trail to Dihthaad	Dihthaadñ Ts'a' Xayh Tay	Winter trail to Dihthaad
Upper Tetlin River drainage	Trail to Northway	Naabiah Ts' a' Tay	Trail to Naabiah
Clearwater, Kalutna River drainage	Trail junction	Sdzits'alt ay Danh	Where trails join
Above Tetlin River to Northway	Trail to north from Midway Lake	Toochin Tayu	Sticks in water trail
" "	Trail to Leecheegn west of Riverside	Leechkeegn Tay	Trail of joined confluences
Upper Nabesna River	Trail on west side of Ellis Lake	Maagn Hets'e'ult ay	Trail passes shore
Lower Scottie Creek	Summer trail: Dawson- Scottie Creek-Northway	Shiin Tay	Summer trail
" "	Winter trail: Dawson- Scottie Creek-Northway	Xay Tay	Winter trail

Source: Kari 1997.

Several contributors to a collection of Upper Ahtna Athabascan narratives recorded by Kari in the early 1980s discussed local trails and travel between the upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna regions. In the narrative "Shallows Lake Country," Fred John described seven routes he used when traveling from Mentasta to various locations in the upper Tanana region:

1. To Bone Creek, over to the Tok River, up the Little Tok River, and back to Mentasta;
2. To Slana, Gakona, and Gulkana;
3. To Tanacross via the Eagle Trail, and back to Mentasta;
4. To Mineral Lake, Moose Creek, and the Little Tok River, over to Indian Pass, and to Mable Creek;
5. To Suslota, Batzulnetas, Tanada Lake, Jacksina, down the Nabesna River to Jack Creek, up to Batzulnetas, then to Suslota, and back to Mentasta;
6. To Trail Creek, down to Tetlin, to Northway, back up the Nabesna River to Jack Creek, over to Batzulnetas, and back to Mentasta; and
7. To Dry Tok Creek, back to Slana River and up to the head of the Slana, over to Slate Creek, and back down the Slana River to Mentasta (Kari 1986:194-207).

In the narrative, “When Lieutenant Allen Came into the Country,” Ahtna elder Katie John of Mentasta described the route taken by the Lieutenant Allen expedition from Batzulnetas to Last Tetlin (Kari 1986:120-121):

Then he (Lt. Allen) camped for a time.  
Then, “I should go over (to the Tanana side).  
An Ahtna should go with me,” he said.  
Then they asked my mother’s uncle about that.  
They sent him with him (Allen).  
Over to “Swift Current” (Tetlin) he led him (Allen) over the pass.  
Up to the place called “Small Salmon” (Suslota)  
he went with him and over to the other side,  
to “My Wife Headwaters” (upper Bear Creek)  
he went through the pass with him.  
They (Allen’s party) came out with him over at  
“My Wife Creek” (Bear Creek) and  
they came out with him down across from Tetlin,  
where “My Wife Creek” flows (to Tetlin Lake).  
He (the guide) arrived with them  
Across there where the (Last Tetlin) people were staying  
at “Nałk’edzi” (Last Tetlin).  
Then he left them (Allen’s party) with them (the Last Tetlin people).

#### **TRAILS DOCUMENTED BY MILITARY AND SURVEY EXPEDITIONS**

From this Ahtna narrative we segue into a discussion of travel routes in the upper Tanana region described by military expeditions, survey parties, and other travelers, as Lieutenant Allen’s account of his 1885 journey is the earliest documented travelogue for this area. Some of these are unquestionably aboriginal Indian trails and others probably are game trails often used for travel, but others might have been made by the expeditions. Allen complements his rudimentary maps with detailed descriptions of the expedition route in what was then uncharted territory. Upon viewing the Tanana valley for the first time, Allen remarked:

We had crossed the Alaskan Mountains represented in this section on all charts that attempt vertical delineations as very rugged and lofty, which is hardly the case. Not four weeks before our landing at San Francisco, a scout sent into Alaska the year preceding us had returned and reported that a crossing from the Copper to the Tananá would be utterly impossible; that a fair idea of the nature of the country could be obtained by placing one Mount Hood on another. His information was obtained from natives, and is not more inaccurate than is frequently obtained from the same source. The traders of the Yukon, who are supposed to be more familiar with the general topography of the interior than any other white men, believed the crossing to be next to impossible, and were more than surprised when we reached the Yukon River (Allen 1887:74).

The geologist Fred H. Moffit later described the probable route taken by the Allen expedition as well as other trails running from the upper Copper River area to Tetlin:

The best route to the upper tributaries of the Little Tok River is over the hill west of Suslota Lake and through Suslota Pass, but no trails except game trails are found

beyond Suslota Lake.... Suslota Lake and Suslota Pass are on the route followed by the natives in travel between Batzulnetas and the Tetling Lake district. The "Indian trail," which exists chiefly in the minds of the natives, turns from the Little Tok into the valley of Tuck Creek, and 5 miles beyond the low, swampy divide between the two streams it reaches the valley of Moose Creek and a pass to the Tetling Lake drainage basin. This appears to be the route followed by Allen, yet there were doubtless variations from this route as it has been described. Another pass to the Tetling Lakes is at the head of Trail Creek east of Mentasta Pass. The natives in their hunting and trapping expeditions use numerous routes and short cuts which they have learned, but these are usually of less help to white travelers than the many game trails, which are often well worn and may be depended on to give the easiest routes across ridges and through valleys (Moffit 1933:141).

The U.S. Army began surveying potential "all-American" routes to the Klondike gold fields in 1898, to address complaints from prospectors who detested the onerous Canadian mining laws and regulations to which they had been subjected in Canada. Military expeditions traversed the Susitna, Matanuska, and Copper River valleys and concluded that the most practicable route ran north from Valdez through the Copper River Basin and across the upper Tanana region to the Yukon River at Eagle City. The Mentasta Trail comprised a portion of this route, which Simeone (1982:74) has described as follows:

From Copper Center the Mentasta trail wound its way north up the Copper River, underneath the snowcapped volcanic summits of Mounts Drum, Wrangell and Sanford. Where the river makes a bend to the east, the trail continued north up the Slana River to Mentasta Lake. From the lake the trail followed the Little Tok River to the north edge of the Alaska Range and the Tanana River crossing. On the north side of the Tanana, the trail connected with Indian trails leading to the head of the Fortymile River which empties into the Yukon. Along the entire route prospectors encountered Indians who reportedly were accustomed to money and dealing with whites.

Alfred H. Brooks was a member of a geological expedition that surveyed the area between Pyramid Harbor, at Lynn Canal in southeast Alaska, and Eagle City in 1899. Brooks included in his report both a map of the expedition course and a written description of what he considered to be the most feasible route through the upper Tanana region:

A party intending to reach the Tanana or White [River] from Eagle City would do well to take the Mentasta Pass trail from Franklin Gulch in the Fortymile Basin and reach the Tanana by way of the Khiltat [Mansfield Creek]. After crossing the Tanana it should make its way in a southeasterly direction and strike our trail near Tetling, or, what would probably be easier, follow the Mentasta trail to the Copper and then reach our trail on the Nabesna by the Batzulnetas trail. By this latter route it would be about 225 miles from Eagle City to the Nabesna... (Brooks 1901:385).

Brooks also described an aboriginal trade route used by the upper Tanana and coastal Chilkat Indians for trading purposes that gained prominence during the Klondike Gold Rush as the Dalton Trail:

An old Indian trail has been reported which extends from the Lynn Canal following near the base of the St. Elias Range and reaches the White [River] near

its base by a valley of the Koidern River. This trail is said to have been used by the coast Indians in their trading journeys which they made into the White and Tanana Basins (cited in Pitts 1972:45).

Basil Austin and his companions were among the hundreds of gold seekers who hiked the Mentasta Trail and interacted with Ahtna and upper Tanana Indians along the way. After landing in Valdez in 1898, the Austin party spent nearly a year prospecting in the Copper River Basin, and then continued on to the Fortymile and Klondike gold fields. Austin sketched a crude map of the route his party traveled between Mentasta and Kechumstuk in early spring of 1899 (Austin 1968:118). The route leading to and from Mentasta is thought to have followed aboriginal Ahtna foot trails (Stratton and Georgette 1984:20-21).

H. Brian Pearson was a member of the 1899 Copper River expedition headed by U.S. Army Captain W.R. Abercrombie. He described three trails leading to the upper Tanana region from the Copper River basin:

Trail via Backeneda Creek to Main Tanana<sup>2</sup>

Leaving the old trail at Cache Creek, at the point where Lieutenant Lowe left a cache in 1898, and following the foothills of Mount Sanford in a northeasterly direction, the trail proceeds through scattering timber and at a distance of 10 miles crosses a clear-water stream some 20 feet wide, keeping between Cornwall ridge and the foothills and still keeping the same course, crosses a rapid glacier stream, 2 feet deep, at a distance of 9 miles.

Between Cache Creek and the glacier stream the trail passes several small lakes on the right and left hand sides. About 2 miles beyond the glacier stream the trail descends toward the Copper River, which at this point is visible, as is also a gap in the Suslota Range, bearing N. 80° E., and striking the Copper River at a point about 8 miles above the Slahna River, crosses on a gravelly bottom, making an easy ford; then bearing east for a mile strikes the regular Indian trail at the mouth of Bacheneda Creek, distant 1 mile, following the creek for 2 miles, and crossing at the house of "John," an Indian chief of that district; then following the other bank for 4 miles the trail turns to the right up a bench about 150 feet high. Following this bench for 4 miles the trail forks, the right fork leading to the head waters of the Copper River; the left fork leading to Lake Tenaden, the source of the Bacheneda, distant 15 miles. Forging the Backeneda at the foot of the lake the trail forks again, the one on the right runs to the head of Lake Tenadin and then to the west fork of the Tanana.

The one on the left bears due north for 2 miles, passes another lake on the left, turns east and follows the valley about 10 miles to a third lake. This lake drains into the Tanana watershed. The trail then passes to the right of this lake and follows down the valley. The Tanana is struck 5 miles below the west fork.

Trail to West Fork of Tanana via Lake Tenadin

This trail forks to the right from the main Tanana trail at the foot of Lake Tenaden. It then follows the lake to its head, then bears south for 10 miles to a

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<sup>2</sup> In these descriptions, "Bacheneda" or "Backeneda" Creek is Batzulnetas Creek; "Slahna" refers to the Slana River; and Lake "Tenaden" or "Tenadin" is Tanada Lake. The "house of John" or Chief John's house is Mentasta Village.

fork; the left fork leading over a low divide, striking the river about 7 miles above its junction with the main stream. The right fork continues in the same general direction and passes a series of small lakes, striking the river at the junction of the two glacier streams which form its bed.

#### Trail to Tanana Glacier via Copper River

This trail leaves the main Tanana trail at a point where the latter forks 8 miles above Chief John's house. Traveling south to another Indian house at the foot of Lake Zoeneda, you cross a creek at the foot of the lake and follow the trail around the right side of the mountain to a small fork of the Copper River, 7 miles from the Zoeneda Ford. At this point is a cache built in 1898 by Roberts and Co. Continuing up the creek for 7 miles the trail forks; the right fork leads to the Copper River Glacier, distant 8 miles. The left fork twines up a gulch in an easterly direction and passes through a box canyon. It crosses the divide at the head of the canyon summit, 7 miles distant from the fork, following the corresponding canyon on the other side to the west fork of the Tanana, 9 miles from the summit. From this point the trail continues to the main river by crossing the stream, which is easily fordable for horses. You then take the trail up a gulch due east, which you follow to the divide 8 miles distant. Continuing down the canyon you leave a small lake on the summit to the left and reach the main river 9 miles distant. On the east bank of the Tanana is a cache, which can easily be distinguished. The river is fordable at this point on a gravel bottom, but not above it (Pearson 1900:151-153).

In 1898, USGS topographer E.C. Barnard identified several access routes to gold mining areas in the Fortymile district. One of these trails extended from the Fortymile post just inside the Canadian border to the Tanana River:

... if the start is made from Fortymile Post the old Indian trail leading over to the Tanana is best. This trail leaves the Fortymile at the mouth of Clinton Creek, 4 miles from the Yukon, which point is usually reached by boat. Then following along the ridges, it finally crosses the south fork of the Fortymile at the mouth of Franklin Creek, and, going up Franklin Creek, crosses to the Mosquito Fork and continues up it to the Tanana (Barnard 1899:79).

After overseeing construction of a military telegraph line while serving in the Philippines in 1899, Lieutenant William L. "Billy" Mitchell was deployed to Alaska, where the U.S. Army was beginning work on the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) to connect its installations across the territory. Between 1901 and 1903, Mitchell supervised construction of the 153-mile line from Fort Egbert near Eagle City to the Tanana River, where it connected with a segment extending north from Fort Liscum at Valdez. He also directed exploration of the route and construction of 204 miles of line through the Goodpaster River region (Quirk 1974:3).

The Valdez-Eagle Trail was upgraded to a wagon road in the early 1900s and by 1907 a spur trail extended from Gulkana to Fairbanks that could support horse-drawn sledges in winter and wagons in summer. This spur trail later was renamed the Richardson Highway, in honor of Major Wilds P. Richardson, the first president of the Alaska Road Commission.

By the 1930s, white travelers were accessing some older Indian trails in the Copper River Basin

and upper Tanana region from the Richardson Highway and other roads. The geologist Fred H. Moffit conducted a number of geological and mining surveys during his 40-year career with the USGS in Alaska. His reports typically contain comparatively detailed information about travel routes into the areas he surveyed. For example, Moffit recorded this lengthy description of access to the eastern part of the Alaska Range between Mentasta Pass and the Nabesna River in 1931:

The district is practically without established routes of travel. It was formerly approached by the military trail from Valdez to Eagle and a branch trail that crossed the Slana River near its mouth and led to the Nabesna River by way of either Platinum or Jack Creek. The old military trail has given place to a new highway along the north side of the Copper River from the Richardson Highway near Gulkana. The highway was not completed until 1931 but is in use as far as the Cobb Lakes, 3 miles from Slana. Bridges over Ahtell Creek and the Slana River have been built, and the right of way south of the Slana has been cleared of trees as far as Batzulnetas. An old Indian trail leads from Batzulnetas to Suslota Lake. It is well marked and fairly dry in the timbered areas near the Copper River.... The best route to the upper tributaries of the Little Tok River is over the hill west of Suslota Lake and through Suslota Pass, but no trails except game trails are found beyond Suslota Lake.... Suslota Lake and Suslota Pass are on the route followed by the natives in travel between Batzulnetas and the Tetling Lake district. The "Indian trail," which exists chiefly in the minds of the natives,<sup>3</sup> turns from the Little Tok into the valley of Tuck Creek, and 5 miles beyond the low swampy divide between the two streams it reaches the valley of Moose Creek and a pass to the Tetling Lake drainage basin. This appears to be the route followed by Allen, yet there were doubtless variations from this route as it has been described. Another pass to the Tetling Lakes is at the head of Trail Creek east of Mentasta Pass. The natives in their hunting and trapping expeditions use numerous routes and short cuts which they have learned, but these are usually of less help to white travelers than the many game trails, which are often well worn and may be depended on to give the easiest routes across ridges and through valleys (Moffit 1933:141).

Moffit surveyed the "Slana-Tok District" in the area between the Tanana River and the headwaters of the Copper River in 1936:

The road from the Richardson Highway to the Nabesna River follows the north bank of the Copper River and crosses the Slana River near its mouth, about 1 mile from the Copper River. This is the best and most commonly used route for reaching the Slana-Tok district. An alternative route is the Tanana River, which is used by the traders of Tanana Crossing and Tetling Indian village.

The Eagle Trail did not go through Slana but bore northeastward from the Cobb Lakes across the end of the ridge on the north to a pass east of the valley of Ahtell Creek and thus reached the Slana River near Mentasta Lake. From that point it skirted the east shore of the lake, bore eastward through Mentasta Pass to the

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<sup>3</sup> We take this statement to mean that the referenced "Indian trail" was an old trail no longer in use, rather than suggesting that it was a mental construct.

Little Tok River, and there turned northward to go through the lower Little Tok and Tok Valleys to Tanana Crossing. This trail is still the only established trail within the district, but it has been traveled little since the military trail and telegraph line were abandoned after the completion of the Richardson Highway.

A trail, parts of which can still be followed, formerly connected Mentasta Lake with the Slate Creek district by way of the Slana River Valley. It is the trail by which the first prospectors made their way to the placer diggings of that district but was long ago abandoned. Indian trails, the trails of white trappers, and game trails are encountered here and there.... (Moffit 1938:7-8).

Moffit continued his survey work north of Jack Creek and the Nabesna River in 1938 and described several access routes into that area:

The general route of the Geological Survey party in 1938 was from mile 73 on the [Richardson] highway to Suslota Lake, up Suslota Creek and across a divide to the Little Tok River, thence to Buck Creek and the Tetling River, from the Tetling River to Cheslina Creek, and finally back to the south side of the mountains by a high pass between Cheslina Creek and the head of Totschunda Creek. This route leads through several passes well know[n] to the natives but little used by the few white men who have visited the district. The route to the first of these passes begins on Suslota Creek, 6 miles east of the lake, and leads through a narrow, canyonlike valley, in which the low point of the divide lies, to a tributary of the Little Tok River. Almost directly east of this but a little north of it is a second pass, which is reached by a long, easy climb to the divide between the Little Tok and the upper valley of Buck Creek. Between the Tetling River and the head of Platinum Creek, at an altitude of 5,500 feet, is a pass that was used by the Survey party once during the summer for replenishing supplies from a cache at the Nabesna mine. The ascent to this pass on the Platinum Creek side is gradual and easy, but on the Tetling River side it is over glacial moraines and is both steep and trying for loaded pack animals... (Moffit 1941:121).

Missionaries traveling from Fairbanks to St. Timothy's Episcopal Mission at Tanana Crossing early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century generally followed the Tanana River but occasionally made detours to avoid poor conditions in the river corridor or to visit remote Indian camps. Tatum (1913) recorded a very general description of the route he traveled on a 25-day trip from Fairbanks to Tanana Crossing in September 1912 to open a new mission there, while the Archdeacon Hudson Stuck described his trip to Tanana Crossing in late February and early March of 1913. Both accounts illustrate the difficulties of accessing Tanana Crossing from the west early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as did the Reverend Frederick B. Drane a few years later:

For instance, the annual trip of the steam boat [from Fairbanks] is a question. Few companies care to risk their boats and few captains care to make the trip, even when they may net a few thousands of dollars in the month required to make the trip. Last summer, it will be remembered, the steamer Atlas was sunk while making a second trip toward this destination, and now we wonder which will be the next boat to make the run. For the past three years it was the Atlas, and it will be hard to find another such reliable man as Capt. Flanagan to handle the Mission freight.

Even with a dog team the journey is not an easy one. There is no established trail to Tanana Crossing, for the simple reason that there is so little travel to and from this point. There is one trail across to the Yukon, to Eagle, and one that joins the Government trail to Valdez, via Gulkana, and then there is a third approach from Fairbanks up the Tanana river, yet when one goes to make the trip the chances are greatly in the balance of his finding only the snow covered flats and gaps in the hills, or the snow covered river, with no sign of travel to guide him (Drane 1917a:48).

The Episcopal missionary Frederick B. Drane also described an overland route between Healy Lake and Tanana Crossing:

...to reach this Indian encampment [Healy Lake] we had made an 18 mile detour, and to get back on the trail to Tanana Crossing was a matter of cutting across country without trails. Here we spent much time discussing the best way to go. The Old Chief [Healy] told us of a way he once went following the ridgetops to Billy Creek, then crossing and going up a tributary creek, bearing to the south at each fork of this tributary. This he said would take us to a low divide, across which we would find one of the winter hunting camp trails of the Mansfield Indians. But his son, John, insisted that this involved a forbidding amount of climbing and advised us to follow up Greenwood Creek, cross a divide, and then follow along Ray Creek until we struck the regular trail from Healey to Tanana Crossing (Drane 1918:87-88).

Settlement in permanent villages and construction of roads in and around the upper Tanana region resulted in declining use of trails by the 1940s. Some families continued to use trails to access seasonal fishing and hunting camps, while trails used for furbearer trapping were regularly used in the late 1940s (Goldschmidt 1948). Highway vehicles emerged as the primary mode of travel between road-accessible upper Tanana villages and to the Copper River basin beginning in the early 1950s. Tetlin remained inaccessible by highway vehicle until 1981, when construction of an unimproved road connected the village to the Alaska Highway. Healy Lake can be accessed by highway vehicle only in the winter months when the Tanana River is frozen over.



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## APPENDIX B

### UPPPER TANANA REGION ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This annotated bibliography is a compilation of ethnographic and historical publications and other sources of information reviewed for preparation of the Upper Tanana Ethnographic Overview and Assessment. With a few exceptions, the emphasis was on identifying published and unpublished materials that are generally available to the public and which address upper Tanana history, upper Tanana Athabaskan culture, and/or relationships between the upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna Athabascans. Only a few references are included for subject matter considered peripheral to the primary goals of this project, including linguistics and prehistory.

**Abercrombie, W.R. 1900a. Supplementary Expedition into the Copper River Valley, Alaska. In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*. Senate Report No. 1023. Pp. 383-408. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Abercrombie describes his 1884 expedition to gather detailed information about the Native people in the Copper and Tanana river drainages, and to record other information about these areas that would be useful to the military should its presence be needed in the region. The expedition did not have direct contact with people in the upper Tanana region. This report contains descriptions of the “Copper River Indians” and “Colcharnies” of the upper Copper River area, and refers to trade networks of the latter with adjoining Native groups, including the “Tanana Indians.”

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1900b. A Military Reconnaissance of the Copper River Valley. In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*, Senate Report No. 1023. Pp. 563-590. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

The primary objective of this 1898 expedition was to explore as much of the “Copper River district” as possible between Valdez and the Slana valley-Mentasta Pass area. Abercrombie estimated that about 300 Indians in four bands (“Tazlena,” “Gakona,” “Klutena,” and “Chettyna”) then resided in the Copper River Valley. He speaks sympathetically about the Native people in the face of an influx of white people and alcohol, and as they endured competition for and a decline in game populations due to the demands of the newcomers.

**Ahtna, Inc. 1988. *Report of Investigation: Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System at Gulkana, Alaska, Oral/Ethnohistoric Cultural Studies Program*. Two volumes. Prepared for the U.S. Air Force. Copper Center, Alaska: Ahtna, Inc.**

Under contract to the U.S. Air Force, Ahtna, Inc. conducted research aimed at designing and developing a methodology for obtaining ethnohistorical information about cultural sites located within an area that could be impacted by the proposed Over-the-Horizon (OTH) Backscatter Radar facility near Gulkana. The main report describes the tasks to be performed and summarizes the results. An appendix volume contains transcripts of interviews with Ahtna elders, discusses Ahtna cultural values, and presents recommendations for mitigating impacts to cultural properties. Some respondents discuss their connections to the neighboring upper Tanana Athabascans and describe cultural sites in the Ahtna-upper Tanana borderlands. [Note: These documents contain culturally sensitive information, and their distribution and/or reproduction may be restricted under provisions of federal regulation 36 CFR 296.18.]

**Ainsworth, Cynthia L. 1997. *Alaskan Folklore and the American Philological Tradition*. Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology. Indiana University, Bloomington.**

As a footnote to her dissertation, Ainsworth states that she “recorded over twelve hours of her [Laura Sanford] reminiscences about four hundred photos from her collection documenting life in Mansfield and Tanacross villages from the 1920s into the 1970s” (p. 143). Otherwise, this dissertation contains no important information about the upper Tanana Athabascans.

\_\_\_\_\_, **Katie John, and Fred John. 2002. *Mentasta Remembers*. Published by the Mentasta Traditional Council. Ontario: University of Toronto Press.**

Described by Ainsworth as “more than a family photo album and less than an ethnography,” this book combines oral and written history and photographs to produce a short, insightful history of Mentasta Village, an Upper Ahtna village situated near the southern border of upper Tanana Athabaskan territory. The potlatch ceremony is described, as are significant accomplishments of the village matriarch, Katie John, who will forever be linked with a court case that extended the federal government’s subsistence management jurisdiction into certain navigable waters in Alaska and set the stage for establishment of a culture camp at Batzulnetas. A videotape with the same title as the book was produced and presents much of the same information.

**Alaska Department of Natural Resources. n.d. RS 2477 Project Case Files. Fairbanks: Division of Mining, Land, and Water. Accessible on the ADNR internet website at: <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/>**

In the 1990s, ADNR began researching and adjudicating routes that appear to qualify as public rights-of-way under federal Revised Statute 2477 from the Mining Act of 1866 (RS 2477). To successfully document an RS 2477 right-of-way on a historic route, the route must be shown to have been constructed or used when the land was unreserved federal land. Route documentation includes historic maps, USGS bulletins and reports, and other sources. ADNR has concluded that about 647 of the 2,000 routes researched to date qualify under the RS 2477 statute.

The RS 2477 Project Case Files contain descriptions of and historical documentation for numerous trails in the upper Tanana/Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve study area, including but not limited to: RST 12 (Nabesna-Chisana); RST 83 (Batzulnetas-Suslota Pass); RST 162 (Batzulnetas-Nabesna River); RST 188 (Slana-Tanana Crossing); RST 307 (Mentasta-Tetlin Trail); RTS 321 (Nabesna-Northway); RST 333 (Tanana Crossing-Grundler); RST 374 (Nabesna-Canadian Border); RST 439 (Nabesna-Chisana Route 2); RST 440 (Mentasta-Slate Creek); RST 656 (Dennison Fork); RST 1567 (Copper River); RST 1572 (Tuck Creek); RST 1852 (Tetlin-Alaska Highway); RST 1854 (Ladue River); and RST 1865 (Last Tetlin/Nandell’s Village-Tetlin).

**Alaska Native Language Center. n.d. Upper Tanana and Tanacross Language Materials. University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

The Alaska Native Language Center research library and archives house a variety of materials developed by staff and upper Tanana Athabascans concerning the Upper Tanana and Tanacross languages. These include instructional materials developed by linguists (including Michael Krauss, Jeff Leer, and Gary Holton) and upper Tanana Athabascans (including Irene Solomon, Jerry Isaac, and Alice Brean). See Krauss and McGary 1980 for a list of materials on file at the Alaska Native Language Center as of 1980.

**Alaska Native Review Commission. 1984. Tanacross hearings of the Alaska Native Review Commission, April 30, 1984 [sound recordings and transcripts]. Oral History Collection, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Canadian Justice Thomas R. Berger conducted public hearings of the Alaska Native Review Commission in several Alaska communities to review the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, including one in Tanacross on April 30, 1984. Residents from Tanacross and other upper Tanana communities gave testimony. Publication restrictions apply to the material on these sound recordings but they are available for review.

**Alaska Trappers' Association. 1997. Oral History of Paul Kirsteatter, Recorded February 4, 1997. Audio tape recording made at Alaska Trappers' Association meeting. Copies available from the ATA, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

Kirsteatter first came to Alaska as a member of the Air Force in 1943 and returned to stay in 1945. A long-time resident of Healy Lake, he was married for many years to an Athabascan woman from that community. Kirsteatter gained a reputation for his success in trapping and denning wolves, and in this recording discusses his experiences trapping in the Fortymile country for nearly 50 years. He acknowledges his respect for the upper Tanana Athabascan elders and their traditional skills in harvesting wildlife.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1999. Oral History of Dean Wilson, Recorded Wednesday, August 25, 1999. Audio recording made with Randy Zarnke. Copies available from the Alaska Trappers Association, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

Wilson was raised in the Northway area and later moved to the Copper River Basin. He discusses his experiences as a trapper, hunter, and well-known fur buyer. Wilson speaks highly of Walter Northway regarding his many skills and talents as a leader and of his brother, Steven Northway. The upper Tanana Athabascan practice of killing wolves in their dens is discussed.

**Allen, Henry T. 1887. *Report on an Expedition to the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk Rivers in the Territory of Alaska, in the Year 1885.* Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Allen's report on his pioneering 1885 expedition contains the earliest documented descriptions of Native life in the upper Tanana region, immediately prior to sustained white contact associated with gold rushes on the Fortymile River in 1886 and a decade later in the neighboring Klondike. Expedition members interacted with Ahtna people regularly and relied on them for food in many instances as they ascended the Copper River. Allen describes their visit at Batzulnetas, where both Ahtna and Tanana people were in spring fish camp. His Tanana River narrative describes the "Lake Suslota to Tetling's" and "Tetling's to Kheeltat's" legs of the trip, which includes the upper Tanana – Ahtna Athabascan borderlands north of and including the northern border of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and extending to present day Tetlin and Lake Mansfield. Limited ethnographic information is presented based on the few days the expedition spent at Nandell's Village (Last Tetlin), Tetling (Tetlin), and Kheeltat (Lake Mansfield).

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1900. A Military Reconnaissance of the Copper River Valley, 1885. In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska.* Pp. 411-488. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

This report is essentially a condensed version of Allen's more detailed narrative (Allen 1887) and summarizes his observations of Native people along the Tanana and Yukon rivers. Allen adds

some information about wildlife and minerals observed on his trip. (Note: Also see Fickett 1900).

**Andersen, David B., and Gretchen Jennings. 2001. *The 2000 Harvest of Migratory Birds in Seven Upper Tanana River Communities, Alaska*. Final Report No. 2 to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Cooperative Agreement No. 701810J252. Fairbanks and Anchorage: Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.**

This report describes the harvest of migratory birds and eggs in 2000 in Dot Lake, Eagle Village, Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Tok, based on interviews conducted in 42 percent of the occupied households in these communities. High water conditions contributed to lower waterfowl harvests in 2000 than in other recent years. Waterfowl hunting areas used in 2000 are not identified, but areas used by Dot Lake and Northway in the early 1980s and described in other reports are mentioned.

**Anderson, Laura David. 1956. *According to Mama. As Told to Audrey Loftus*. Fairbanks, Alaska: St. Matthew's Episcopal Guild.**

This small booklet is a collection of stories describing upper Tanana Athabascan customs and cultural practices. They were conveyed to the author by her mother, Helen David Charlie, who was born on the Goodpaster River near Healy Lake "more than ninety years ago." No reference is made to ties with the Ahtna people. This is a companion to Paul 1957, which conveys upper Tanana Athabascan cultural information from a man's perspective.

**Andrews, Elizabeth F. 1977. *Report on the Cultural Resources of the Doyon Region, Central Alaska*. Vols. I and II. Anthropology and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, Occasional Paper No. 5. University of Alaska, Fairbanks.**

Prepared for Doyon, Ltd., the regional Native corporation for interior Alaska, this report is an inventory of historic and cemetery sites that could be considered for selection under section 14(h)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Volume I describes the known cultural resources and presents general ethnographic and archaeological information for the Native peoples of each subregion in the Doyon region, based on a literature review and interviews with key respondents. Volume II is a compilation of site inventory forms for each site, of which 77 are included for the upper Tanana subregion. Additional information for each site is presented when available. No reference is made to upper Tanana-Ahtna connections.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1980a. ***Progress Report of Tanacross Pilot Program to Record Information on Cemetery and Historic Sites—Healy Lake Area*. Prepared for the Doyon Cemetery and Historic Site Committee, Doyon, Limited, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

At a two-day meeting in Tanacross in August 1980, members of the Doyon Cemetery and Historic Site Committee interviewed 14 upper Tanana Athabascan elders regarding their knowledge of historic sites and Native place names in the Tanacross, Ketchumstuk, and Healy Lake areas. This interim report contains transcriptions of interviews pertaining to the Healy Lake area and a map depicting the location of sites discussed in the text. It was prepared for internal use by Doyon, Limited, and is not available for public distribution.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1980b. *Native and Historic Accounts of Some Historic Sites in the Tanacross-Ketchumstock Area*. Compiled for Doyon Cemetery and Historic Sites Committee, Doyon, Limited, Fairbanks, Alaska.

This is the second report derived from interviews conducted by Andrews and the Doyon Cemetery and Historic Site Committee with upper Tanana elders in August 1980, for the purpose of documenting their knowledge about important historical and cemetery sites in the area between Tanacross and Joseph Village. It contains verbatim transcriptions supplemented with information from published sources. The sites described include: Ketchumstuk Village, Ketchumstuk Cemetery, caribou fences and lookouts near Ketchumstuk and Flint Hill, Flint Hill Cemetery, Joseph Village, Mitchell's Ranch, Long Cabin, Big Hill, Mansfield, Eagle Trail, *Dihthaad*, and old Tanacross. A map depicting these sites and their Native names is included. No reference is made to upper Tanana interactions with Ahtna people who might have traveled to these sites for potlatches or to hunt caribou.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1981. *Interim Report—A Compilation of Historic and Native Oral Accounts about Historic Sites near Tanacross*. Prepared for the Doyon Cemetery and Historic Site Committee, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Oral and written accounts about ANCSA 14(h) (1) selections and other sites important to upper Tanana Athabascans in the Tanacross area are the focus of this report. The sites include abandoned villages, cabins, caribou fences, lookouts, and a trail. This report was prepared for internal use by Doyon, Limited, and is not available for public distribution.

**Arnold, Irene Solomon, with Gary Holton and Rick Thoman. 2003. *Dihthâad Xt'een Iin Aandëeg'—The Mansfield People's Language: Tanacross Athabascan Phrases and Conversations*. Booklet and CD. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This booklet and CD contain “useful phrases and model conversations” for students of the Tanacross Athapaskan language.

**Austin, Basil. 1968. *The Diary of a Ninety-Eighter*. Mount Pleasant, Michigan: John Cumming.**

Austin and his companions were lured north to the Klondike Gold Rush by the promises of instant wealth, as were many other adventurous Americans of their generation. This informative diary covers a 3-year period from 1897 to 1900 and chronicles the experiences of the Austin party on the trail and while prospecting along the way between Valdez and the Fortymile River area. Reference is made to observations of and interactions with Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans encountered in both the Copper River Basin and the Fortymile region, but not to interactions between these two groups.

**Baggen, Mertie. nd. *Mertie Baggen Papers 1964-1967*. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Baggen studied Northern Athabascan kinship systems in the 1960s but passed away in 1967 before she could publish her findings. This archival collection contains her fieldnotes of interviews with Athabascan informants residing in Fairbanks to Northway and points between, and a 1974 manuscript (in which Elizabeth Andrews organized and summarized some of the fieldnotes) entitled, “A Partial Compilation of the Fieldnotes of Mertie Baggen, with an Emphasis

on the Salchaket Band of the Middle Tanana.” The fieldnotes include kinship, clan affiliation, and ethnographic data for Athabascans in Northway, Tanacross, Dot Lake, and Mentasta, and references the kinship ties between the upper Tanana and Ahtna people. A short description of the potlatch ceremony provided by Katie John of Mentasta also is included, while Mrs. Arthur Wright describes a potlatch at Tanacross given by Big Frank. Interestingly, Mrs. Wright also tells Baggen that her husband had once written an article highly critical of the potlatch ceremony (see Wright 1926) but later had a change of heart.

**Barnard, E.C. 1899. Report of the Fortymile Expedition. In *Maps and Descriptions of Routes of Exploration in Alaska in 1898*. 55<sup>th</sup> Congress, 3d session, Senate Executive Document No. 172 (Serial 3737). Pp. 76-83. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

This geological expedition was one of several funded by the U.S. Congress in 1898 (see Peter and Brooks 1899), and describes the topography, mining activity, and resources in the Fortymile district. Travel routes into the area from Eagle City or other Yukon River locations are described. Barnard says little about Native inhabitants of the area, noting only that they hunt caribou and catch salmon in the Yukon River.

**Beck, E.J. 1930. *Report of Official Visit to Upper Tanana and Copper River Valleys, Dec. 28, 1929, to Feb. 14, 1930*. Report prepared for the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Chief of the Alaska Division, Anchorage. National Archives, Record Group No. 75, Alaska Division: General Correspondence Files: Special Cases—John Hajdukovich, Information on Upper Tanana Indians, 1930-32. Washington, DC. [Also available at the Alaska State Library, MS51, Box 1, Folder 2. Juneau, Alaska].**

Beck’s report is written as a letter to J.H. Wagner, Chief of the Alaska Division of the U.S. Department of Education, and is dated March 4, 1930. Beck visited villages and seasonal encampments in the upper Tanana region and upper Copper River Basin, where he recorded population numbers, documented serious illnesses, and assessed the feasibility of opening local schools. He sketched the layout of most villages and on graphs portrayed the percent of population that was resident in the village during various months of the year. Beck obtained some information for places he could not visit from Robert McKennan, who was conducting research in Batzulnetas when Beck stopped there. [Also see Hajdukovich nd. (b).]

**Bentley, Wallace W. 1962. Moose Management Investigations: Characteristics of the Hunter Harvest—Interior Alaska. In *Annual Report of Progress, 1960-61. Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-6-R-2, Game Investigations in Alaska*. Pp. 152-160. Pittman-Robertson Project Report II (2): Moose Management Investigations. Juneau: Division of Game, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.**

This report contains moose harvest data for 1960 for communities in the upper Tanana region, based on surveys conducted by Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel. The data are characterized as being “indicative of the yearly take of moose.” Harvest levels reported for upper Tanana communities are as follows: Tetlin (30); Northway (18); Tanacross (14); Dot Lake (4); and Tok (34).

**Betticher, Reverend Charles E., Jr. 1913. *By Trail and Poling-Boat. Alaska Churchman* 7(3):75-77.**

Betticher, who at the time was the editor and publisher of *The Alaska Churchman* and played key role in establishment of Episcopal missions on the Tanana River, describes his trip from Nenana

to St. Timothy's Mission at Tanana Crossing. The article includes photographs of Joe Joseph and three other young Athabascan men who accompanied Betticher on this trip.

**Bleakley, G.T. 1996. *A History of the Chisana Mining District, Alaska, 1890-1990. National Park Service, Alaska Field Area, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Resources Report NPS/AFARCR/CRR-96/29, National Park Service, Alaska System Support Office, Anchorage.***

This detailed history of the Chisana Mining District, which originated with the "Chisana Stampede" in 1913, is derived from secondary sources and interviews with people who lived and worked there. Occasional reference is made to the Native population of the Chisana region. Of the 148 residents counted in the 1920 census for the Chisana District, 105 were Alaska Natives. Their first names and ages are recorded in an appendix to the report. [Note: A revised and expanded version of this report was published in 2005 and can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://www.nps.gov/archive/wrst/chisana.htm>.

**Boyer, L. Bryce, Ruth M. Boyer, Charles W. Dithrich, Hillie Harned, Arthur E. Hippler, John S. Stone, and Andrea Walt. 1989. *The Relation between Psychological States and Acculturation among the Tanaina and Upper Tanana Indians of Alaska: An Ethnographic and Rorschach Study. Ethos 17(4):450-479.***

The two lead authors spent two weeks each in Tanaina [Dena'ina] and upper Tanana Athabascan villages recording data discussed in this article. The basic premise is that mental health includes the capacity to change adaptively to relatively rapidly changing environmental conditions: "...the incapacity of a group, given sufficient time after an initial culture shock, to adapt to new cultural ways and to live in relative psychological comfort, without its members showing obvious widespread manifestations of personal distress or societal anomie, reflects psychopathology." Continuing, "Hunting, gathering, and warring nomadic groups, especially those who live in areas where subsistence is meager, often manifest personality configurations that would be considered as psychopathological by Western medical standards." The authors conclude that the effects of acculturation have been beneficial to the Tanaina but have not yet had sufficient time to markedly reduce the effects of aboriginal psychopathology on the ability of the upper Tanana to adapt to Westernization.

**Bowen, Richard John. n.d. *Incidents in the Life of the Reverend Richard John Bowen Among the Natives, Trappers, Prospectors, and Gold Miners in the Yukon Territory Before and After the Gold Rush of the Year 1898. Unpublished manuscript in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.***

Bowen, an Anglican missionary, accompanied the Han Indians in Eagle on a trip to Fort Reliance and a trading expedition toward the Tanana River in the winter of 1895. His unpublished journal contains observations recorded during these two trips, the second of which describes the Han playing a middleman role in the fur trade linking Athabascans from the Copper, Tanana, and Yukon rivers. Information from the journal is cited in Mishler and Simeone (2004).

**Brean, Alice. 1975. *Athabascan Stories. Anchorage, Alaska: AMU Press.***

A lifetime resident of Tanacross, Brean recounts ten myths and stories that "hold great spiritual, traditional significance for the Native peoples. They are valuable in preserving a precious portion of culture." McKennan (1959) recorded variations of some of these stories in the late 1920s.



**Brooks, Alfred H. 1900. A Reconnaissance in the White and Tanana River Basins, Alaska, in 1898. In *Explorations in Alaska in 1898. 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the U.S. Geological Survey, Part 7: 425-494. Washington: Government Printing Office.***

Brooks was a member of a geological expedition assigned to explore the Lower White River and Tanana River areas during the summer of 1898. He summarizes reports of previous expeditions and records his observations of the region and its inhabitants. Brooks observed the “easy communication” the upper Tanana Indians from Mansfield Village have with the Copper River Indians and the “Ketchumstock Indians” to the north. He depicts on a map and describes several overland routes connecting the White and upper Tanana river basins. Brooks also states that the “Upper Tanana Indians obtained their first knowledge of the outside world by the products of civilization which they obtained through the Coast Indians of Lynn Canal” (p. 492).

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1901. A Reconnaissance from Pyramid Harbor to Eagle City, Alaska, Including a Description of the Copper Deposits of the Upper White and Tanana Rivers. Extract from the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the U.S. Geological Survey, 1899-1900, Pt. 2:331-391. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Brooks was a member of an expedition that in the spring of 1899 surveyed the area between Pyramid Harbor on Lynn Canal (near Haines in southeast Alaska) and Eagle City, by way of the White and Tanana river headwaters. In this report he describes the geography, geology, and Native inhabitants of this area, as well as travel routes to the Tanana and upper White rivers. A map depicting the expedition route and potential routes between Pyramid Harbor and Eagle City accompanies the text. As the expedition did not encounter any Native people in the Fortymile-upper Tanana region, Brooks refers readers to the description of the “Tanana Indians” in his 1900 report. He says the most important Native settlements in the upper Tanana area are “Nandles,” “Tetling,” and “Khiltat,” and repeats his reference to the “easy communication” between the Indians of the upper Tanana and those of the upper Copper River.

**Brown, C. Michael. 1979. *Navigable and Non-Navigable Waterbodies in the Northway Area, Eastern Alaska. Memo to Chiefs, Division of Resources and Branch of Lands and Minerals, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Anchorage.***

The physical characteristics and historical uses of the upper Tanana River (from Tanacross to the Chisana River), Nabesna River, Chisana River, and selected creeks and lakes in the Northway area are described in this report. It focuses on water bodies affected by ANCSA village selection applications submitted by Northway Natives, Inc., and is the basis for navigability determination recommendations made by the BLM Alaska State Office for parts of the upper Tanana, Nabesna, and Chisana rivers. Although the Cole (1979) report cited below is critical of the Brown report and the attendant BLM navigability recommendations, the two reports collectively contain a great deal of information from a range of sources concerning the contact history in part of the upper Tanana region.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1984. *Indians, Traders, and Bureaucrats in the Upper Tanana District: A History of the Tetlin Reserve. Anchorage, AK: Bureau of Land Management State Office.***

This is the longer and unpublished paper from which Brown’s 1999 article (next entry) is derived, and draws upon published and unpublished sources, including archival information not available in Alaska. A Bureau of Land Management historian, Brown conducted the research for and wrote this report to address a longstanding dispute about the location of the western boundary of the Tetlin Indian Reserve: The BLM maintained that the Tanacross-Tetlin Trail formed the

boundary, while the Tetlin Native Corporation insisted that the Valdez-Eagle Trail was the correct boundary. Brown describes the history of exploration and development of trails to and within the upper Tanana area, then details the role of trader John Hajdukovich in the eventual establishment of the Tetlin Indian Reserve by Executive Order. A final section of the report examines the efforts of the BLM and BIA to modify the reserve boundaries and later to locate the boundaries as described in the Executive Order. The report, which is available at the ARLIS Library in Anchorage, does not examine Ahtna-upper Tanana Athabascan connections.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1999. **John K. Hajdukovich and the Tetlin Indians, 1924-1941.** *Alaska History* 14(1-2):1-29.

Brown details the relationship between the trader and U.S. Commissioner John Hajdukovich and upper Tanana Athabascans, primarily those residing in Tetlin, in the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Derived from his unpublished paper (Brown 1984) and based on extensive archival research, this article focuses on the instrumental role Hajdukovich played in establishing the Tetlin Reserve and in bringing about economic and educational improvements to the people of Tetlin. No reference is made to the Ahtna people or the Copper River basin.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs. 1984-1992.** *BIA 14(h) (1) Recordings with Native Elders of the Upper Tanana Region.* Tape recordings on file at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska.

In 1984, 1987, and 1992, BIA staff recorded interviews with several upper Tanana Athabascan elders to document their knowledge of historical and other important sites in the region. The interviews also contain historical and ethnographic information. Recordings of interviews with Silas Solomon, Andrew Isaac, and Jack John Justin are on file and available for use on a case-by-case basis.

**Bureau of Land Management. 1992.** *The Eagle-Valdez Trail: Northern Portion.* A BLM "Adventure in the Past" Series. Informational booklet published by the Bureau of Land Management in cooperation with the Eagle Historical Society and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Fairbanks, Alaska.

This booklet describes travel between Eagle and Valdez in the late 1800s and early 1900s, as well as construction of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) along the Eagle-Valdez Trail in 1900-02. Maps depicting the northern part of the trail between Eagle and Tanana Crossing are included. Passing reference is made to the Native inhabitants of the region.

**Burge, Moris. 1938.** *Report of Field Representative, Indians of the Upper Tanana Region of Alaska, September 1938.* American Association on Indian Affairs. US Archives. RG75. Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Entry 121. Central Correspondence Files (1940-56). Box 17. F 00-1949-AK-032. Monthly Report. Alaska Native Service—ending 31 Jan 1950.

This report was not reviewed.

**Buteau, Frank. 1967. My Experiences in the World. In *Sourdough Sagas*, Herbert L. Heller, ed. Pp. 86-108. New York: Ballantine Books.**

Buteau recounts his experiences as a prospector on the Fortymile River, at the northern periphery of upper Tanana Athabaskan territory, in the 1880s and 1890s, and presents some historical information about life and mining in the area.

**Buzzell, Rolfe G. 2003. *Cultural Resource Survey of the Taylor Highway MP 64.5 – 95.6 and the Top of the World Highway MP 0.0 – 13.5 (Jack Wade Junction to the U.S.-Canadian Border)*. Anchorage: Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Department of Natural Resources.**

This report summarizes the findings of a 2002 cultural resources survey conducted in the area described in the title, and includes some ethnographic and historical information for the survey area. This overview is useful for describing development of the mining industry in the north-central part of upper Tanana Athabaskan territory beginning in the 1880s.

**Callaway, Donald G., and Constance A. Miller-Friend, annotators and editors. 2001. *Mendeas Cheeg Naltsiin Keyh': An Oral History of the People of Healy Lake Village*. Report prepared with a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum and with support from the Healy Lake Traditional Council, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, National Park Service, and the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

The centerpiece of this collection of oral histories of current and former Healy Lake residents is a series of free-form narratives by Ellen Demit, who was born at Chena Village and adopted at a young age by a family in Healy Lake. Interviews with other village residents complement Demit's account and provide detailed information not previously recorded about the history of Healy Lake. This project was conceived when Healy Lake was seeking "resident zone status" for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, which would qualify community residents to harvest fish and wildlife resources in the park for subsistence purposes without having to apply for individual permits. Interestingly, however, linkages between the Healy Lake people and the Upper Ahtna Athabascans and the Copper River Basin are not discussed. Seven tape recordings made for this project and some transcripts are filed in the Oral History collection in the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

**Capps, Stephen R. 1914. Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District. In *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1914*. *U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin* 622:189-228.**

Mineral resources in the areas on the northeast side of the Wrangell and St. Elias mountains, including parts of the upper basins of the White and Chisana rivers are the focus of this article. Capps describes seven travel routes to the Chisana-White River district and characterizes the region as being "very sparsely populated with Indians," and limited to a few families living near lower Beaver Creek and to a small settlement on Cross Creek in the Chisana Valley.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1916. The Chisana-White River District, Alaska. *U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin* 630:1-130.**

This report was not available for review.

**Capps, Stephen Reid, Jr. n.d. *Stephen Reid Capps, Jr., Papers. 1906-1980. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University Archives and Manuscript Collections, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.***

Capps had a distinguished career as a USGS geologist in Alaska from 1907 to 1936. Best known for his work in the area that became Mt. McKinley National Park, Capps also was involved in some geological field investigations in the Copper River basin. Series 7 in this collection contains some photograph scrapbooks for the Copper and White River areas in 1908 (Box 9) and the Chisana-White River district in 1914 (Box 12).

**Case, Martha F. 1986. *Wild Resource Use in Northway, Alaska. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 132. Fairbanks.***

This description of historical and contemporary fish and wildlife harvest and use patterns in Northway is based on fieldwork conducted in 1984-85. It was designed to address land use planning and resource management issues in the Northway area. Included in the analysis is a short discussion of the ongoing exchange of resources between Northway and Copper River Basin households, some of which is kinship-based. Case also describes the traditional territory of Athabascan bands with which Northway residents are affiliated.

**Castner, Lieutenant J.C. 1899. *Report of Lieutenant J.C. Castner. In Reports of Explorations in the Territory of Alaska (Cooks Inlet, Sushitna, Copper, and Tanana Rivers) 1898. Made under the Direction of the Secretary of War, by Captain Edwin F. Glenn and Captain W. R. Abercrombie. Pp. 189-265. Washington: Government Printing Office.***

Castner led an expedition in 1898 from Portage Bay to Cook Inlet, then east to the Copper River Basin. The party cut out and established a 460-mile trail from Knik Arm across the Tanana River to the head of the Volkmar River. At an unidentified location in the Copper River Basin, they “crossed Indian trails going from the Sushitna [Susitna] to the Upper Tanana and to the head of the Copper River.” Castner visited Upper Ahtna Athabascan camps near the Delta River. The expedition traveled down the Tanana River from the Delta River, bypassing most of the Upper Tanana region. As they crossed “the pass of the Alaska range,” probably south of what is now Delta Junction, the expedition encountered an Indian “from the head of the Tanana” who was hunting caribou in the mountains. Castner’s Native guides feared retribution for trespassing on Tanana hunting grounds. Castner speaks highly of the Tanana Indians and their generosity.

**Coates, Kenneth. 1985. *The Alaska Highway and the Indians of the Southern Yukon, 1942-50: A Study of Native Adaptation to Northern Development. In The Alaska Highway: Papers of the Fortieth Anniversary Symposium, Kenneth Coates, ed. Pp. 151-171. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.***

Coates discusses the social and economic impacts of Alaska Highway construction on the Yukon Indians, arguing that the consequences “were much more ambiguous than have usually been asserted.” He concludes that economic and social relations between the Indians and the wider Yukon community resembled patterns established during the Klondike gold rush era—e.g., most Natives who sought employment worked seasonally and continued to hunt and trap at other times of the year. However, diseases introduced by soldiers and workers had catastrophic demographic implications, wreaked havoc on the Indians, and contributed to high rates of infant mortality and an overall decline in the Native population. See Cruikshank (1985) for a complementary assessment.

**Cohen, Kenneth L., nd. *Kenneth L. Cohen Collection, 1942-1964. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.***

This collection consists of Cohen's personal diaries, some correspondence, and newspaper clippings. Cohen was a Bureau of Indians Affairs educator in several rural Alaska communities, including Chitina and for a short time in Tanacross. The Cohen family moved to Fairbanks in 1959. The diaries cover Alaska and BIA events from 1942 through 1964 from a personal perspective including the bombing of Dutch Harbor and the 1964 earthquake.

**Cole, Terrence M. 1979. *Historic Uses of the Chisana and Nabesna Rivers, Alaska. Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Lands, Anchorage.***

Cole reconstructs the history of navigation on the Chisana and Nabesna rivers, based upon an exhaustive review of historic documents and archival materials. Critical of and in part a response to a Bureau of Land Management navigability report for water bodies in the Northway area (see Brown 1979), Cole presents information missing from the BLM report (much of it derived from early 20<sup>th</sup> century newspaper accounts) to describe navigation routes and overland trails used by traders and explorers to access the Northway area from adjoining regions. Use of these trails and the two rivers by Upper Tanana Athabascans is described, including statements in BLM ANCSA files submitted by Walter Northway and other Northway residents in 1975. The Cole and Brown reports together provide a detailed look at transportation in and uses of the upper Tanana region - Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve borderland area in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Cook, John P. 1969. *The Early Prehistory of Healy Lake, Alaska. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation in Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Madison.***

Cook describes his important archaeological fieldwork at Healy Lake that is generally described below in Cook (1989 and 1996).

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1989. *Historic Archaeology and Ethnohistory at Healy Lake, Alaska. Arctic 42(2):109-118.***

Archaeological investigations beginning in the 1960s at Healy Lake revealed that this site had been continuously occupied for more than 10,000 years, but that a permanent Athabaskan village probably was not established there until the early 1900s. Cook reached this conclusion after examining primary and secondary historical and ethnographic data. He says the Natives who settled at Healy Lake had ties to Joseph Village in the Fortymile River drainage and obtained trade goods along the Yukon River prior to establishment of a trading post at the mouth of the Healy River in 1907. As more non-Natives moved into the Tanana River valley, the Healy River band then settled permanently at Healy Lake and by the 1920s no longer traveled to Joseph Village to conduct seasonal subsistence activities. Cook reports that Joe Joseph, born at Joseph Village in 1885, told the anthropologist Robert McKennan that his people conducted some trade with the Ahtna on the Copper River. Moose and caribou hides were exchanged for large trade beads and copper. Several historic photographs accompany this article, including one of the 1927 potlatch at Healy Lake described by Wendell Endicott.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1996. Healy Lake. In *American Beginnings—The Prehistory and Paleoecology of Beringia*, F.H. West, ed. Pp. 323-327. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This short article summarizes the findings of archaeological excavations at Healy Lake conducted between 1967 and 1972. Cook concludes that the Chindadn Complex at the Healy Lake Village site dates to between 8210 and 11,410 radiocarbon years (mean = 9700 bp).

**Cruikshank, Julie. 1977. Alaska Highway Construction: A Preliminary Evaluation of Social Impacts on Yukon Indians. In *Yukon Case Studies: Alaska Highway and Ross River*. Pp. 1-42. Whitehorse: University of Canada (North), Research Division.**

The social consequences of Alaska Highway construction in 1942-43 on Native people living in southern Yukon Territory are described in this article. It is based on research conducted by Cruikshank and Catharine McClellan and from evidence they presented to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry in 1976. Cruikshank prefaces her assessment with historical background information on the Yukon Indians, then outlines the sequence of events surrounding highway construction and finally discusses some of the short-term and long-term effects of the highway on Indians living near the route. Specifically, she describes changes in the traditional annual cycle, settlement patterns, sources of subsistence and cash income, social organization, values, health conditions, education, and alcohol use. Her objective was to identify some of the costs that may accompany industrial growth that may help to find ways to avoid them in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1979. Athapaskan Women: Lives and Legends. *National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 57*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.

This monograph contains excerpts from the longer biographies Cruikshank prepared for seven Athabaskan women living in Yukon Territory, focusing on information illustrating changes in their lives in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and legends told by older women. Several of the women describe the impacts of Alaska Highway construction on them and their families.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1985. The Gravel Magnet: Some Social Impacts of the Alaska Highway on Yukon Indians. In *The Alaska Highway: Papers of the Fortieth Anniversary Symposium*, Kenneth Coates, ed. Pp. 172-187. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

In this assessment of the social impacts of the Alaska Highway project on the Yukon Indians, Cruikshank summarizes some aspects of the Native economy and society prior to construction and then discusses the short- and long-term sociocultural effects of the highway on Indians living near the route. In the absence of comparable documentation for Alaska, the impacts described arguably might resemble those experienced by the upper Tanana Athabascans. Her analysis complements the article by Coates (1985) and is based on archival data and personal interviews she conducted with Yukon Indians beginning in the 1970s. Cruikshank concludes that both the Klondike gold rush and Alaska Highway construction were short-term events that expanded the Canadian state and increased government presence in the north. She believes the highway “was a decisive factor bringing Yukon Indians to the marginal position they have in the present Yukon economy and society.”

\_\_\_\_\_. 1990. *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Cruikshank complements the “life stories” of three Native women from southern Yukon Territory, presented in their own words, with contextual information and “a discussion of how each narrator combines traditional narrative with individual experience to construct a coherent account of her life.” The women all were born within a few years of the Klondike Gold Rush and lived during a period of significant change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their recollections of the impacts of Alaska Highway construction on the Yukon Indians offer some insights as to how the upper Tanana Athabascans conceivably were impacted by this construction project.

**Cruikshank, Julie, and Catharine McClellan. 1976. *Preliminary Investigation of the Social Impact of the Alaska Highway on Yukon Indians: Probable Parallels to the Impact of Pipeline Construction*. Report to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, Yellowknife, May 6.**

Attempts to obtain a copy of this report were unsuccessful. It probably contains information appearing in Cruikshank’s 1977 and 1985 publications cited above, and was used to evaluate the potential impacts of a gas pipeline construction project on the Yukon Indians.

**Dall, William H. 1870. *Alaska and its Resources*. Boston: Lee and Shepard.**

Dall’s short descriptions of the “Áh-tená” and Tenán-Kutchín illustrate just how little was known about the Ahtna and Tanana River Athabascans as of 1870.

**Darbyshire and Associates. 1980. *Socioeconomic Community Profiles: A Background for Planning (Delta Junction, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tok, Tetlin, and Northway)*. Prepared for Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

These socioeconomic profiles were compiled for Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company in 1979-80, when planning was underway to build a natural gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to the Canadian border, then through Canada and terminating in the Midwestern U.S. Each “profile” actually is a large detailed map of the community on one side and a detailed socioeconomic description of the community on the other. Subsistence use patterns are briefly described, based primarily on published sources of information available at the time. Consequently, they are incomplete and may not reflect contemporary practices.

**De Laguna, Frederica. 1972. *Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit*. *Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology, Volume 7. Parts 1, 2, and 3*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.**

Trade between the Yakutat Tlingit and their neighbors is discussed in Part 1 of this detailed ethnography. The Tlingit traveled regularly to Alaganak (Alakanik), Nuchek, and Cordova, where they visited Eyak relatives and traded with Ahtna people from Taral and Chitina—from whom the upper Tanana Athabascans obtained some coastal trade goods.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Catharine McClellan. 1960. **Field Notes, Dot Lake and Tanacross. Typescript on file at the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

De Laguna and McClellan made brief trips to the upper Tanana region while conducting fieldwork in the Copper River Basin in 1960. This file consists of field notes recorded in visits with upper Tanana Athabascans in Dot Lake (36 pp.) and Tanacross (50 pp.). The authors

recorded linguistic, kinship, and ethnographic information, as well as traditional stories. Occasional reference is made to kinship ties between the upper Tanana and Ahtna people.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1981. Ahtna. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6: Subarctic*. June Helm, vol. ed. Pp. 641-663. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

This article focuses on the Ahtna Athabascans but presents useful information about their affiliations and interactions with the neighboring upper Tanana Athabascans. Historically, the two groups were said to be “friendly.” The Ahtna served as intermediaries in trade between the coastal Eyak and Tlingit and the upper Tanana, while the Mentasta Ahtna often worked a caribou fence at Ketchumstuk with upper Tanana relatives. Contemporary kinship and social ties between the two groups can be traced to a traditional story explaining that Ahtna clans were descended from a set of sisters who ascended the Copper River from the coast, with some of the sisters continuing to the Tanana River and Cook Inlet.

**Denny, W.C. 1923. A Northern Potlatch. *Alaska Churchman* 17(1):8-9.**

Denny was a member of a prominent family in Seattle and one of the first white residents of Tanana Crossing. In this short article he concisely describes the Upper Tanana potlatch ceremony. Denny’s brother, David T. Denny, married a Native woman from Ketchumstuk and resided in Tanacross until his death in the early 1980s.

**Department of the Air Force. 1989. *Environmental Impact Analysis Process. Environmental Assessment: Proposed Sites, Alaska Radar System, Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar Program. Finding of No Significant Impact Attached. Hanscomb Air Force Base, Massachusetts: Department of the Air Force, Air Force Systems Command, Electronic Systems Division.***

In the 1980s, the US Air Force prepared environmental impact statement pursuant to its proposal to construct and operate an Over-the-Horizon Backscatter (OTH-B) radar system in the Copper River Basin and upper Tanana region. This system, the Alaska Radar System, would be one of four OTH-B systems required to establish a surveillance zone around North America to provide early warning of hostile aircraft and cruise missiles approaching the continent. The project would consist of antenna arrays and associated facilities near Gulkana and east of Tok.

Because the EIS did not provide the detail necessary to fully address the potential impacts of this project in the two study areas, the Air Force provided funding for assessments of subsistence uses and cultural resources. The findings of subsistence studies (Marcotte, Wheeler, and Alexander 1992; McMillan and Cuccarese 1988) and existing information on cultural resources in the study areas are summarized in this report. Another report included as an appendix (Mishler, Alfonsi, and Bacon 1988) examines qualitative dimensions of subsistence in the two study areas.

**Dixon, E. James. 1985. Cultural Chronology of Central Interior Alaska. *Arctic Anthropology* 22(1):47-66.**

Dixon characterizes this article as a first step toward defining the cultural chronology of central interior Alaska, based on a review and analysis of data from archaeological sites. It is useful primarily as context for understanding the development of the Athabascan tradition.



**Dot Lake Village Council. 1994. *Comments on National Park Service Customary and Traditional Use Eligibility Report for the Federal Subsistence Board*. Letter dated February 16, 1994, submitted to the National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.**

These comments on the draft NPS report (see National Park Service 1994 below) include information on the cultural ties between Dot Lake residents and the Copper River area. For example, two elder residents of Dot Lake were born and raised at Batzulnetas, and had a history of harvesting resources in that area prior to establishment of the park and before restrictions were imposed on the salmon fishery at Batzulnetas.

**Drane, Frederick. B. n.d. *Frederick B. Drane Collection, 1915-1925*. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

A missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in interior Alaska from 1915 to 1925, Drane served as Archdeacon of the Yukon beginning in 1921. Materials in this collection include Drane's unpublished biographical account of his experiences entitled, "A Circuit Rider on the Yukon or Life Among the Sourdoughs and Indians, Subarctic Alaska," which he wrote in 1930 while recuperating from tuberculosis. Setting aside the ethnic biases and stereotypes common at the time, Drane presents an insightful account of life in interior Alaska villages. Photographs documenting life in the area highlight this collection.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1917a. Tanana Crossing in Midwinter. *Alaska Churchman* 11(2):47-50.**

Characterizing Tanana Crossing as an isolated and remote outpost hampered by the high cost of imported goods, Drane describes the difficulties of maintaining St. Timothy's Mission there.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1917b. Camp and Trail among Tetlin Indians. *Alaska Churchman* 11(3):83-88.**

Drane describes his post-Christmas trip from Tanana Crossing to the two Tetlin villages, which he refers to as Chief Luke's camp and Chief David's village.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1918. Under Heavy Marching Orders. *Alaska Churchman* 12(3):84-90.**

Drane describes a trip from Fairbanks to St. Timothy's Mission at Tanana Crossing, which included holding church services at Healy Lake and visiting with Chief Healy.

**Ducker, James H. 1983. *Alaska's Upper Yukon Region: A History*. Anchorage, Alaska: Bureau of Land Management.**

Ducker, a Bureau of Land Management historian, constructed this unpublished history of the Upper Yukon region primarily from secondary sources. It resembles Melody Webb's *The Last Frontier: A History of the Yukon Basin of Canada and Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), but focuses on Alaska and covers some topics not addressed by Webb. Of particular interest is Ducker's discussion of historical trails and travel routes in the upper Tanana region.

**Eastern Interior Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. 1999. Transcript of Special Meeting at Healy Lake School, February 26, 1999. Transcript prepared by Computer Matrix, Anchorage, Alaska.**

This public meeting was held in conjunction with the Eastern Interior Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting in Delta Junction. Its purpose was to obtain information about the hunting patterns of Healy Lake residents, which would inform the regional council and better enable it to comment on federal customary and traditional use determination proposals for Units 11 and 12. The information also was used to support the proposed addition of Healy Lake to the subsistence resident zone for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. At this public meeting, several Healy Lake residents described their ties to other villages in the upper Tanana region and Copper River basin, as well as their subsistence harvest patterns in these two areas.

**Easton, Norman Alexander. 2001a. Remembering *Nelna*—Bessie John. *The Northern Review* 23:205-211.**

Easton pays tribute to Bessie John, an upper Tanana Athabascan elder from the Yukon-Alaska borderland area, who passed away in 2000. He describes his friendship with her and reviews the many contributions Bessie made to preserving the cultural heritage of her people.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 2001b. Intergenerational Differences in Ethnic Identification in an Athapaskan Community. *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 31(1-2):105-119.**

Easton posits that differences exist in ethnic identification between the younger and older generations of Athabascans in the Yukon-Alaska borderlands area—primarily in Beaver Creek, Yukon Territory, and to a lesser extent in Northway. He says the generation born prior to the mid-1950s had a culturally cohesive traditional upbringing in the bush and life-long participation in a foraging economy, while the succeeding generations are rooted in the non-native system of schools and electronic media, and are more reliant on wage labor or social assistance to acquire the capital resources for their consumptive needs. Easton suggests that persons around 35-45 years of age (the “emergent elders”) are beginning to take on more traditional functions.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 2002. “It’s hard enough to control yourself; it’s ridiculous to think you can control animals.” Competing views on “the bush” in contemporary Yukon. Unpublished paper presented at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association, Anchorage, Alaska.**

Aboriginal Athabascan conceptions of the “bush” and its occupation by “other-than-human persons, as well as the nature of proper relations between “human persons” and the bush and its occupants stand in vivid contrast to western Euro-Canadian views of the “wilderness” and “natural resources.” As a result of these distinctive perceptions, and the values and behaviors which they engender, considerable mis-understandings arise in the area of “joint management”, which is now required under the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) on aboriginal land claims. In this paper Easton examines the competing discourse that has arisen in the Yukon within efforts to implement joint management provisions of the UFA. As an example, he describes consideration by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board of the issue of catch and release practices in recreational fishing. Easton concludes that the current structure and implementation of “joint management” is, in practice, contrary to the overarching goal of the UFA: that of the “wish to recognize and protect a way of life that is based on an economic and spiritual relationship between Yukon Indian People and the land,” and the “wish to encourage and protect the cultural distinctiveness and social well-being of Yukon Indian People.”

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. **Anthropology and Archaeology at Yukon College. Internet website** <http://dl1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/anthropology/>

Easton, an Instructor of Anthropology, created this website in 2004 to provide information about the anthropology program at Yukon College. Accessible from this site are web pages describing the Chisana River Basin Ethnohistory and Scottie Creek Culture History projects headed by Easton, both of which deal with upper Tanana Athabascans in the Yukon-Alaska borderlands. The Chisana River Basin project is documenting aboriginal use of that area and is a cooperative effort with the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Some of the web pages were still under construction as of October 2006. Included on the website, which is supposed to be updated regularly, are an ethnographic overview of upper Tanana Athabascan culture, genealogies of several elders with whom Robert McKennan worked in the late 1920s, and descriptions of college courses taught by Easton.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2005. ***An Ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin. Northern Research Institute, Yukon College, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Draft report submitted to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Copper Center, Alaska.***

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve funded this ethnohistorical study of the Native peoples residing in and near the Chisana River Basin. Easton draws from his own extensive research in the Alaska-Yukon borderlands and from an array of published and unpublished sources in presenting geological, archaeological, historical, and ethnographic information for the “Upper Tanana *Dineh*” and their homeland. This report contains some published and archival sources not reviewed in preparation of the Upper Tanana Ethnographic Overview and Assessment that will be of interest to readers.

**Emmons, George Thornton. 1991. *The Tlingit Indians. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History No. 70. Edited with additions by Frederica de Laguna and a biography by Jean Low.***

As a young naval officer posted to southeast Alaska in the 1880s and 1890s, Emmons recorded a wealth of information on Tlingit culture that remained unpublished upon his death in 1945. De Laguna spent many years editing and improving Emmons’ manuscript. This monograph contains some general information on aboriginal Tlingit trading practices with adjoining Native groups.

**Endicott, Wendell. 1928. *Adventures in Alaska and Along the Trail.* New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.**

Included in this account of Endicott’s hunting trip to Alaska in 1927 is a description of an historic potlatch in Healy Lake in the 1920s attended by Ahtna people. This potlatch was also reported in the July 25, 1927, issue of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. John Hajdukovich and several upper Tanana Athabascan men guided the Endicott party on their hunt in the Alaska Range. The book includes a picture of a young Charlie James from Tanacross.

**Episcopal Church, Diocese of Alaska Collection. n.d. *Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.***

This document collection is housed in the Rasmuson Library archives and contains historical church records and other materials. Archdeacon Hudson Stuck’s diaries for the years 1904, 1905, and 1909-1918 are included. Permission must be obtained from the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska before these materials can be viewed.

**Ferguson, Judy. 2001. The People of Healy Lake. Four-part series in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Heartland Magazine* (April 15: In the footsteps of the Healy Lake people; May 20: A different land, a different tongue; June 17: Epidemic survivors begin community anew; and July 15: Bringing a dying village back to life). Fairbanks, Alaska.**

This series of informative newspaper articles discusses the history of Healy Lake through published information and interviews Ferguson conducted with current residents. Included are some historic photographs borrowed from private collections.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2002. *Parallel Destinies*. Big Delta, Alaska: Glas Publishing Co.**

Upper Tanana Athabascans figure prominently in this biography of the trader John Hajdukovich, reflecting his many dealings with them in the 1920s and 1930s. The author interviewed several who knew or worked for Hajdukovich and includes many historical photographs of the upper Tanana people in the book.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2005a. Isaac Siblings Lived Village Ways. Interview with Laura Sanford. *Anchorage Daily News*, April 10.**

In this short biographical sketch, Laura Sanford reminisces about her childhood and growing up in the Lake Mansfield-Tanacross area. She is the sister of the late Chief Andrew Isaac.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2005b. Ancestral Fires of Paul and Margaret Kirsteatter. *Anchorage Daily News*, April 24.**

Healy Lake resident Paul Kirsteatter, a non-Native who married an upper Tanana Athabaskan woman, discusses his life in Alaska and describes the history of Healy Lake.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2005c. Oscar Albert: Old-time Christmas in the Interior. *Anchorage Daily News*, December 11.**

Oscar Albert was born near Nabesna in 1917. This short biographical sketch contains snippets of information about his jobs, trapping experience, the impacts of Alaska Highway construction, and how Christmas was celebrated in the old days.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2006. *Alaskana: Decade in a Tent*. *Anchorage Daily News*, April 2.**

David Joe was born into the Joseph-Healy Lake band at Healy Lake in 1942 and presents a short synopsis of his life in this interview.

**Fickett, Fred W. 1900. Meteorology. In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*. Pp. 488-494. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

This is a brief subreport included in Lt. Henry Allen's longer description of the Allen expedition on the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukon rivers (Allen 1900). In this report, Signal Corps Private Fickett discusses the meteorological data he recorded on the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_. n.d. *Fred Wildon Fickett Papers, 1877-1906*. Archives and Manuscripts Department, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage/Alaska Pacific University.

Private Fickett volunteered for military service in Alaska in 1882 and was stationed in Sitka until he joined the expedition led by Lt. Henry T. Allen to explore the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk rivers in 1885. Fickett compiled a diary and maintained weather observations. This collection includes his diaries and notebooks from the expedition, correspondence, and photographs (including two of expedition members and two of Fickett wearing an Athabascan chief's jacket).

**Funk, Dora. 1972. Indian Deacon Ministers: 54 Years along the Upper Tanana. *Alaska Churchman* LXVII (3): 6, 20.**

The daughter of Reverend David Paul presents highlights of his life, focusing on his 54 years with the Episcopal Church at St. Timothy's Mission in Tanacross. In 1957, Paul was ordained as the first Indian deacon of the church in 30 years.

**Gallen, Ada. 1979. *Basket Making by a Northway Athabascan*. Northway, Alaska: Walter Northway School.**

Gallen describes the construction of birch bark baskets in this illustrated booklet.

**Gavin, Alsa F. ca. 1990. *Walking Among Tall Trees*. Self-published.**

Gavin resided in Alaska from 1951 to 1969, and taught school in Eagle, Dot Lake, and several other communities. He recounts some of his experiences and presents vignettes of persons with whom he spent time or who he considers "personal heroes," including Andrew Isaac, and Abraham and Eva Luke of Dot Lake. The limited historical information presented is readily available in other publications, but this is an interesting personal memoir just the same.

**Geoghegan, James T. n.d. *Sojourn in Yucon and Alaska*. Unpublished manuscript. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Born in England in 1869, James was the brother of Richard, who was the personal secretary to Judge James Wickersham. This collection is an unpublished manuscript describing James' experiences as a prospector and road house operator in Alaska and the Klondike between 1897 and 1914. Brief references are made to Native people in the Ketchumstuk areas, but they add no new information and reflect the prejudices common at the time. An article about the Geoghegan brothers was published in the winter 1976 issue of the *Alaska Journal*.

**Glave, E. J. 1892. Pioneer Packhorses in Alaska. Parts I & II. *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 44(5):671-682 and 44(6):869-881.**

Glave was an artist and newspaper correspondent and a member of the Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper Expedition to Alaska in 1890. The expedition split into two parties at Kusawa Lake near Klukwan, with E. H. Wells and three members headed to interior Alaska (see Wells 1974) and Glave and John Dalton exploring the Alsek River system and ending their journey at Dry Bay. Glave returned in the spring of 1891 to find out if it was possible to reach interior Alaska with packhorses and again teamed up with Dalton and Indian guides and packers for the trip. The party reached the north side of Mount St. Elias before returning to the coast, apparently falling

short of reaching the White River because their guides refused to go there and risk a conflict with local Indians. The travel route in the interior was mostly in Canada. Glave's account of this trip contains some ethnographic information for the Chilkat Indians and those in western Canada east of Mount St. Elias.

**Glenn, E.F. 1900. A Trip to the Region of the Tanana. In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*. Pp. 629-648. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

In this account of the Tanana River Exploring Expedition, Captain Glenn describes his expedition to "discover the most direct and practicable route from salt water [Cook Inlet] to one or more crossings of the Tanana River, in the direction of the Yukon, between Fortymile Creek and Circle City." Glenn traveled through the northern part of the Copper River Basin and near the mouth of the Delta River, but not in the upper Tanana region. He references several travel routes that may or did lead to the Tanana River from the south, some of which were long-used Indian trails.

**Goldschmidt, Walter R. 1948. *Delimitation of Possessory Rights of the Athapascan Indian Natives of the Villages of Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin in the Interior of Alaska*. Unpublished report submitted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC.**

During a short trip to the upper Tanana region in July 1946, Goldschmidt and Theodore Haas documented "the present lands used and occupied by the native Athapascan Indians of the villages of Northway (Nabesna), Tanacross (Mansfield), and Tetlin (Tetling)...." The cursory ethnographic overview at the beginning of this report describes social organization and the economy, and provides context for the more detailed examination of land ownership and use patterns. Appended to the report are the statements of respondents interviewed in each village and a description of the geographic area they used to conduct seasonal subsistence activities. [Note: The maps and charts in this report, as well as some of the text, are illegible, as a faded carbon copy of the original material was used to xerox the copy in the authors' possession]. In their formal statements, some respondents indicated having been born in Ahtna territory and later moving to the upper Tanana region. This is a rich source of post-contact ethnographic and land use information that complements the earlier work of Robert McKennan and the later research of Guédon and other ethnographers.

**Graves, Margaret C. 1913. Saint Timothy's. *Alaska Churchman* 7(3):72-74.**

A missionary at the newly-established St. Timothy's Episcopal Mission at Tanana Crossing, Graves describes conditions there and makes general observations about the local upper Tanana people. She labels them as being "extravagant" but "industrious" and doubts that furbearer trapping will provide them with sufficient income to purchase the western goods they desire. Graves believed the potlatch system should be abolished.

**Griffiths, C.E. 1900. From Knik Station to Eagle City. In *Explorations in and about Cook's Inlet*. E.F. Glenn, *Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska*. Pp. 724-733. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

This is an account of a military expedition charged with exploring the area between Knik Station in southcentral Alaska and Eagle City. (Also see Holeski and Holeski 1983).

**Guédon, Marie-Francoise. 1974a. *People of Tetlin, Why Are You Singing?* Mercury Series Paper No. 9. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, Ethnology Division.**

Guédon accompanied Frederica de Laguna to Tetlin in 1968 and spent several months there and in other area communities conducting anthropological fieldwork in 1969 and 1970. She describes the seasonal round of resource harvest activities for several upper Tanana Athabascan villages, based on McKennan's earlier work and her own research, but this monograph focuses on kinship, social organization, and social ceremonialism, especially the potlatch. Occasional reference is made to linkages with the Ahtna people, especially for procuring fish and wildlife resources.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1974b. **Chamanisme Tsimshian et Athapaskan: un essai sur la définition des méthodes chamaniques.** In *Proceedings of the First Congress, Canadian Ethnological Society*, J.H. Barkow, ed. Pp. 186-222. Ottawa, Ontario: National Museums of Canada.

This reference was not reviewed.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1981. **Upper Tanana River Potlatch.** In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6: Subarctic*, June Helm, ed. Pp. 577-581. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

This short description of the upper Tanana Athabascan potlatch ceremony is based on the author's observations during preparation for and participation in several potlatches in 1969 and 1970, supplemented by comments from residents of Tanacross and Tetlin. Linkages between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans from the northern part of the Copper River Basin are identified.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1988. **Du Rêve à l'Ethnographie: Explorations sur le Mode Personnel du Chamanisme Nabesna.** *Chamanismes des Amériques, Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 18(2-3): 5-18.

This reference was not reviewed.

**Guiteau, Luther W. 1941. A Plague of Scurvy. *Alaska Sportsman* 8(1):16-18, 26-28.**

This is the final in a series of three articles that describe the author's experiences on the Valdez Trail in 1898 and includes occasional comments about the Indians of the area. Guiteau met Captain Abercrombie and later worked for him on road construction. This installment describes an outbreak of scurvy in the Copper River basin and the care provided for victims at a hospital in Copper Center. Guiteau also mentions a "chief of the Copper River Indians," who reported that many of his people were dying of hunger and sickness. Guiteau says the illness was tuberculosis and that nothing could be done for people who "have very little resistance to the disease."

**Hajdukovich, John. n.d. [a]. *John Hajdukovich Papers, 1904-1958.* Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Included in this archival collection are correspondence, business papers, ledgers, and journals containing information that reflect Hajdukovich's varied occupations and interests during his many years in Alaska. The ledgers contain details about transactions with upper Tanana Indians who sold or traded furs at his trading posts in the upper Tanana region.

\_\_\_\_\_. n.d. [b]. *Some Information about Upper Tanana Indians*. Unpublished manuscript. Big Delta, Alaska. National Archives, Record Group No. 75, Alaska Division: General Correspondence Files: Special Cases—John Hajdukovich, Information on Upper Tanana Indians, 1930-1932. Washington, DC.

This short report is attached to the authors' copy of the Beck (1930) report cited above, and apparently was written by Hajdukovich in 1930. It contains detailed census data for residents of Nabesna Village, Tetlin, Last Tetlin, and Scotty Creek, and generally describes the reliance of the upper Tanana Indians on furs and game. Hajdukovich also makes his case for establishing a reservation at Tetlin.

**Halpin, Libby. 1987. *Living off the Land: Contemporary Subsistence in Tetlin, Alaska*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 149. Fairbanks.**

Halpin conducted thesis research in Tetlin in 1983-84, the primary purpose of which was to document the wild resource harvest and use patterns of Tetlin residents in the Tetlin area. Seasonality of harvest, methods and means, community harvest levels, and areas used were recorded, as were resource issues of concern to local residents and some geographic place names. Halpin indicates that several household heads in Tetlin were born and raised in the Copper River Basin and that there is a longstanding tradition of resource exchange between Tetlin and Ahtna communities.

**Hanable, William S. 1982. *Alaska's Copper River: The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 21. Anchorage: The Alaska Historical Society.**

This ethnohistorical examination of the Copper River Basin notes the similarities in log cabin construction among the Ahtna and Tanana Athabascans, except that the Ahtna used parallel poles in each corner and on both sides of the doorways (p.13).

**Haycox, Stephen. 1989. *Strengthening the Indian Voice: U.S. Military Relations with Natives at Two Sites in Alaska, 1942-44, and 1987-89*. Pp. 202-226 in *Borderlands: 1989 Heritage Conference Proceedings*. Whitehorse: Yukon Historical and Museums Association.**

Negotiations between the Tanacross and Tetlin Village corporations and Ahtna Corporation with the US Air Force concerning use of Native lands for construction of the proposed Backscatter "Over-the-Horizon" radar installations are described in this article. The villages of Tanacross and Gulkana had previous experience with the military, when roads and airfields were constructed on Native lands in 1942-43 to support the war effort. Interviews conducted with elders from these two villages in the late 1980s described the loss of their lands and other impacts that occurred. This experience strengthened the resolve of these Native corporations to negotiate agreements with the Air Force that would benefit their stockholders.

**Hayes, Charles W. 1898. *Copper River as a Route to the Yukon Basin*. *American Geological Society Bulletin* 30:127-134.**

A copy of this journal article was not available for review.



\_\_\_\_\_. 1892. **An Expedition through the Yukon District.** *National Geographic Magazine* 4:117-162.

Hayes was the geologist on Frederick Schwatka's 1891 expedition to explore portions of the Yukon basin, including areas north of the St. Elias Mountains. This paper is the text of a presentation he made to the National Geographic Society and summarizes "the main facts of scientific interest observed during the journey." The introductory section includes brief descriptions of the travel route and of Native people the expedition encountered.

**Haynes, Terry L. 1979 [1978]. *Preparing for Gas Pipeline Impact: A Guide to Health Planning for Upper Tanana Communities in Eastern Interior Alaska.* Prepared for the Upper Tanana Development Corporation, Tok, Alaska. Boulder, Colorado: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.**

Proposed construction of a natural gas pipeline through the upper Tanana region was projected to create a boom-and-bust economy in the early 1980s. With a goal of providing information that would facilitate medical services planning and minimize the negative consequences of the pipeline project on community health, a study was conducted to (1) describe existing medical services in the upper Tanana region; (2) identify existing health problems and medical services deficiencies in Native and non-Native communities; and (3) review the health and medical services impact of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline construction project in the mid-1970s. The report makes recommendations designed to ensure that appropriate medical services are available to address both short-term needs during pipeline construction and over the long term.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1983. ***Tetlin, Northway, and the Nelchina Caribou Herd: Selected Background Information.*** Draft report prepared for presentation to the Alaska Board of Game. Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks.

Substantial numbers of Nelchina caribou migrated into the Tetlin-Northway area in the winter of 1982-83, for the first time since the 1940s, prompting submission of proposals to the Board of Game to authorize hunting of these caribou when they moved into Game Management Unit 12. This short paper presents socioeconomic information for the two communities, describes their historic uses of caribou, and discusses how the movement of Nelchina caribou into the area disrupted or otherwise affected other resource harvesting activities. It is based primarily on several days of fieldwork conducted by the author in the upper Tanana region in December 1982.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1984. ***Rural Aging and the Use of Social Supports in the Upper Tanana Region, Alaska.*** Ph.D. Dissertation in Medical Anthropology, University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International.

This dissertation examines the formal and informal supportive resources available to and used by elder residents of the upper Tanana region in order to continue living in their own homes, and evaluates the Upper Tanana Aging Program as a form of institutional support. Similarities and differences between Native and non-Native elders regarding their use of social supports and on other socioeconomic indices are discussed. Short biographical sketches are presented for several elders. Reference is made to kinship and social ties between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans.

\_\_\_\_\_, Martha Case, James A. Fall, Libby Halpin, and Michelle Robert. 1984. *The Uses of Copper River Salmon and Other Wild Resources by Upper Tanana Communities, 1983-1984*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 115. Fairbanks.

In 1984, the Alaska Board of Fisheries found that residents of Dot Lake had a customary and traditional use of Copper River salmon. The board also concluded that residents of Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Tok probably had a similar pattern of use of Copper River salmon but requested additional data before making a final determination. Division of Subsistence staff conducted fieldwork in these four communities to document the seasonal round of resource harvest activities generally and their participation in the Copper River salmon fishery. The study concluded that there was historically and continues to be interaction between upper Tanana and Copper River basin communities for the purpose of harvesting certain fish and wildlife resources.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Stan Walker. 1995. *Pilot Project: Documenting Traditional and Subsistence Access in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve*. Anchorage: ANILCA Program, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Sections 811 and 1110(a) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) authorize continued access on federal public lands for subsistence and other traditional activities, respectively. Documentation of pre-ANILCA access routes is a necessary first step in protecting continuation of these public uses. In response to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission expressing interest in obtaining such documentation, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game conducted this study, both to document modes of pre-ANILCA access in the park area and to create a template for use in conducting similar studies in other federal conservation system units. This report contains (1) an overview of pre-ANILCA access routes and methods derived from personal interviews with current and former residents of the Copper River Basin and secondary sources; (2) an annotated bibliography of data sources consulted for the project; and (3) USGS topographical maps which depict access routes that were documented. Although the documentation does not extend into the upper Tanana region, travel routes commonly used in the northern periphery of Ahtna territory are identified.

**Heffley, Sheri. 1981. The Relationship Between Northern Athabaskan Settlement Patterns and Resource Distribution: An Application of Horne's Model. In *Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Strategies*, B. Winterhalder and E.A. Smith, eds. Pp. 126-147. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**

This article examines the ecological basis of settlement patterns among three different Northern Athabaskan hunter-gatherer groups. The upper Tanana Athabascans represent groups reliant upon resources of the Cordillerian, or inland riverine environment. Heffley applies Horn's model to data derived primarily from McKennan's *The Upper Tanana Indians*, and hypothesizes that an optimal relationship exists between group size and location (i.e., settlement pattern) and resource distribution. She concludes that the upper Tanana adapted their foraging strategies to a mixed resource base and adjusted their settlement patterns to accommodate a strategy that exploited mobile, clumped, and unpredictable resources as well as spaced, stable ones. The local band was the exploitation unit within the geographic range of the regional band. The upper Tanana case did not fit into the Horn model classification, in part because their exploitation of fish resources allowed aggregation of users not accounted for in the model. The only reference to the Copper Basin is Heffley's modified version of McKennan's map of upper Tanana territory, which has been expanded to include the northern periphery of the Copper River basin.

**Heller, Herbert L., ed. 1967. *Sourdough Sagas*. New York: Ballantine Books.**

For this book, Heller compiled first-hand accounts from prospectors who ventured into the Alaska and Klondike gold fields in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these narratives describe the interactions between these men and the Native people they encountered. They are replete with the biases and prejudices typical of that period of American history, and undoubtedly contain some exaggerations. However, these accounts also offer insights into the early western contact period in some areas of Alaska, including the Fortymile region at the time gold was discovered there in the 1880s.

**Heinrich, Albert. 1957. Sib and Social Structure on the upper Tanana. In *Proceedings of the Alaska Science Conference*, Albert W. Johnson, ed. Pp. 10-22. Anchorage: Alaska Division, American Association for the Advancement of Science.**

Heinrich bases his examination of upper Tanana Athabascan social structure primarily on fieldwork conducted in Tetlin in the summer of 1956. He describes the *Naltsim* sib as having originated in the Copper River area and discusses the other sibs represented in Tetlin, then expands his discussion of kinship and social structure. While noting that their kinship and socio-political systems are and have been under stress associated with western contact and residence in a harsh environment, Heinrich concludes that “The complex of sib and kinship systems of the Upper Tanana, with its attendant matrix of economic, political, and social functions, is very much alive” and “barring some drastic, unforeseeable impetus toward acculturation, that, in gradually altering form, the ‘old ways’ will have considerable influence for quite some time to come.” Heinrich also determined that the kinship system he observed in Tetlin differed from that described by McKennan a generation earlier.

**\_\_\_\_\_, and Russell Anderson. 1968. Co-affinal Siblingships as a Structural Feature among Some Northern American Peoples. *Ethnology* 7(3):290-295.**

Co-affinal siblingship in two widely separated Northern Athabascan groups and in two Canadian Eskimo groups is discussed in this article. Co-affinal siblingship is defined as “any enduring bond of moral obligations that unites two otherwise unrelated persons where the spouses of the two persons concerned are siblings or functional equivalents of siblings.” The authors suggest that co-affinal siblingship “offered a handy and pragmatic cultural artifact for extending co-operative ties between otherwise unrelated individuals,” and conclude that its prevalence among both Athabascans and Eskimos suggests “the importance of functional factors as they related to both ecology and culture.”

**Hippler, Arthur E., L. Bryce Boyer, and Ruth M. Boyer. 1975. The Psychocultural Significance of the Alaska Athabaskan Potlatch Ceremony. In *Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, Vol. 6. Pp. 204-234. W. Muensterberger and A.H. Esman, eds. New York: International Universities Press.**

This paper delineates selected social and psychological functions and meanings of the Alaska Athabascan potlatch, based in part on the authors’ assessment of pertinent published information about the upper Tanana Athabascans. In their words, the potlatch ceremony “provided a pleasant and colorful way of initiating festivities and also served as an institution which focused on the central social and psychological concerns of the group and its individuals.” An appendix to the article summarizes the authors’ observations and interpretations of child rearing practices in one upper Tanana village.

**Hippler, Arthur E., and John R. Wood. 1974. *The Subarctic Athabascans: A Selected Annotated Bibliography. ISEGR Report No. 39.* Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This annotated bibliography contains general or cultural anthropology references for Subarctic Athabascans as of the early 1970s, focusing on materials that would aid researchers interested in culture and personality studies, basic ethnographies, and studies of sociocultural change.

**Holen, Davin L. 2004. *The Atna' and the Political Ecology of the Copper River Fishery, Alaska. Arctic Anthropology 41(1):58-70.***

Holen examines how the Atna' [Ahtna] Athabascans have used their knowledge of the environment to articulate a specific claim to subsistence salmon fishing in the Copper River. Holen summarizes the history of salmon fishing regulations then presents three case studies to illustrate Atna' use of traditional ecological knowledge to support their claims. One example is the landmark *Katie John* case, in which elder Native women from Mentasta and Dot Lake were victorious in their efforts to have subsistence fishing reinstated at the now-abandoned village of Batzulnetas on Tanada Creek. This article illustrates the historic ties between Athabascans at one village in the Ahtna-upper Tanana border area.

**Holeski, Carol Jean, and Marlene Conger Holeski, eds. 1983. *In Search of Gold: The Alaska Journals of Horace S. Conger, 1898-1899. Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 28.* Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society.**

Conger and several friends from Minnesota ventured north to the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898. This book combines daily journal entries recorded by Conger during his trip with historical documentation from other sources. The Conger party landed in Valdez, and then hiked overland through the Copper River Basin and upper Tanana region to Eagle, where health problems forced Conger to return home. Local Indians searching for caches left behind by prospectors joined the Conger party on its trip through the Nabesna River area. Chief David from "Tetling's" invited the Conger party to attend the burial of his wife and the "cry" dance, which went on for 15 days. Conger traveled with the C.E. Griffith military expedition from the Tanana River near Tanacross to Eagle City. He observed "Lots of Indians" at Lake Mansfield where there was an "Abundance of fish", but noted that many Natives had died the previous winter.

**Hollinger, Kristy. 2003. *The Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline.* Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.**

This report documents the history of the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline, which delivered fuel for military use in Alaska and Canada during the Cold War era. It began operating in 1955 and ceased operations when the final section (Tok to Fairbanks) closed down in 1973. The route through the upper Tanana region followed the CANOL Pipeline route and ran parallel to the Alaska Highway. The report contains no information about the upper Tanana Athabascans living in communities along the corridor. With one exception, neither Canadian government nor industry officials consulted with Canadian Natives affected by the project—the rationale being that "tribal consultation on a government-to-government basis was not yet practiced." However, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations reported that the pipeline had impacted their traditional lifestyles and people had been exposed to dangerous levels of chemical toxins from fuel spills and active spraying of chemical defoliant. Several former employees of the Tok Terminal were interviewed for the project.

**Holton, Gary. 2000. History of the Name “Tanacross.” Paper on Alaska Native Language Center website: <http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/tanacross/nametnc.html>. Website last visited October 25, 2005.**

Holton, a linguist at the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, discusses use of the name “Tanacross” as a village and as an ethnolinguistic group.

**Hosley, Edward H. 1981. Environment and Culture in the Alaska Plateau. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6: Subarctic*. June Helm, vol. ed. Pp. 533-545. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.**

This article describing Athabascan adaptations to living in the Alaska Plateau is of interest primarily because it contains several photographs of upper Tanana Athabascans taken by Robert McKennan in 1929-30 and Frederica de Laguna in 1935 and 1968.

**Hunt, William R. 1996. *Mountain Wilderness*. Anchorage: Alaska Natural History Association.**

Subtitled, “An Illustrated History of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska,” this informative monograph contains some general information about the upper Tanana Athabascans living north of the park who are affiliated with the Upper Ahtna Indians. The historian Hunt relies on secondary sources to summarize the history of Russian and American exploration, mining, transportation, and mountaineering in the Copper River Basin.

**Isaac, Jerry. 1974. Potlatch at Tanacross. *Theata* 2:50-53. University of Alaska, Fairbanks.**

Isaac, a lifelong resident of Tanacross, wrote this brief description of the upper Tanana potlatch while attending the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

**Jimerson, Shirley David. 1975. *Tetlin As I Knew It*. Anchorage: Alaska Bilingual Education Center of the Alaska Native Education Board.**

In this illustrated booklet, Jimerson describes the topography of the Tetlin area and summarizes the yearly cycle of subsistence activities practiced in Tetlin during her childhood.

**Johns-Penikett, Lu, Mrs. Bessie Johns, and Northway Elders. 1989. Northway Stories of Meeting the Boundary Surveyors in 1911. In *Borderlands: 1989 Heritage Conference Proceedings*. Pp. 186-193. Whitehorse: Yukon Historical and Museums Association.**

Presentations at this conference examined the history of the Alaska/Yukon and Alaska/British Columbia borders, as well as their impacts on people living in the border regions and the future significance of these borders to northern peoples. This paper is a transcript from the conference in which Johns-Penikett queries her mother, Bessie Johns, about the Alaska-Canada Boundary Survey in 1911. Johns recalls her great-grandfather signing a paper that supposedly authorized him to move freely across the border after it had been established. This document has not been found but Johns-Penikett considers it to have historical significance. Athabascan elders from Northway participated in this conference but any contributions they made to the discussion do not appear on the transcript.

**Johnson, Frederick. 1946. An Archaeological Survey along the Alaska Highway, 1944. *American Antiquity* 11(3):183-186.**

Johnson, along with botanists and a geologist, conducted an archaeological survey along the entire route of the Alaska Highway but the team spent most of its time in Canada. This article was reviewed to determine if it contained any information about the people and communities living along the highway in 1944, but it does not. Instead, it summarizes the archaeological findings derived primarily from investigations in the Kluane Lake area.

**Justin, Wilson. 2005. ATV Noise Drowns Out the Songs of the Trails. *Anchorage Daily News*, August 7.**

Justin, an Athabascan and a lifelong resident of the Ahtna-upper Tanana borderlands, discusses Indian trails in that area and how their use has changed during his lifetime. He describes the effects of technology and a changing world on traditional Athabascan practices.

**Kari, James. 1983. Tanacross Place Names List (preliminary version), compiled by Andrew Isaac and others. Unpublished report. 19pp. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This report was not reviewed.

**\_\_\_\_\_, (Transcriber and Editor). 1986. *Tat'ahwt'aenn Nenn': The Headwaters People's Country, Narratives of Upper Ahtna Athabaskans*. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This collection of 21 Upper Ahtna narratives focuses on major events in Upper Ahtna prehistory (15 narratives) and on traditional Ahtna territory, emphasizing Native place names, trail systems, and land use in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (6 narratives). Kari indicates that more than 210 place names and a system of at least 28 mountain passes within or leading into or out of Upper Ahtna territory have been recorded. Major trails used by explorers and miners at the onset of the gold rush almost always followed established Native trails. Ahtna connections to the upper Tanana Athabascans and their traditional territory are discussed.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1997. *Upper Tanana Place Names Lists and Maps*. Final Report for the project: "Upper Tanana Athabaskan Place Names in the Vicinity of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park," sponsored by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Cooperative Agreement: CA 9700-5-9023.**

Kari began documenting upper Tanana place names in the early 1980s while employed at the Alaska Native Language Center and continued the work intermittently until the National Park Service funded this project in 1995. This report discusses the methodologies he used for collecting place names and includes a list of 926 documented names, about 200 of which are for features located in Canada. The list is divided into 19 subregions based on drainages or portions of drainages. Included in the inventory are some place names in the Tok River and Copper River drainages for which both upper Tanana and Ahtna place names may exist. At the time this report was written, Kari had not verified the accuracy of all the literal translations for the place names and the precise locations with which they are associated. A large map specifying the locations of these place names is included with this report on file at the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Siri Tuttle. 2005. *Copper River Place Names. US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, BLM Alaska Technical Report 56. Alaska BLM State Office, Anchorage.*

Subtitled, "A report on culturally important places to Alaska Native tribes in Southcentral Alaska," this report identifies sources of Ahtna, Eyak, and Tlingit geographic place names information in areas covered by the Bureau of Land Management's East Alaska Resource Management Plan. It is cited here because three key respondents identify place names that extend into the upper Tanana region, providing further evidence of the linkages between Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans in the borderlands area at the northern periphery of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

**Kari, Priscilla Russell. 1985. Upper Tanana Ethnobotany. *Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 182. Anchorage, Alaska.***

Kari spent two weeks in 1985 recording ethnobotanical information from elders in Northway and Tetlin, and considers this to be a preliminary compilation. She describes use of a wide range of plants as food and medicine and in the construction of crafts and tools. Kari also indicates if and how the same plants were used by the Ahtna and Dena'ina Athabascans.

**Keller, Connie, and Reverend Pat Keller Slide Collection, 1959-1963. PCA 303. Alaska State Library Archives. Juneau.**

Included in this slide collection are several images of local residents and activities in Tetlin in the mid- to late 1950s.

**Ketz, James A. 1983. *Paxson Lake: Two Nineteenth Century Ahtna Sites in the Copper River Basin, Alaska. Anthropology and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, Occasional Paper No. 33. University of Alaska, Fairbanks.***

As background to this examination of two archaeological sites at Paxson Lake, Ketz briefly discusses the "Gulkana Indians" who reside in the area. Using secondary sources, he references the intermarriage of upper Copper River Ahtna with the upper Tanana Athabascans and the observations of Lt. Henry T. Allen of Tanana River people at Batzulnetas.

**Kirchhoff, Mark. 1989. Shushanna: Alaska's Last Great Gold Rush. *Alaska Geographic* 16(3):47-69.**

This article describes the short-lived Chisana gold rush of 1913. The rush began after a Native man named [Chisana] Joe, who lived in the Chisana Valley, told prospectors where he had seen a "funny looking" yellow hill at the mouth of Bonanza Creek. No other reference is made to the local Indians or to the impacts of the Chisana Stampede on them.

**Kirsteatter, Paul. 2002. Oral History of Paul Kirsteatter Recorded February 4, 1997. Draft transcript of tape recording made by the Alaska Trappers Association, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

Kirsteatter responds to questions about his trapping experiences in the Healy Lake area and other parts of the upper Tanana region.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Fred Kirsteatter, 2000. **Interview with Don Callaway and Connie Friend on August 16, 2000, in Healy Lake, Alaska. Audio cassette recording on file at the Oral History Program, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Paul Kirsteatter arrived in Healy Lake after World War II and married an Athabascan woman from that community. He discusses his life in Healy Lake, local Native history and traditions, and subsistence practices of the upper Tanana, Ketchumstuk, and Healy Lake Indians. Kirsteatter is well-known as a very successful wolf trapper. Paul's son, Fred, describes his childhood and his work with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and in the community.

**Koskey, Michael. 2006. *Subsistence Resource Use in the Upper Tanana 2004-2005*. Report prepared for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Fairbanks: Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.**

The Division of Subsistence conducted household surveys in Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross, Tok, and Dot Lake to record fish and wildlife harvest and use data for the period April 2004 to March 2005. Areas used for resource harvesting also were documented, but maps depicting these areas are not included in this report. This study responded to a request from the Department of Natural Resources for updated subsistence data to be used in evaluating the potential effects of construction and operation of a natural gas pipeline through the region.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2007. ***Subsistence Resource Use among Ten Tanana River Valley Communities: 2004-2005*. Draft technical paper. Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks.**

This draft report (as of May 2007) builds on Koskey's 2006 study by adding fish and wildlife harvest and use data for Tanana River communities outside of the upper Tanana region. Healy Lake also provided some harvest data to the author for use in this report. Maps depicting areas used in the upper Tanana region for harvesting fish and wildlife resources were also compiled for Dot Lake, Northway, Tetlin, and Tanacross. Recommendations are made for additional research that would provide a more comprehensive picture of resource use patterns in the upper Tanana region that may be needed for management purposes.

**Krause, Aurel. 1956 (1885). *The Tlingit Indians*. Translated by Erma Gunther. *American Ethnological Society Monograph 26*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.**

This detailed ethnographic account of the Tlingit Indians contains some information about their trade relationships with interior Athabascans in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Krauss, Michael E., and Victor K. Golla. 1981. *Northern Athapaskan Languages*. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6: Subarctic*. June Helm, vol. ed. Pp. 67-85. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.**

This chapter of the Subarctic handbook describes the 23 languages comprising the Northern Athapaskan language family, which include the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages spoken in the upper Tanana region. Both languages were classified as "moribund" as of 1980, meaning that they had "generally ceased to be learned by children, and without a reversal of this trend [they] will become extinct in a generation or two" (p. 71).



**Krauss, Michael E., and Mary Jane McGary. 1980. *Alaska Native Languages: A Bibliographical Catalogue. Part One: Indian Languages.* Alaska Native Language Center Research Paper No. 3. University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Alaska Native language materials on file in the ANLC research library and archives as of 1980 are included in this catalogue. Most of the listings for the Tanacross and Upper Tanana languages are linguistic materials but some traditional stories and ethnographic field notes are included. Materials in the library are available for public use, but were not reviewed.

**Lethcoe, Jim, and Nancy Lethcoe. 1996. *Valdez Gold Rush Trails of 1898-99.* Valdez, Alaska: Prince William Sound Books.**

The authors use secondary sources to describe the gold rush history of Valdez, which includes some information about the Ahtna Athabascans and the impacts they experienced consequent to the influx of prospectors and other travelers in the late 1800s. Comparable information is very limited for the upper Tanana Athabascans but we can infer that similar impacts might have occurred in parts of their homeland. Recurring themes noted in the historic accounts referenced by the authors are the generosity of the Ahtna people and the white prejudices toward Native people prevalent of the period.

**Lilley, Cynthia. 1955. Tanacross Potlatch. *Alaska Churchman* 50:19-20.**

A potlatch held on July 4, 1955, to celebrate the near completion of a new rectory at St. Timothy's Mission in Tanacross is described. An estimated 500-600 people were in attendance.

**Lohr, Amy, 1979. Tanacross History. *Mukluk News*, May 3: 13-14. Tok, Alaska.**

This brief chronological history of Tanacross was written by a community resident shortly after a fire destroyed some of the cabins at "old Tanacross."

\_\_\_\_\_, transcriber and compiler. **1985. Athabascan Story-Teaching: Stories Told by Gaither D. Paul and Titus Peter. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 183.**

This book was not available for review.

**Lowe, P.G. 1899. From Valdez Inlet to Belle Isle on the Yukon. Pp. 353-388 in *Reports of Explorations in the Territory of Alaska (Cook's Inlet, Sushitna, Copper, and Tanana rivers), 1898. Made Under the Direction of the Secretary of War, by Captain E.F. Glenn and Captain W.R. Abercrombie.* U.S. War Department Document No. 102. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Lieutenant Lowe led his military expedition through the Copper River basin and the upper Tanana-Fortymile region in July-August 1898. The party was enroute to Belle Isle (Eagle) but instead ended up at the Fortymile post. South of Mentasta Lake, the expedition met a Tanana Native man "who had come into that region to court a Copper River maiden" (p.366). Lowe describes the Natives at Tetling (Tetlin) and claimed to be the first soldier they had ever seen, although Lieutenant Henry Allen was there more than a decade earlier. Lowe presents some ethnographic information for both the Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans encountered by the expedition.

**MacIntosh, E. A. n.d. *St. Timothy's Mission – Tanacross, Alaska*. Undated manuscript. Episcopal Diocese of Alaska. Subgroup III – Parish Records, St. Timothy's Mission, Box 2, Folder 1. (15 pp.). Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This manuscript was not reviewed.

**Marchand, John. 1943. *Tribal Epidemics in the Yukon*. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 123:1019-1020.**

Marchand discusses the infectious diseases and other illnesses that devastated Yukon Indian communities during construction of the Alaska Highway at the outset of World War II.

**Marcotte, James R. 1989. *Use of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve by Residents of Northway*. Preliminary Report. Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fairbanks.**

Marcotte prepared this 9-page report at the request of the Interior Regional Fish and Game Advisory Council to support its recommendation that Northway be added to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park subsistence resident zone. He summarizes the information then available on uses of the park and preserve areas by Northway residents and includes data from Division of Subsistence research conducted in 1988 (see Marcotte, Wheeler, and Alexander 1992). Evidence from this study and secondary sources demonstrated that upper Tanana Athabascans from the Northway area used extensively what is now the northern portion of the park and preserve from aboriginal times through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This use began declining as people settled in the community in the 1930s and 1940s, but some residents continued to harvest resources in the park and preserve area through the late 1980s and an unbroken pattern of use had been maintained. A copy of this report was submitted to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in a 5/20/91 letter from Terry Haynes to Thelma Schrank.

**\_\_\_\_\_, Polly Wheeler, and Clarence Alexander. 1992. *Fish and Game Use by Residents of Five Upper Tanana Communities, 1987-1988*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 168. Fairbanks.**

Fish and wildlife harvest and use patterns in 1987-88 in the upper Tanana communities of Dot Lake, Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Northway are described in this report. Based primarily on data recorded in household surveys conducted in 1988, the project was designed to provide information needed to assess the potential effects of construction and operation of the Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar Facility on subsistence activities in the upper Tanana region and Copper River Basin. One specific study objective was to assess historic and contemporary subsistence uses of 13 defined areas in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. (See McMillan and Cuccarese 1988 for a summary of findings of a companion study conducted in the Copper River Basin, along with another version of the upper Tanana study findings.)

**Martin, Gayle. 1983. *Use of Natural Resources by Residents of Dot Lake, Alaska*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 19. Fairbanks.**

Fieldwork conducted in 1982 was the basis for this subsistence study of Dot Lake, the content of which is typical of Division of Subsistence reports published in the early 1980s. Martin presents a demographic profile of the community; describes the resources used, seasons of harvest, and harvest patterns; discusses the cultural significance of wild resources; and concludes with a

presentation of contemporary resource issues. Maps depicting historic and contemporary resource harvest areas used by community residents are included. Historic ties between residents of Dot Lake and the Copper Basin are demonstrated by the residence of two elders in Dot Lake who were born and raised in the Copper River area and of two other elders who traveled extensively between the Tanana and Copper river drainages earlier in the 1900s.

**McClellan, Catharine. 1975. *My Old People Say: An Ethnographic Survey of Southern Yukon Territory. Parts 1 and 2. National Museums of Canada, National Museum of Man, Publications in Ethnology Nos. 6(1) and 6(2). Ottawa.***

This ethnography of three Indian groups living in southern Yukon Territory—the Southern Tutchone, Tagish, and Inland Tlingit—as of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is based primarily on fieldwork McClellan conducted there in 1948-1951. The territory of the Southern Tutchone borders that of the upper Tanana Athabascans on the east. McClellan's work is cited here because she makes passing reference to the upper Tanana Indians, primarily in the context of Native trade networks and "the last war between Canada and Alaska."

**McConnell, David L. 1920. *Settling at a New Mission. Alaska Churchman 14(3):71-74.***

The new Missionary-in-Charge of St. Timothy's Mission describes his trip to Tanana Crossing and comments on conditions among the Native people there.

**McIntosh, E.A. 1918. *A Big Feast at Tanana Crossing. Alaska Churchman 12(2):47-49.***

The missionary at St. Timothy's Mission in Tanana Crossing describes a potlatch held in April 1917 at Tanana Crossing for Chief John of "Mantasta," who had passed away in April 1915. Messengers traveled as far as Dawson and Moosehide to invite guests. McIntosh describes how arriving guests are welcomed and provides some details about the potlatch itself, but says nothing about Chief John or why the potlatch was held at Tanana Crossing.

**McKenna, Robert A. 1932. *The Indians of the Upper Tanana, Alaska. Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.***

McKenna's doctoral dissertation was the basis for his important 1959 monograph, *The Upper Tanana Indians*, but contains some information not included in that document. Specifically, he recorded anthropometric measurements and observations for 33 adult upper Tanana Athabaskan males. Some of this material appears in McKenna 1964. A copy of this dissertation is available at the ARLIS Library at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1959. *The Upper Tanana Indians. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 55. New Haven, Connecticut.***

This monograph is the first definitive ethnographic account of the upper Tanana Athabascans and is based primarily on McKenna's fieldwork in 1929-30 in areas and villages located south of the Tanana River. It remains the most detailed account available for the Athabascans in eastern interior Alaska, who were among the last Alaska Native groups to experience white contact in their homeland. McKenna describes the upper Tanana Athabascans as he observed them but also discusses cultural characteristics and practices that were no longer in use. He spent some time in the Alaska-Yukon borderlands area and discusses relationships between the upper Tanana and the neighboring Ahtna Athabascans.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1964. The Physical Anthropology of two Alaska Athapaskan Groups.** *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 22(1):43-52.

Anthropometric and morphological data are presented and discussed for 33 adult male upper Tanana Athabascans and 44 adult male Chandalar Kutchin Athabascans. McKennan collected these data while conducting ethnographic research among these two groups for his doctoral dissertation.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1969a. Athabaskan Groupings and Social Organization in Central Alaska.** In *Contributions to Anthropology: Band Societies*. David Damas, ed. Pp. 93-114. National Museum of Canada Bulletin 228. National Museum of Canada, Ottawa.

McKennan discusses Alaskan Athabaskan social groupings and social organization at the time of first white contact, based primarily on his fieldwork among the upper Tanana and Chandalar Gwich'in and on information recorded by other observers. He presents some population data for the Nabesna and Scottie Creek bands—the upper Tanana groups most closely affiliated with the neighboring Ahtna Athabascans to the south—and describes a local band living at the head of the Nabesna River in 1929. McKennan does not discuss the Ahtna Athabascans in this presentation and instead focuses on the groups he knew best from his own fieldwork. The basic premise of this article is that the semi-permanent riverine village has replaced the traditional hunting and fishing band—the basic social grouping among most Alaskan Athabascans—in much of central Alaska. McKennan laments the passing of time and its impact on our ability to learn details about pre-contact Alaskan Athabaskan social organization. However, he believes that some salient features can be better understood by interviewing elders and re-examining existing information.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1969b. Athapaskan Groups of Central Alaska at the Time of White Contact.** *Ethnohistory* 16(4):335-343.

In this paper McKennan describes Northern Athabaskan groupings in central Alaska, in what is essentially a condensed version of McKennan (1969a).

\_\_\_\_\_, **1969c. Finding Aid to the Papers of Robert A. McKennan at Dartmouth College.** Hanover, New Hampshire: Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

McKennan donated many of his papers to the Dartmouth College Library after his retirement in 1969. The papers, which span his teaching career from 1925-1969, include correspondence and materials associated with his participation in meetings and conferences. Also included are journals from trips to the upper Tanana and Chandalar regions of Alaska, as well as notes and drafts of his ethnographies from these two field trips. [Note: We have not determined how much, if any, overlap there is between this collection and materials housed in the University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives.]

\_\_\_\_\_. **n.d. Robert Addison McKennan Papers, 1929-1980.** Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

McKennan is best known for his pioneering ethnographic research among the upper Tanana and Gwich'in Athabascans in the late 1920s and 1930s, and for his later archaeological investigations at Healy Lake with John Cook. This collection of his personal papers includes many of his field notes, some of which were published by Mishler and Simeone in 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1981. Tanana. In *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 6: Subarctic*, June Helm, vol. ed. Pp. 562-577. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

In this article McKennan presents a concise ethnographic overview of the Tanana River Athabascans. A map depicting tribal territories ca. 1880 is included.

\_\_\_\_\_, and John P. Cook. 1968. *Prehistory of Healy Lake, Alaska*. Paper read at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Tokyo-Kyoto, Japan, September 3-10.

The results of archaeological investigations at two Healy Lake sites in the summers of 1966 and 1967 are summarized. A preliminary radiocarbon analysis of bone fragments from one site yielded a date of 11,090 ± 170 B.P., which was the earliest such date in North America and the oldest site of human habitation in Alaska that had been documented at that time.

McMillan, Patricia O., and Sal V. Cuccarese. 1988. *Alaska Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System: Characteristics of Contemporary Subsistence Use Patterns in the Copper River Basin and Upper Tanana Area. Vol. I: Synthesis and Vol. II: Appendices*. Prepared for Hart Crowser, Inc., Seattle, Washington. Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center (AEIDC), University of Alaska Anchorage.

This report summarizes existing information on subsistence practices in the upper Tanana Valley and Copper River Basin, and includes the preliminary findings of collaborative fieldwork conducted in 1987-88 in the upper Tanana region by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), the National Park Service, and AEIDC. Data for Copper Basin communities are derived from ADF&G research conducted there in the early 1980s. This project was designed in part to provide information required to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed Backscatter Radar System on subsistence patterns and to assess historic and contemporary uses of 13 specific areas within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Maps depicting areas used by Tok and Tanacross for harvesting resources in 1968-1988 are included, as are tables summarizing use of selected areas in the park and preserve by upper Tanana and Copper Basin households.

Medary, Milton B., Jr. 1924. *A Hunting Trip in Alaska: The Diary of Milton Bennett Medary, Jr.* Unpublished typescript. On file at the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Medary was a member of a hunting party that obtained a special permit from the Secretary of Agriculture to exceed the big game bag limit as they collected specimens of caribou, Dall sheep, and mountain goats for the U.S. Biological Survey and Smithsonian Institution. The party hunted on the north side of the Wrangell Mountains and spent some time in the Nabesna and Chisana River drainages and at Batzulnetas. Medary's account includes descriptions of interactions with Ahtna people at Batzulnetas, Chistochina, and nearby areas. No reference is made to the upper Tanana Athabascans. This personal memoir contains some insightful descriptions of the Ahtna-upper Tanana borderlands in 1924 and of the abundant wildlife resources present in the area.

Mendenhall, W.C., and F.C. Schrader. 1903. *The Mineral Resources of the Mount Wrangell District, Alaska*. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper No. 15:1-71. Washington: Government Printing Office.

This report resembles that of most geological survey papers for this period. Some information is presented concerning Native groups and travel routes (some of which are depicted on a foldout

map) in the Copper River basin and upper Tanana region, but this is secondary to the descriptions of the geology and mineral resources in the Mount Wrangell District.

**Mercier, François Xavier. 1986. *Recollections of the Youkon*. Translated, Edited, and Annotated by Linda Finn Yarborough. *Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History* No. 188. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Society.**

Subtitled, “Memoires from the years 1868-1885,” this slender volume contains a wealth of information about the trading posts on the Yukon River and the inhabitants of this large region during this important period in Alaska history. It does not specifically address the upper Tanana region or its inhabitants, but Mercier does describe an encounter between a Kutchin Indian chief and an unnamed “upper Tanana” Indian chief at a trading post in Fort Yukon, probably in the 1870s or early 1880s.

**Milanowski, Paul G. 1962. Sound system of Upper Tanana Athapaskan (a preliminary view). In *Science in Alaska: Proceedings of the 12th Alaska Science Conference, Aug. 28-Sept. 1, 1961* (pp. 7-10). Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers.**

This is the synopsis of Milanowski’s presentation at the Alaska Science Conference in 1961. Milanowski was affiliated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics and at the time resided in Tetlin. At the time he was conducting research to “determine scientifically the most practical orthography to be used in writing the speech sounds of the Upper Tanana dialect....”

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1965. *Uusii dinahtl’aa’: A Beginning Reading Book*. Tetlin, Alaska: Wycliffe Bible Translators.**

This book, written in the Upper Tanana Athapaskan language, was not reviewed.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1979. *NEE’AANEEGN’ – Upper Tanana (Tetlin) Junior Dictionary*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center, Rural Education Affairs, University of Alaska.**

Working under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Milanowski collaborated with Alfred John of Tetlin and Mary Paul of Tok to assemble this dictionary of the Tetlin dialect of the Upper Tanana language. It updates and expands on previous versions published in 1974 and 1975, and was designed primarily for use by elementary school students.

**Miller, Debbie. 1981. A Bit of Everything! *Alaska Ruralite* 28(3):16-17.**

This article highlights the lives of Ted and Babe Lowell, who opened a trading post at Tanacross in 1928 and delivered freight and purchased furs in the upper Tanana region until the early 1940s.

**Mishler, Craig. 1986. *Born with the River: An Ethnographic History of Alaska’s Goodpaster and Big Delta Indians*. Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys, Report of Investigations 86-14. Fairbanks.**

A literature review and fieldwork conducted in 1983-1985 are the basis for this ethnographic and ethnohistorical assessment of the Middle Tanana Athabascans in the Goodpaster and Big Delta river areas. This is the best available overview of the now-extinct Athabaskan bands located just downriver from the upper Tanana region, and much of the information was obtained from the last surviving members of the Goodpaster Band. Although the Middle Tanana people spoke a dialect

distinct from those spoken by the upper Tanana bands, their descendants moved to the upper Tanana region following the death of Chief Jarvis died in 1913. Jarvis was of Ahtna heritage and born near present-day Paxson; this is the only reference made to linkages between the Middle Tanana Athabascans and the Ahtna people.

**Mishler, Craig, and William E. Simeone. 2004. *Han, People of the River: Hän Hwëch'in: An Ethnography and Ethnohistory*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.**

This book originated as an ethnographic overview and assessment of the Han Athabascans in Eagle and Dawson City that was solicited by the National Park Service to document the Native heritage of lands around the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. The Han had ties to and interacted with upper Tanana Athabascans immediately to the south of Han territory in the Fortymile River area. This book describes both the historic and contemporary Han people, includes rarely seen historic photographs and sections on Han expressive culture, and is the most comprehensive work yet published on the subject.

**Mishler, Craig, and William E. Simeone, eds. 2006. *Tanana and Chandalar: The Alaska Field Journals of Robert A. McKennan*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.**

Robert McKennan's field journals offer important insights into his fieldwork among the upper Tanana and Gwich'in Athabascans and the challenges of conducting ethnographic research in remote areas of interior Alaska in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Mishler (Gwich'in) and Simeone (upper Tanana) have performed an important service for researchers by assembling this material, augmenting the journals with a biographical sketch of McKennan, and providing other contextual information. McKennan's upper Tanana journals contain important insights about life in the Chisana, Nabesna, and Slana areas near the northern border of what is now the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in the late 1920s.

**Mishler, Craig, John Alfonsi, and Glenn Bacon. 1988. *Alaska Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System: Cultural and Traditional Aspects of Subsistence*. Research Summary Report Provided to the U.S. Air Force. Prepared for Hart Crowser, Inc., Seattle, Washington. Anchorage, Alaska: Ahtna-Tanacross Association.**

Included as Appendix B to the "Department of the Air Force 1989" document cited above, this report examines the importance and qualitative dimensions of subsistence to the predominantly Athabascan communities in the Tok and Gulkana areas and complements the survey data reported in other subsistence studies conducted in conjunction with this environmental review (Marcotte, Wheeler, and Alexander 1992; and McMillan and Cuccarese 1988). The authors interviewed long-time residents of the Tanacross and Gulkana areas. Traditional subsistence territories are summarized. Similarities in cultural beliefs and practices between the upper Tanana and Ahtna people are described, as are kinship connections between the two regions.

**Mitchell, William L. 1982. *The Opening of Alaska 1901-1903*. Lyman L. Woodman, ed. Anchorage, Alaska: Cook Inlet Historical Society.**

Mitchell directed construction in 1901-1903 of the branch of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) running from Eagle City to Valdez. He recounts his experiences in this monograph, which was written about 30 years following his Alaska service. Mitchell's observations of and interactions with the Han Chief Charley at Ketchumstuk, the upper Tanana Chief Joseph (who served as a guide for Mitchell) and other upper Tanana people at Ketchumstuk, and Middle Tanana Athabascans at encampments along the Goodpaster River offer

insights into a culture in transition consequent to increasing white presence in the region at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Upper Tanana – Ahtha interactions and relationships are not discussed.

**Moffit, Fred H. 1933. The Suslota Pass District, Upper Copper River Region, Alaska. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 844-C:137-162. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

This geological survey report includes brief descriptions of the Indian and white population in the Batzulnetas and Slana areas, and of travel routes between the upper Copper River basin and Tetlin.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1936. The upper Copper and Tanana rivers. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 868-C:136-143. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

Topographic and geologic field parties surveyed the section of the Alaska Range between the Nabesna and Big Tok rivers in 1934. This report contains no information about the people living in this area. A sketch map included with the report depicts the Eagle Trail running south along the Tok River to Mentasta and then to Slana, with one loop circling back to another point on the Tok River.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1938. Geology of the Slana-Tok District, Alaska. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 904. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

Moffit describes the Slana-Tok District as “extending from Mount Kimball southeastward to the Tetling River and including streams that are tributary to the Copper River on the south and to the Tanana River on the north.” He summarizes the history of exploration in the area and describes trails and travel routes. Reference is made to Indian trails, but no other information is presented about Native peoples in the area.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1940. Geology of the Nutzotin Mountains, Alaska. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 933-B:103-199.**

This geologic investigation focused on the northeast side of the Nutzotin Mountains between the Chisana River and the Canadian border, and included geologic mapping of the valleys of Cooper, Notch, and Cross creeks, located between the Nabesna and Chisana rivers. Moffit describes travel routes and trails in the area, including an “old Indian trail down the south bank of the Nabesna River” that had fallen into disuse. Some of these trails extended into the southern periphery of the upper Tanana region. The Native inhabitants of this region are not discussed.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1941. Geology of the Upper Tetling River District Alaska. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 917-B:115-157. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

The geology of a part of the Alaska Range located in the headwater region of the Tanana and Copper rivers is described in this report. The history of previous geological investigations in the area is summarized. Moffit describes routes and trails in the area, including one “well known to the natives but little used by the few white men who have visited the district.”



\_\_\_\_\_, and Alfred Knopf. 1909. **Mineral Resources of the Nabesna-White River District.** *U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 379:161-180.* Washington: Government Printing Office.

The authors conducted topographic and geologic fieldwork in the summer of 1908 south of the upper Tanana region, on the northeastern slope of the Wrangell Mountains and the adjacent Nutzotin Mountains. Three Indian villages with an estimated population of 45-50 inhabitants were then located in this area: Batzulnetas, on the Copper River; an unnamed village on the Nabesna River at the mouth of Cooper Creek; and an unnamed village on Cross Creek opposite the mouth of Notch Creek in the Chisana Valley. Due in part to their isolation, Moffit and Knopf considered the Chisana Indians to be more independent than those at Batzulnetas and Nabesna, and said they “have retained their own manner of living to a greater extent” (p.166). The Indians in all three villages wore western clothing and Native-made moccasins, and were eager to trade for tea and tobacco. [In contrast, a version of this report published in 1910 in USGS Bulletin 417, contained a more negative description of the Indians, stating that they were “inveterate beggars, always asking for tea or tobacco, for which, as well as for flour and cloth, they will trade meat and leather goods, when they have them” (p.15)].

**Moodie, D. Wayne, A.J.W. Catchpole, and Kerry Abel. 1992. Northern Athapaskan Oral Traditions and the White River Volcano.** *Ethnohistory 39(2):148-172.*

This article discusses Athabascan oral traditions regarding a volcano that erupted in the upper White River basin of Alaska circa A.D. 720 and deposited ash that covered most of the southwestern Yukon Territory. The authors posit that “the widespread ecological disruptions that accompanied the deposition of this ash triggered migrations of people that led to the dispersal and linguistic differentiation of the ancestral Athapaskan Indians.” The presence of trade networks (for copper and European goods) involving the upper Tanana, Ahtna, and other Native groups in the Alaska-Yukon borderlands is acknowledged.

**Murie, Olaus J. 1935. Alaska-Yukon Caribou.** *U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Biological Survey, North American Fauna No. 54.* Washington, DC.

Murie conducted fieldwork in the 1920s to compile information needed for caribou management in Alaska and “to obtain data bearing on the desirability of crossing the wild animals with the domesticated reindeer, with a view toward improving the latter.” His report includes pictures and descriptions of caribou fences at Ketchumstuk and other information about caribou in the upper Tanana region.

**National Park Service. 1994. Final Report on Upper Tanana Region Customary and Traditional Use Eligibility for the Communities of Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, Northway, and Tok.** Analysis prepared for the Federal Subsistence Board. Anchorage: Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service.

This report summarizes existing information on the historic and contemporary uses of fish and wildlife resources in Game Management Units 11, 12, 13, and 20 by residents of the upper Tanana region. Emphasis is placed on the use of large mammals, as the primary purpose of the report was to provide information for use by the Federal Subsistence Board in making customary and traditional use determinations for moose, caribou, sheep, goat, bison, and black and brown bears. Areas used to harvest wildlife resources within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are identified, as documented in Division of Subsistence community surveys and in other sources.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1999. Information Regarding the Addition of Healy Lake as a Resident Zone Community for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Prepared for the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission, April 1999.**

This report is a synthesis of public testimony, oral interviews with residents of Healy Lake and other upper Tanana and Copper River Basin communities, and published and unpublished sources. It documents use by these communities of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve for subsistence purposes and was prepared in support of a proposal to add Healy Lake to the park resident zone.

\_\_\_\_\_. **2001. Special Regulations; Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve: Proposed Rule. *Federal Register* 66(115):32282-32287, June 14.**

The rulemaking in this Federal Register notice proposed to add Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin, and Northway to the resident zone for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, thereby enabling residents of these communities to pursue subsistence activities in the park without a National Park Service subsistence permit. The analysis summarizes the information available to support the request and concludes that these four communities,

....contain a significant concentration of Athabascan Indians whose lifestyle is centered on the subsistence harvest of resources in the same areas their ancestors used for centuries. This area includes (approximately) the northern third of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, which is composed of both park lands and preserve. Residents of these communities do not use aircraft in the subsistence harvest of resources in this area.

**Naylor, Larry L., Lawrence A. Gooding, and G. Richard Scott. 1976. *Demographic Survey of Native Communities Located Along the Alaska Highway*. Report prepared by the University of Alaska Fairbanks for Alcan Pipeline Company. Houston, Texas: Gulf Interstate Engineering Company.**

Proposed construction in the mid-1970s of a pipeline to transport natural gas from the North Slope of Alaska to Lower 48 markets generated research projects designed to identify potential impacts to cultures and communities along the pipeline corridor. This study summarizes and analyzes demographic and socioeconomic data for the upper Tanana communities of Dot Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin, and presents additional descriptive information for each community. The social and cultural ties between upper Tanana and Copper River Basin communities are not discussed.

**Nelson, Richard K. 1986. Raven's People: Athabascan Traditions in the Modern World. In *Interior Alaska: A Journey Through Time*. Robert M. Thorson, Jean S. Aigner, R. Dale Guthrie, Mary Lee Guthrie, William S. Schneider, and Richard K. Nelson, eds. Pp. 195-250. Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society.**

This article is one of a series in this volume that describe the environment and people of interior Alaska. Other articles examine the geological landscape and the evolution of plant and animal communities in the region; the origin of Alaska's Native people; major historical events; and life in contemporary Athabascan communities. In his usual eloquent and insightful way, in this paper Nelson "describe[s] something of the modern village lifeway, its roots in Athabascan tradition, and its place in the context of present-day Alaska." This article is an excellent introduction to

Alaska Athabascan culture, and includes some information and photographs for the upper Tanana region.

**Norris, Frank. 2002. *Alaska Subsistence: A National Park Service Management History*. Anchorage: Alaska Support Office, National Park Service.**

A National Park Service historian, Norris wrote this detailed chronological history of subsistence management in Alaska, primarily as it involves National Park Service lands and programs. It is required reading for serious students of the subject. Relevant to this project are sections of the report describing the Katie John case and subsistence resident zone issues in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, both of which involve upper Tanana Athabascans and local communities.

**Ogilby, Alexander. 1953. Forest Green Pants – and a Red Flannel Shirt. *Alaska Churchman* 49(4):9-14.**

Ogilby reminisces about his experiences ministering to the people of Tetlin and Last Tetlin.

**Ogilvie, William. 1890. *Exploratory Survey of Part of the Lewes, Tat-on-Duc, Porcupine, Bell, Trout, Pelly, and MacKenzie Rivers, 1887-1888*. Extract from Canadian Department of the Interior, Annual Report for 1889.**

This book was not available for review.

**Olson, Ronald L. 1936. Some Trading Customs of the Chilkat Tlingit. In *Essays in Anthropology: Presented to A.L. Kroeber*. Robert H. Lowie, ed. Pp. 211-214. Berkeley: University of California Press.**

While conducting research on Tlingit social structure in 1933 and 1934, Olson recorded information on Chilkat Tlingit trading customs and practices with Athabascans in northwest British Columbia and southern Yukon Territory in the decades prior to the Klondike gold rush. He describes the Tlingit as being “decidedly superior,” both culturally to “the tribes of the hinterlands” and as middlemen in the fur trade.

**Olson, Sigurd T. 1955. Management Studies of Alaska Caribou: Sampling of Kill by Hunters, Steese-Fortymile Herd. In *Wildlife Investigations of Alaska, Project W-3-R-10. Work Plan B, Job No. 1-b*. Unpublished Quarterly Progress Report. Pp. 21-36. Juneau: Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Game Commission.**

A total of 2,345 Steese-Fortymile caribou were reported harvested in 1955, most of which (2,175) were taken in the Taylor Highway area. This total greatly exceeded the reported harvest for the previous four years combined. This report describes how the harvest data were obtained and presents a detailed assessment of this information. Harvest data recorded for upper Tanana community residents who passed through hunter check stations are as follows: Tok (116); Tanacross (83); Northway (96); Tetlin (28); and Dot Lake (15).

**Olson, Wallace, and Ramon Vitt. 1969. Tree Paintings Near Tok, Alaska. *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska* 14(2): 76-83.**

A tree painting (or pictograph) of undetermined age or origin discovered along the Tok River at Mile 93.2 of the Tok Cutoff to the Glenn Highway is described and discussed in this article. The pictograph depicts several human figures standing between what the authors speculate are the

Mentasta and Nutzotin mountains. Consultation with Native leaders in Mentasta, Tanacross, and Tok did not yield definitive information about what was portrayed in the pictograph, although one man recalled having heard of such paintings and another suggested that the picture could denote people moving someplace else. Robert McKennan confirmed to the authors that the pictograph is consistent with those described to him in the late 1920s and referenced in his 1959 monograph.

**Osgood, Cornelius B. 1936. *The Distribution of Northern Athapaskan Indians. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 7. New Haven, Connecticut.***

This monograph represents the initial attempt by an anthropologist to map the geographic distribution of the 25 Northern Athabascan Indian groups in Alaska and Canada at the time of first contact with Europeans. Osgood describes the territory associated with each group and identifies their subgroups. Based on information provided from Robert McKennan, he defined the “Nabesna” grouping to include people living in:

The entire drainage of the Nabesna and Chisana Rivers, including the tributaries of the Tanana River, which they form at their confluence, as far down as the Tok River; the upper White River, including its tributaries the Beaver and Snag, and the headwaters of the Ladue; together an area roughly enclosed between 61° 31' and 63° 30' north latitude and 141° 30' and 143° west longitude.

The “Tanana” classification as it applied to the upper Tanana region was reserved for people living in the “drainage of the lower Tanana River below the Tok River.”

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1971. *The Han Indians. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 74. New Haven, Connecticut.***

Osgood describes the culture of the Han Athabascans living along the Yukon River in the Alaska-Yukon boundary area at the time of western contact, based on existing information and fieldwork he conducted in the summer of 1932. He also examines four periods of culture change among the Han, which resemble the factors that also influenced the neighboring upper Tanana bands. The final section of this ethnography examines the relationship of the Han to neighboring Athabascan groups, including the upper Tanana and Ahtna.

**Patterson, E.A., and Mary Moses. 1968. *Tetlin Indian Reserve Program Recommendations: Tourism and Recreation Sites, Sport Hunting and Fishing, Arts and Crafts, Social Progress. Fairbanks, Alaska: Bureau of Indian Affairs Agency.***

This BIA report is essentially a proposal to promote self-sufficiency and use of local resources on the Tetlin Reserve, thereby providing “a way for the people to adjust to changing society and its demands through a modified gradual transition and movement” (p. 34). The proposed strategies include training Tetlin residents to operate sawmills and to work in the tourism industry. As background information, the proposal notes that Tetlin residents obtained 35-50 percent of their food from hunting, trapping, and fishing. Tetlin is reported as having 89 residents in 1968.

**Paul, David. 1957a. *When Jesus Came to Tanacross. Alaska Churchman 52(2):6-9.***

A lay reader at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Mission and an Athabascan from Tanana Crossing, Paul discusses the early days of the mission and its influence on his life as a young man.

\_\_\_\_\_, 1957b. *According to Papa. As Told by David Paul to Audrey Loftus.* Fairbanks, Alaska: St. Matthew's Episcopal Guild.

The author was born near Chicken "some 68 years ago." A companion to the "Anderson 1956" citation, this booklet is a collection of upper Tanana Athabascan legends and customs. They take the form of short stories as conveyed to David Paul by his father and great uncle. Three of the stories reference Ahtna people or places in the Copper River Basin.

**Paul, Gaither. 1980. *Stories for My Grandchildren.* Transcribed and edited by Ron Scollon. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.**

This collection of five stories is presented in the Tanacross Athapaskan language and translated into English. These stories were a way for elders to convey important cultural information to young people during the long winter months. One story explains the dangers of teasing a bear. The others involve "Brush Indians" and discuss the origin of dentalium necklaces.

**Pearson, H. Brian. 1900. *The Upper Tanana Basin.* In *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska.* Pp. 814-816. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Pearson describes several trails leading to and from the upper Tanana River in the upper Tanana-Ahtna borderlands area, most of which have been described in other expedition reports.

**Peters, W.J., and A.H. Brooks. 1899. *Report of the White River-Tanana Expedition.* In *Maps and Descriptions of Routes of Exploration in Alaska in 1898.* 55<sup>th</sup> Congress, 3d session, Senate Executive Document No. 172 (Serial 3737). Pp. 64-75. Washington: U.S. Geological Survey.**

In 1898, the U.S. Congress provided funding for geological surveys in Alaska. Peters and Brooks summarize their expedition to the White and Tanana river drainages, and describe existing and potential transportation routes into these areas. In their discussion of local Native groups, they divide the Tanana Athabascan Indians into three geographic groups: "First, those living near the Tok and Tetling rivers; second, those of the Middle Tanana living near the Volkmar and Delta rivers; and lastly, those of the lower river, whose scattered settlements extend about 170 miles up the river, to where swift water begins" (p.74).

**Peterson, Knut D. 1980. *The Last Frontier.* Port Washington, NY: Ashley Books.**

An Alaskan pioneer who lived in the Copper River Basin and Alaska-Canada borderlands area, Peterson recounts some of his experiences and observations there beginning in the 1920s. Two chapters in this short volume describe interactions between whites and local Athabascans. The first account took place in the 1930s somewhere near Snag, Yukon Territory, where white trappers (including the author) invited Athabascans from a local village to their cabin to celebrate Christmas and to purchase furs. The second story, presumably recounted to Peterson by one of the prospectors involved, also occurred just inside the Canadian border in 1912. It tells of a local Native medicine man whose apparent misdeeds led to his life being taken by a Native from another village in exchange for a new Winchester rifle. The accuracy of neither story has been verified.

**Pierce, W. H. 1977 (1890). *Thirteen Years of Travel and Exploration in Alaska 1877-1889*. Edited and updated by R. N. DeArmond. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co. [Originally published by Journal Publishing Co., Lawrence, Kansas.]**

Reputed to be a “real” pioneer prospector, Pierce came to Alaska in 1877 in search of fortune and fame, and recorded his adventures in this book. The account of his time in the Fortymile area, probably on the Canadian side of the border, is the least believable section of the book. Pierce references a tribe of “cannibals” living at the headwaters of the Tanana River, which he claimed murdered and ate two of his companions. He spins a remarkable tale about the ensuing battle, in which he and his companions killed or wounded 130 of these “cannibals.” The exact location of this purported encounter is unclear. The editor of the updated version found no information to substantiate this far-fetched story, although he did locate some corroborating evidence for other topics discussed in the book.

**Pitts, Roger S. 1972. *The Changing Settlement Patterns and Housing Types of the Upper Tanana Indians*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis in Anthropology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.**

This thesis traces historical changes in upper Tanana settlement patterns and housing types, from pre-contact times to the present, based on library research and fieldwork conducted in 1970. Pitt’s primary respondents included both upper Tanana and Ahtna elders. He describes how 50 years of western contact had profoundly impacted the traditional upper Tanana bands, as reflected in the shift from a nomadic to sedentary culture. Pitts incorrectly predicted the disappearance of any remaining vestiges of traditional upper Tanana culture after elders born around the time of Lt. Henry Allen’s visit had passed away. Detailed 1938 census data for upper Tanana villages are presented in an appendix. This thesis and the one written by fellow researcher, Ramon Vitt (1971) offer valuable glimpses into upper Tanana culture as of the early 1970s and are among the few sources of ethnographic data available for that period.

**Powell, Addison M. 1997. *Trailing and Camping in Alaska*. Abridged version. Preface by Jim and Nancy Lethcoe. Valdez, Alaska: Prince William Sound Books.**

Originally published in 1909, this account of Powell’s travels in the Copper River region includes some insightful observations about the Ahtna and neighboring upper Tanana Athabascans. Powell was a surveyor and adventurer who ventured north for the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898 and remained in Alaska intermittently until 1907. He was a deputy surveyor on Abercrombie’s Copper River exploring expedition from 1898 to 1900, and later prospected and hunted in the Chisana and Valdez areas.

**Quirk, William A. 1974. *Historical aspects of the building of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System, with special emphasis on the Eagle-Valdez and Goodpaster telegraph lines, 1902-1903*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.**

This short report is an overview of the WAMCATS telegraph line construction project that focuses on the segments built under the direction of Lieutenant Billy Mitchell.

**Rainey, Froehlich G., Papers, 1931-1947. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Included in this collection are three field diaries maintained by Rainey when he conducted archaeological surveys and fieldwork in the upper Tanana region: (1) Diary—Black Rapids, no year but probably 1936, Box 1, Folder 23; (2) Diary—Dixthada, etc., 1937, Box 1, Folder 24; and (3) Diary—Upper Tanana 1939, Box 1, Folder 25. These diaries provide some insights into upper Tanana Athabascan culture in the 1930s and are among the few firsthand sources of documentation available for this period.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1939a. Archaeology in Central Alaska. *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 36(4):351-405.**

Drawing upon both published literature and his 1936-37 archaeological reconnaissance of the Copper River, Tanana River, and central Yukon River valleys, Rainey's descriptions of archaeological sites are supplemented by ethnographic and historical information for the area, some of which was obtained from Native elders. The 1930s is a period for which documentation about the upper Tanana Athabascans is extremely limited.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1940. Archaeological Investigations in Central Alaska. *American Antiquity* 5(4):299-308.**

This article is essentially a synopsis of Rainey (1939a) and summarizes the limited archaeological data available as of the 1930s for "central Alaska," which includes the Tanana River and upper Copper River valleys. Rainey concludes that a sufficient number of Athabascan sites are present to support productive archaeological investigations and to enable reconstruction of aboriginal Athabascan culture. He suggests that some similarities may be found between upper Tanana and Copper River valley fishing-camp sites.

**Rand McNally and Company. 1922. *Guide to Alaska and the Yukon*. New York: Rand McNally and Company.**

Described as a guide for "tourists, investors, homeseekers, and sportsmen," this booklet contains statistical information about Alaska and the Yukon, describes the natural resources and communities, and provides other information that visitors would find useful. Of particular interest are the detailed maps presented for different regions of Alaska, three of which portray portions of the upper Tanana region and/or Copper River Basin. Major trails and travel routes within and between the two regions are depicted.

**Reckord, Holly. 1979. A Case Study of Copper Center, Alaska. *Alaska OCS Socioeconomic Studies Program, Technical Report Number 7*. Anchorage: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Office.**

Reckord describes sociocultural changes that occurred in the Ahtna Athabascan community of Copper Center during construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Systems (TAPS) in 1973-1978. This ethnographic and ethnohistorical overview also describes the subsistence patterns of Copper River Basin communities affiliated with the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the effects of such change agents as missionaries and the fur trade. It is based primarily on research conducted in the 1970s before the park was created. The only reference made to the upper Tanana Athabascans is in a section discussing clan affiliations.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1983a. *Where Raven Stood: Cultural Resources of the Ahtna Region*. Anthropology and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, Occasional Paper No. 35. University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

As a preamble to her inventory of historical and cemetery sites in the Ahtna region, Reckord summarizes relevant ethnohistorical and ethnographic information based on research she conducted beginning in the mid-1970s. She focused on cataloging known sites outside of lands already selected by Ahtna villages under ANCSA, including some historic sites in the border area between the Ahtna and upper Tanana regions. Reckord discusses interregional networks and reports that the Upper Copper River Ahtna, or Tatl'ahwt'aene, who lived north of Chistochina, maintained close social and economic relations with the Tanana drainage people. Because of these continual interactions with upper Tanana speakers, the Upper Ahtna dialect was the most distinct of all the Ahtna dialects spoken.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1983b. *That's the Way We Live: Subsistence in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve*. Anthropology and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, Occasional Paper No. 34. University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Aboriginal and contemporary subsistence patterns in communities around the newly-established Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are described in this report, which is based on a literature review and interviews conducted by the author in the late 1970s. Reckord included Northway, Tetlin, and Tok in the study but concluded that the distance and expense of traveling to the park precluded Alaska Highway communities from using the area very much today. However, she adds that when Natives lived in the Nabesna and Chisana valleys, "they knew the Wrangells well and used them extensively" and still today "some might drive to the Nabesna Highway to go hunting." Reckord also points out that upper Tanana people activate social ties with the Ahtna to obtain salmon, which are generally unavailable in the upper Tanana region.

**Reece, Susan. 1988. Letter to W. T. Ellis from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, dated May 16, 1988.**

This letter is the US Department of Interior response to a series of subsistence hunting plan recommendations developed by the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission. Reece explains why all of the recommendations were rejected, including one to add Northway to the park subsistence resident zone.

**Rice, J. F. 1900a. From Valdez to Eagle City. In *Yukon River Exploring Expedition, Alaska 1899*, by Captain W.P. Richardson. Pp. 784-789. *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*, U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Military Affairs. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

The Rice expedition traveled from Valdez to Eagle City and back to Valdez between June and August 1899. They followed "an old Indian trail" from an unidentified point on the Slana River to Mentasta Lake, where they encountered prospectors and "3 of the Tetling Indians" who informed Rice that all but two of the Mentasta Indians had died the previous winter and the two survivors had joined the "Ketchumstock tribe." At Lake Mansfield the expedition found "a band of about 50 Ketchumstock Indians" that was spending the summer there hunting and fishing before returning to Ketchumstuk for the winter. An Indian guide hired by the expedition (possibly at Copper Center) did not want to accompany the group beyond Ketchumstuk, as he would be trespassing in the territory of another "tribe" without approval from the local "chief."



**Robe, Cecil F. 1943. *The Penetration of an Alaskan Frontier, the Tanana Valley and Fairbanks*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Graduate School of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.**

Robe examines the history of interior Alaska, focusing on events leading to and surrounding the peopling of the Tanana River valley and the establishment of Fairbanks. This dissertation is derived primarily from secondary sources and presents some information about the Native population contained in these published accounts.

**Rogers, Randall R. 1991. *An Analysis of Eligibility for Subsistence Hunting in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Alaska*. M.S. Thesis, School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This study of the methods used for establishing eligibility for subsistence hunting in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park was motivated by concerns about population growth in local communities and its potential effects on conservation of park resources. Rogers details the legal framework guiding subsistence uses in national parks in Alaska, reviews management of subsistence hunting in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park from its establishment through June 1990, and analyzes subsistence harvest data for the park area. He also summarizes the views of local Native and non-Native subsistence users and of one representative of the conservation community, based on personal interviews conducted in 1989. Finally, Rogers presents a series of conclusions and recommendations concerning future management of subsistence in the park. One of Rogers' respondents noted that "Down in the Northway area a lot of people used to go up in the Chisana...with the park being established, people didn't understand the regulations so they just kinda (sic) quit going up there." This is the only new information presented regarding linkages of the upper Tanana communities to the park area.

**Rohn, Oscar. 1900a. *Copper River Exploring Expedition: An Expedition into the Mount Wrangell Region*. In *Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska*. Pp. 790-803. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

The Rohn party was charged with making a general topographic reconnaissance map of the Wrangell Mountains area and studying the geologic and mineral resources to the extent possible. Some travel routes in the Copper Basin are described, as are interactions of expedition members with Ahtna Athabascans. No reference is made to the neighboring upper Tanana Indians.

**\_\_\_\_\_ . 1900b. *Copper River Exploring Expedition: Trails and Routes*. In *Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska*. Pp. 780-784. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

Rohn describes trails in the area between Valdez and the Tanana River, including several in the Batzulnetas-Mentasta Lake –Nabesna area, the purpose being to identify travel routes that would facilitate investigation and development of mineral resources in the interior. Included are brief descriptions of some "old Indian trails" that connected Ahtna villages in the Ahtna-upper Tanana borderlands area.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1900c. **Report of Oscar Rohn on Exploration in Wrangele Mountain District. In *Alaska, 1899, Copper River Exploring Expedition*, Captain W.R. Abercrombie, ed. Pp. 105-130. Washington: Government Printing Office.**

In this report Rohn describes the geography and mineral resources of the Copper River Basin, occasionally referencing and adding to the observations of earlier explorers in the area. He notes that “Indians on the Nabesna [River] had bullets, knives, and arrow points made of native copper” obtained at four different places including a tributary of the White River and farther west on the headwaters of the Tanana and the Nabesna rivers. As he does in his other expedition reports, Rohn also describes the routes traveled, many of which were Indian trails. Rohn persuaded Indians encountered on the Nabesna River to guide the expedition to Batzulnetas.

**Rooth, Anna Birgitta. 1971. *The Alaska Expedition 1966. Myths, Customs, and Beliefs among the Athabaskan Indians and the Eskimos of Northern Alaska*. Lund, Sweden: CWK Gleerup (Acta Universitatis Lundensis, Sectio I:14).**

Rooth’s investigation of creation myths and other myths in Alaska included interviews with elder Athabascans in Dot Lake, Tanacross, Northway, Eagle, and Copper Center. Two of the stories recounted by informants in Tanacross (p.239) and Northway (p.316) make reference to the Copper River region. The interviews (and thus the stories) were recorded in English.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1976. ***The Importance of Storytelling: A Study Based on Field Work in Northern Alaska*. Uppsala, Sweden: Almquist and Wiksell International.**

In a second publication based on her fieldwork in Alaska, Rooth synthesizes data from *The Importance of Storytelling* to describe the social and religious importance of storytelling for transmitting knowledge embedded in legends and myths in Alaska Natives cultures. Her key respondents included Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans.

**Ruppert, James, and John W. Bernet, eds. 2001. *Our Voices: Native Stories of Alaska and the Yukon*. Lincoln: University of Alaska Press.**

Included in this collection are several upper Tanana Athabaskan stories recounted by Mary Tyone (originally from Scottie Creek) and Gaither Paul (originally from Tanacross), and Upper Ahtna Athabaskan stories told by Katie and Fred John and Huston Sanford of Mentasta.

**Saleeby, Becky M. 2000. *The Quest for Gold: An Overview of the National Park Service Cultural Resources Mining Inventory and Monitoring Program*. National Park Service—Alaska Region, Research/Resource Management Report ARRCR/CRR-2000-37. Anchorage.**

Survey data recorded by the National Park Service in its Cultural Resources Mining Inventory and Monitoring Program between 1986 and 1996 are summarized in this report. Included is a chapter on the mining history of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in which connections between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans are briefly discussed.

**Sattler, Robert A., and Norman Alexander Easton. 2004. *Walter Goldschmidt in the Upper Tanana, 1946*. Paper presented at the Alaska Anthropological Association, 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, Whitehorse, Yukon.**

This paper discusses the 1946 land use and occupancy investigation conducted by Goldschmidt and BIA General Counsel Theodore Haas in the upper Tanana region. The authors apparently plan to assemble the corpus of the project findings (see Goldschmidt 1948) into a monograph and may use this material “in the review of the cultural environment for the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline.”

**Schwatka, Frederick. 1893. *A Summer in Alaska*. St. Louis, MO: J.W. Henry.**

In this narrative account, Schwatka describes his exploring expedition of the Yukon River. He references an overland trip taken by two white men (probably the traders Harper and Bates) and their Indian packers from Belle Isle near Eagle to some point on the Tanana River, where they constructed a “bull-boat” of moose hide and drifted to the mouth. This probably was the first documented exploration of the upper Tanana region by white men. Schwatka says that Mr. Bates made a map and took notes of the expedition, but their whereabouts are unknown.

**Shinkwin, Anne D. 1979. *Dakah Denin’s Village and the Dixthada Site: A Contribution to Northern Athapaskan Prehistory*. *National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper No. 91*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.**

Archaeological remains from two late prehistoric/early historic sites in east central Alaska are described in this report: Dakah Denin’s village site on the Copper River, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Ahtna village; and the Dixthada site near Mansfield Lake in the upper Tanana valley, which has both late prehistoric and later prehistoric/early historic components, the most recent of which represents upper Tanana Athabascan occupation. Similarities in these two sites are identified and include shared copper toolmaking and subsistence technologies and a shared adaptive strategy to the subarctic boreal forest environment. General archaeological, historical, and ethnographic data for the Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans are included in the presentation.

Andrews (1977, Vol. II:464) described Dixthada as “one of the most significant settlements of the upper Tanana Indians. The site is known to have been occupied as early as 400 B.C., later in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century....The site has also provided much valuable information on the earlier life ways of the people at various times during the last 2300 years and plays a significant role in the oral traditions of the people today who regard the site as their ancestors’ home.”

**\_\_\_\_\_, and Jean S. Aigner. 1979. *Historic and Prehistoric Land Use in the Upper Tanana Valley: Report on the Archaeological Survey along the Alaska Highway Pipeline from Delta Junction to the Yukon Border*. Report submitted to Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company. Anthropology Program, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.**

The authors conducted a cultural resource assessment of the proposed gas pipeline alignment between Delta Junction and the Canadian border for the Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company. This assessment included a literature review and field survey in most of the alignment area. No archaeological sites were discovered in the alignment but 216 sites were identified in the general survey area, 140 of which were categorized as post-contact sites. This report summarizes the results of the alignment survey and presents information on traditional upper Tanana Athabascan settlement and land use patterns. The scope of this project precluded any examination of ties

between the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans, but the report is an informative overview of upper Tanana prehistory as of the late 1970s.

\_\_\_\_\_, **Jean Aigner, and Elizabeth Andrews. 1980. Land Use Patterns in the Upper Tanana Valley, Alaska. *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska* 19(21):43-53.**

This article summarizes a literature review on archaeological and historic sites in the Tanana Valley assembled as background for an archaeological survey conducted during planning for the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, a portion of which would have run parallel to the Alaska Highway through the heart of the upper Tanana region. The available data appear to support the authors' hypothesis that settlement patterns in the area (1) were controlled by the utility of maintaining centrally placed semi-permanent settlements in the lowlands and (2) that these settlements were situated to minimize travel distance and time to other major resources.

**Siegel, Lenny. 2000. Alaska's Interior Deserves Improved Cleanup Programs. *Citizens' Report on the Military and the Environment* 7(5).**

The author summarizes his August 2000 trip to visit military contamination sites in the upper Tanana region. He identifies problems and recommends steps for taking corrective action.

**Simeone, William E. 1981. *The Episcopal Church in Alaska: A Catalogue of Photographs from the Archives and Historical Collections of the Episcopal Church*. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission.**

Funded by an Alaska Historical Commission grant, Simeone cataloged the Alaska photograph collection at the Episcopal Church Archives in Austin, Texas. Most of the photographs were taken between 1900 and 1930, many of which are not attributed to a specific photographer. The photographs are classified either as ethnographic or historic. Included in the collection are photos of upper Tanana Athabascans from Tanacross and Tetlin, many of which were published in the Alaska Churchman, as well as other images of the greater upper Tanana region.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1982. *A History of Alaskan Athapaskans*. Published for the Alaska Historical Commission, Anchorage.**

Subtitled "A History of Alaskan Athapaskans including a description of Athapaskan culture and a historical narrative, 1785-1971," this monograph was designed for use in the Alaska History Textbook project. It discusses the major historical events affecting Northern Athabascans from the time of contact to passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Key elements of Athabaskan culture in Alaska are described as they existed in the early or middle 19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by a narrative discussing key events in Athabaskan post-contact history. The content is derived primarily from secondary sources but is a useful general reference. Sections addressing the upper Tanana and Ahtna Athabascans benefit from Simeone's familiarity with those areas of the state.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1983. The Alaskan Athapaskan Chief's Coat. *American Indian Art Magazine* 8(2): 64-69.**

Chief's coats were open front jackets that combined elements of Athabaskan and European construction, decoration, and design, and are first referenced in the literature in the mid-1800s. This article describes chief's coats and includes several photographs depicting Tanana Athabascans wearing them. The author says these coats offered a way for people to display their

wealth after European clothing replaced highly decorative skin shirts and pants, but still met the Indian's ideas of aesthetics, fashion, and practicality.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1992. **Fifty Years Later: Alaska Native People and the Highway.** In *Alaska or Bust: Promise of the Road North*. Terrance M. Cole, Jane G. Haigh, Lael Morgan, and William E. Simeone, contributors. Pp. 40-55. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Museum.

This is one of several articles assembled in a booklet for the exhibition commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of construction of the Alaska Highway. As a backdrop to outlining the effects of this massive wartime project on the upper Tanana Athabascans, Simeone summarizes their traditional seasonal round and the changes they experienced after traders and missionaries arrived in the region. The Alaska Highway led to the demise of remote villages, provided wage employment opportunities, and "created a set of new social relationships in which Indians and Whites became alienated from one another, inhabiting different worlds." Excerpts from three Native men who either were boys or young men at the time the road was built are included in this article.

A sound recording made by Simeone in conjunction with this project, "50 Years Later: Alaska's Native Peoples and the Highway," is on file at the Oral History Program in the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. (H95-89-03 parts 1 and 2).

\_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *Rifles, Blankets, and Beads: Identity, History and the Northern Athapaskan Potlatch*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

The history and culture of the upper Tanana Athabascans in Tanacross provide a backdrop for this detailed examination of the potlatch ceremony, which Simeone describes as "the most significant cultural event in the life of the Tanacross people." It complements and builds on the earlier ethnographic work of McKennan and Guédon in the upper Tanana region. Discussion of linkages between the Tanacross and Ahtna Athabascans focuses on subsistence and ceremonial activities and kinship ties. Simeone collected most of the data for this book primarily in 1986-87, but his field research and observations in the region date back to 1971.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1998. **The Northern Athapaskan Potlatch in East-Central Alaska.** *Arctic Anthropology* 35(2):113-125.

Changes in the Athapaskan potlatch as practiced in east-central Alaska between 1900 and 1930 are described in this article, based primarily on an analysis of the recorded observations of five individuals who attended or heard about potlatches held in Tanana River and upper Copper River villages between 1912 and 1930. Instead of signaling a break with tradition, Simeone believes the observed changes to the potlatch "reflect an enhancement of the ceremony within the parameters of a coherent traditional system of meaning" and were the result of a process in which Native people actively responded to changes in their social and economic environment.

\_\_\_\_\_, and James W. VanStone. 1986. "And He Was Beautiful": Contemporary Athapaskan Material Culture in the Collections of Field Museum of Natural History. *Fieldiana Anthropology, New Series No. 10, Publication 1371*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History.

In 1981-82, the Field Museum of Natural History acquired a collection of 65 Athapaskan craft items made by residents of several Interior Alaska villages including Tanacross, Tetlin, Dot Lake, and Northway. This monograph describes and illustrates the collection, which includes clothing,

hunting tools, and ceremonial equipment. Some ethnographic background information is presented, along with a description of the contemporary potlatch.

**Simon, Jim. 2001. The History of U.S. Military and Athabascan Indian Interactions in Interior Alaska during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In *The Tanana Chiefs Conference's Tribal Environmental Restoration Program's (TERP) 1999 Final Report on Military Impacts to Tribes in Interior Alaska*. Pp. 244-257. Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

This document is a research proposal to conduct oral history interviews concerning Alaska Native - US military interactions in interior Alaska. The proposed study was part of a larger effort to address military impacts to Native lands addressed in the TERP report, and includes limited information for the upper Tanana region.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Carol Gelvin-Reymiller. 2002. *ALCANGO (Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline) Tok Terminal Traditional Cultural Property Evaluation Report*. Prepared for US Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, Anchorage. Fairbanks, Alaska: Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc., Community and Natural Resources, Department of Defense Office.

In 2000, the Native Village of Tanacross requested a halt to environmental restoration activities at the ALCANGO Tok Terminal of the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline, pending compliance with Tribal consultation mandates and the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act. The US Army Alaska responded in 2001 by funding the Tanana Chiefs Conference to conduct a Traditional Cultural Property assessment of the Tok Terminal and its associated installation lands. Archaeological, documentary, and oral sources of information were consulted, and 14 residents of Tanacross were interviewed regarding their knowledge of Six Mile Hill or the Tok Terminal itself. The study found that the property, known as *Taiy Tsadlh* in Tanacross Athapaskan, is culturally and historically significant in four ways: It is an ancestral habitation site; it is a unique geologic and topographic feature that is considered sacred; it is associated with a shamanic or "medicine" landscape; and it was a hallowed subsistence site for snaring moose and caribou in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (cooperation in using this site sometimes extended to people from Mentasta and Nabesna). The authors concluded that *Taiy Tsadlh* meets the eligibility requirements for inclusion in the National Register as a Traditional Cultural Property because of its cultural significance.

**Skarland, Ivar. 1956. Upper Tanana Revisited. In *Science in Alaska. Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> Science Conference 1955*. Pp. 152-153. College, Alaska.**

This paper was not available for review.

**Skarland, Ivar, Papers, 1933-1964. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This collection has correspondence (1933-1964), photographs and field books (1934-1947) relating to Skarland's anthropological expeditions and travels throughout Alaska. There are also reports by Skarland and others on anthropological subjects; a resource file relating to course work in various fields; a log; a photographic file; and miscellaneous materials. Included in Box 1 is correspondence with "Andrew Isaacs," which was not reviewed. Box 16 contains lecture notes on Alaska Natives and may reference the upper Tanana Athabascans. Box 25 includes photographs of Healy Forks and Healy River.

**Smelcer, John E. 1997. *In the Shadows of Mountains: Ahtna Stories from the Copper River*. Glennallen, Alaska: The Ahtna Heritage Foundation.**

Smelcer collected and edited the stories in this collection to help preserve the Ahtna language, myths and tales, and to revive interest in Ahtna traditions. Several stories are Ahtna accounts of myths that also are part of the traditions of other Alaska Native groups (e.g., “The Blind Man and the Loon” is a common Alaska Native myth). In discussing the story, “Old Man and Grizzly,” Smelcer reports having heard a similar account told by Tanacross people and suggests that it was originally an Ahtna story. He goes on to say that, through intermarriage, many Native people in the Tanacross area are of Ahtna descent.

**Solomon, Irene. 1994 (1997), *Tanacross Athabaskan Language Lessons*. Joint publication of the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the Yukon Native Language Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada.**

This is a booklet of language lessons based on seasonal themes and includes a cassette tape.

**Sommers, Roy E. 1953. *Tanacross Trails*. *Alaska Churchman* 43(1):6-10.**

The Reverend Sommers reminisces about his trips to Tanacross and Tetlin in the early 1950s.

**Stern, Richard O. 1979. *Nabesna/Chisana Rivers—Interviews with Ted Lowell*. On file at the Division of Forest, Land, and Water Management, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage.**

Richard Stern and Terrence Cole conducted tape-recorded interviews with Ted Lowell in February 1979, focusing on his experiences as an employee of the trader John Hajdukovich (1929-1935), the operation of trading posts in the upper Tanana region, and navigability of the Nabesna and Chisana rivers. Stern prepared this file memo to summarize key points recorded in these interviews. Limited information is presented about the upper Tanana Athabascans. Cole used some of the navigability information in his report cited above (Cole 1979).

**Stirling, Dale. 1982. *Contemporary Uses of Lakes in the Northway Region of Alaska*. Division of Research and Development, Policy Research and Land Entitlement, Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage.**

Stirling wrote this report to provide background information for a navigability case the State of Alaska anticipated filing in U.S. District Court. It also was designed to fill gaps in the Cole (1979) report cited above by adding ethnographic information on historic uses of lakes in the Northway area. Interviews conducted with a few (and mostly non-Native) Tok and Northway residents to document contemporary uses of selected lakes provide the only relevant data not available in other publications. A list of historic sites in the Northway area reported in Andrews (1977) is included as an appendix.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1985a. *History of the Kechumstuk Winter Trail, Upper Tanana Region, Alaska*. Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land and Water Management, State Interest Determinations. Anchorage.**

This short report presents a general historical overview of the Ketchumstuk area and describes development and use of the Ketchumstuk Winter Trail. The area involved encompasses the section of the WAMCATS telegraph line between Ketchumstuk and Joseph Village on the

Middle Fork of the Fortymile River. Reference is made to caribou hunting and caribou fences near Ketchumstuk and that the area that “was home to the Tanana Indians.” Maps depicting relevant sections of the WAMCATS route are included.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1985b. *History of the Chistochina-Eagle, Chistochina-Eagle Spur, and Fortymile-Lillywig Creek Trails, Fortymile River Region, Alaska.* Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land and Water Management, State Interest Determinations. Anchorage.**

The three trails described in this report generally lie within the Fortymile River district, where the first gold rush in Alaska occurred in 1886. The Chistochina-Eagle Trail was originally part of the WAMCATS route constructed in 1901-02, while the Chistochina-Eagle Spur Trail dates back to 1921, when the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) conducted a reconnaissance for a trail from Chistochina to Eagle. The Fortymile-Lillywig Trail originated as a sled road built by the ARC in 1927 to facilitate access to quartz prospects.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1985c. *Historic Uses of the White River, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.* Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land and Water Management, State Interest Determinations. Anchorage.**

This publication was not available for review.

**Stratton, Lee, and Susan Georgette. 1984. *Use of Fish and Game by Communities in the Copper River Basin, Alaska: A Report on a 1983 Household Survey.* Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence Technical Paper No. 107. Anchorage.**

This report presents socioeconomic and historical information for communities in the Copper River Basin and describes resource harvest and use patterns in these communities for the period June 1982 to May 1983. Among the communities described are those in the “Upper Copper River Subregion,” which lies in the upper Tanana-Ahtna borderlands area: Chistochina, Slana, Nabesna Road, and Mentasta. Most of the pertinent historical information is derived from secondary sources, but some of the new resource harvest information affirms the ties between people and communities in the upper Tanana region and Copper River Basin.

**Strong, B. Stephen. 1972. *An Economic History of the Athabaskan Indians of the Upper Copper River, Alaska, with Special Reference to the Village of Mentasta Lake.* M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.**

Strong tested three hypotheses in fieldwork conducted in Mentasta during the summer of 1971, and presented the findings in this thesis, which also served as the foundation for his doctoral dissertation (Strong 1976): (1) Economic and social change among the Ahtna Athabascans in this area resulted from the influences of the larger white society; (2) the specific causal nexus of change was the introduction of commodity production; and (3) specific forms of commodity production and commodity relations give rise to specific economic stages. The historical and ethnographic background information presented for Ahtna Indians in the Mentasta-Batzulnetas-Slana-Suslota area and discussion of their ties to the neighboring upper Tanana Athabascans enhances our understanding of the nature and importance of these relationships.



\_\_\_\_\_. 1976. *Historical Sequence of the Patterns of Production of the Ahtna Athabascan Indians of the Upper Copper Valley, Alaska: the Development of Capitalism in Alaska*. Ph.D. Dissertation in Anthropology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.

In his doctoral dissertation, Strong expands on his M.A. thesis and traces the economic history of Ahtna Athabascans in the Upper Copper River Valley from the 1700s to 1974. Both pre-contact and contemporary subsistence patterns are described. Reference is made to Ahtna affiliations and interactions with their upper Tanana neighbors, including situations in which the Ahtna harvested resources in the upper Tanana region and the upper Tanana procured some resources in Ahtna territory.

**Stuck, Hudson. n.d. *Hudson Stuck Papers, 1902-1920*. Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This archival collection consists of manuscripts of three of Stuck's books and his 1912-13 diary concerning his ascent of Mt. McKinley. It contains no information about the upper Tanana region not available in his published works.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1913. **A Flying Visit to the Tanana Crossing.** *Alaska Churchman* 7(3):83-86.

Stuck describes his trip from Fairbanks to Tanana Crossing that began in late February. He references "an unusually protracted potlatch" held the previous December, "attended by detachments from Mantasta (sic), Tetlin, Ketchumstock (sic), and even Moosehide, in honor of the memory of the local chief who died the previous Summer...."

\_\_\_\_\_. 1914. ***Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled: A Narrative of Winter Travel in Interior Alaska***. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The renowned Episcopal missionary describes a series of dogsled trips in interior Alaska. In 1910 and accompanied by Arthur Wright, Stuck traveled east from Fairbanks to Healy Lake and Tanana Crossing, then north to Eagle, and west to Circle City and Fort Yukon. The purpose of visiting the upper Tanana Indians was to inquire "into their condition and into the desirability of establishing a post among them." He concluded that Tanana Crossing was a good location for a mission, being "a central spot for the Indians of this region" and two days journey from Tetlin, Mentasta and Ketchumstuk. Tanana Crossing was then a WAMCATS telegraph station and the Indians who eventually relocated there had resided at the "picturesque" Lake Mansfield. Stuck ministered to 15 Indians at Lone (Long?) Cabin and also baptized five children on this trip. He encountered 40 residents of Ketchumstuk on the trail between that village and Chicken Creek, and lamented the detrimental influences of white contact on them.

**Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. 2001. *The Tanana Chief Conference's Tribal Environmental Restoration Program's (TERP) 1999 Final Report on Military Impacts to Tribes in Interior Alaska***. Prepared by Jim Simon et al. Fairbanks, Alaska.

The Tribal Environmental Restoration Program was designed facilitate the mitigation of environmental impacts to certain Native lands resulting from US military/Department of Defense activities in interior Alaska, and to ensure the meaningful participation of tribes in this process. This report summarizes the activities of the Tanana Chiefs Conference in 1999 and presents relevant background information. Reports from village councils in the upper Tanana region describe their activities and identify military sites near their communities. (Also see Simon 2001)

**Tatum, R.G. 1913. My Stay at Saint Timothy's. *Alaska Churchman* 7(3):81-83.**

Tatum and his companions spent 25 days traveling from Fairbanks to Tanana Crossing in September 1912 to establish St. Timothy's Episcopal Mission in an abandoned trading post. Tatum describes the challenges of repairing cabins and traveling from Tanana Crossing to George Creek during the winter months. Reference is made to an abandoned village site near George Creek and to the spruce tree shelters the inhabitants had occupied.

**Thomas, Kenny, Sr. 2005. *Crow is My Boss*. Craig Mishler, ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.**

Over a three-year period, Mishler interviewed Kenny Thomas, Sr., an Athabascan elder from Tanacross, about his life experiences and assembled them in this life history presented as a dialogue between the two. Thomas has ties to the Copper River area through his mother, who came from Batzulnetas. He recounts many details about his life and upper Tanana Athabascan traditions. This biography offers important insights into the 20<sup>th</sup> century transitions occurring in the upper Tanana region.

**Tintinger, Opal. 1945. Swiftly Flows the Tanana. *Alaska Sportsman* 11(8):18-20, 23-24.**

Tintinger and her family lived across the river from old Tanacross for 18 months beginning in December 1941, where her husband worked for Pan American Airways. She describes the local wildlife and scenery and discusses construction of the airfield at Tanacross. This article focuses on the life of Ole Frederickson, who arrived in Alaska in 1901 and while enroute to the Chisana gold fields in 1913 stopped in Tanacross and decided to remain there. Little reference is made to the Native people at Tanacross, but this short article is one of the few published sources of information for this area in the 1940s.

**Townsend, Peggy Jean, Patricia Roppel, and Art Peterson, eds. 1999. *The Alaska Gold Rush Letters and Photographs of Leroy Stewart Townsend, 1898-1899*. Auke Bay, Alaska: Klondike Research.**

The original letters and photographs of Leroy Townsend, who traveled north to seek gold in the Copper River valley in 1898-99, are reprinted in this book and supplemented with historical information from other documented sources. Townsend spoke favorably of the Ahtna Indians he employed as guides or met on his trip. Although no reference is made to the upper Tanana Indians, this book includes several rarely seen photographs that portray Ahtna people and culture.

**Tyone, Mary. 1996. *Ttheek'ädn Ut'iin Yaaniida' Oonign'*: *Old-time Stories of the Scottie Creek People*. Transcribed and edited by James Kari. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Mary Tyone was born in 1935 at Scottie Creek to Bell and Laura John, while her grandmother and her husband's grandmother both were from *Taaghael*, a village below Chitina on the Copper River. This book is a collection of oral narratives she recorded in the Upper Tanana language that convey important cultural information and traditional knowledge that guided upper Tanana Athabascan life in the past.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2003. *Final Pogo Gold Mine Environmental Impact Statement, Delta, Alaska*. Vols. I & II. Seattle, Washington: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10, Office of Water, NPDES Permits Unit.**

This EIS describes the proposed development of the underground Pogo Mine and eventual production of 375,000 ounces of gold annually at the site located 38 miles east of Delta Junction and about the same distance north of Healy Lake. Included in the EIS is a discussion of historic and contemporary subsistence resource use patterns by “Upper Tanana River Athabaskans” in the project area—namely, residents of Healy Lake and persons living in other communities stretching from Northway to Fairbanks who have kinship ties to Healy Lake residents. This information is condensed from a 2002 background report prepared by Stephen R. Braund and Associates for the EPA entitled, *Subsistence Uses of the Upper Tanana River Valley: Historical and Contemporary Patterns*, and from workshops conducted by Braund and coordinated by the Healy Lake Village Council. The EPA apparently agreed to withhold this report from the public because it contains “sensitive Tribal information” of concern to the Healy Lake Traditional Council, despite the use of public funds for the project. Consequently, Braund cannot release a copy of his report to the public. The EIS describes salmon fishing in the Copper and Chistochina rivers as a seasonal activity but makes no other reference to links between the upper Tanana Athabascans and the Ahtna people in the Copper River Basin.

**University of Alaska Fairbanks. n.d. Oral History Program, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library.**

The Oral History Program was established in 1981 to collect, preserve, and provide access to audio and video recordings concerning Alaska history and the people who have contributed to its heritage. The collection includes recordings made with upper Tanana people from Dot Lake, Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross, and Tetlin. Topics range from recitation of word lists in Athabascan and English, traditional stories, life histories, and recordings of interviews conducted for a study of the subsistence uses of whitefish. There are restrictions on how some of the materials can be used.

**VanStone, James W. 1974. *Athapaskan Adaptations*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.**

This book is designed as an introduction to Northern Athabascan ethnography, including both an overview of pre-European contact culture and a brief examination of the post-contact period. It draws upon more detailed ethnographies and the author’s own fieldwork.

**Villers, Larry. 1967. *Let’s Read about Tetlin*. Unpublished booklet produced by the Tetlin BIA School, Tetlin, Alaska.**

Stories and pictures presented in this short booklet were class projects designed by the author for elementary students in grades 2-8 at the Tetlin BIA School. The booklet provides a glimpse at life in Tetlin in the mid-1960s.

**Vitt, Ramon B. 1971. *Hunting Practices of the Upper Tanana Athapaskans*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis in Anthropology, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

Based on library research and fieldwork conducted in 1969-70, Vitt set out to reconstruct the upper Tanana Athabascan “hunting culture” as it existed at the time of historic contact and to document subsequent changes that had occurred through 1970. Native elders in Tanacross, Northway, and Mentasta were key respondents, but residents of Dot Lake, Tetlin, Last Tetlin, and Nabesna Village also were interviewed. Guédon and Pitts also were conducting research in the

upper Tanana region at the same time and shared data, according to Vitt. This is an informative thesis but focuses on reconstructing upper Tanana Athabascan culture of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as recalled by Vitt's key respondents. Consequently, we learn little about the contemporary culture as it existed in 1970. Vitt opines that the traditional hunting culture had pretty much disappeared, fewer young men were active harvesters, and reliance had grown on jobs and government support. He concludes that the upper Tanana Athabascans had "abandoned their individuality and their independence for dependence on the non-native and his economic-based world and today they exist between two cultures, not really belonging to either one" (p.188).

**Walkley, Richard N. 1954. *The Natives Call it Tetlin – I Call It Wonderful. Alaska Churchman* 49(4):15-19.**

Walkley spent the summer of 1954 as an Episcopal missionary in Tetlin and in this short article comments on his experiences and the people there. A picture of the Titus David family at summer camp is included.

**Walle, Dennis F. 1985. *Guide to the Fred Wildon Fickett Collection. Anchorage: University of Alaska, Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center.***

This guide was produced to accompany the microfiche publication of the Fickett Collection at the University of Alaska Anchorage Archives. Fickett served in the US Army and was stationed in Alaska from 1882 to 1885. He participated in the Alaska exploratory expedition under the command of Lt. Henry T. Allen. This collection contains papers and photographs from military career in and outside of Alaska. Of particular interest are Fickett's diaries and other materials associated with the Allen Expedition in the Copper River and upper Tanana regions. However, the collection contains little information pertinent to this project.

**Wayland, Russell G. 1940. *Geology of the Nutzotin Mountains. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin* 933-B:103-199. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office.**

Other than describing a few travel routes and trails in and to the Nutzotin Mountain study area, including "an old Indian trail down the south bank of the Nabesna Rive," this geological survey report contains minimal information about Native people there.

**Wells, E. Hazard. 1974. *Down the Yukon and Up the Fortymile. Alaska Journal* 4(4):205-213.**

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper sponsored an expedition to Alaska in 1890 and then published Wells' account of the trip in weekly installments. The Alaska Journal published abridged versions of these accounts, two of which describe travel in the upper Tanana region. On this stage of the trip, the expedition descended the Yukon River to the Fortymile Post inside the Canadian border, and then ascended the Fortymile River. This installment describes the experiences of the party while traveling through the Fortymile region. It includes a short description of Ketchumstuk, whose residents were away fishing on the Tanana River and, much to the chagrin of Wells, were unavailable to be hired as packers for the expedition. The party intended to march overland to the Tanana River, hike to the Copper River headwaters, and raft down the Copper River to the coast.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1975. **Exploring the Tanana River Region.** *Alaska Journal* 5(1):41-48.

This account of the Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper Expedition picks up where the previous installment left off, with the expedition arriving at Mansfield and continuing on to the Tanana River, and then descending the Tanana to its mouth. Very little information about the Athabascan inhabitants of the region is presented.

**West, Constance. 1973. *An inventory of trails and habitation sites in the Ahtna region.* Xerox of report sponsored by the Humanities Forum of Anchorage, Alaska.**

In 1973, the Humanities Forum of Anchorage sponsored a project to assemble information on sites of historic and prehistoric occupation in the Ahtna region. Data were derived primarily from the unpublished fieldnotes of Frederica de Laguna and from tapes and transcripts of interviews with Ahtna elders. The 138 documented sites and trails are identified on USGS maps (1:250K scale), which were not included with the copy of the report used for this review. A few of the trails discussed in the report extend from the Copper Basin to the upper Tanana region, including a trail running from Chitina to Batzulnetas then continuing on to Suslota, Tetlin, and eventually to Dawson.

**Wheeler, Polly. 1992. *Customary and Traditional Use of Nelchina Caribou by Upper Tanana Athabaskans.* Fairbanks, Alaska: Tanana Chiefs Conference, Wildlife and Parks.**

Wheeler prepared this paper to support a "Petition for Reconsideration of Customary and Traditional Use Determination" submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board by the Tanana Chiefs Conference. The petition requested that the board find that "the Upper Tanana villages of Tetlin, Northway, Tanacross, Dot Lake, Eagle, and Healy Lake have customarily and traditionally used the Nelchina Caribou Herd." Relying on secondary sources, Wheeler describes the historic and contemporary harvest and use of caribou by upper Tanana communities.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1997. ***Customary and Traditional Use of Caribou in Units 11, 12, and 13.* Unpublished paper prepared for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, Anchorage, Alaska.**

This paper was the basis of a staff analysis for several proposals submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board seeking to modify the existing customary and traditional use (C&T) findings for caribou in Game Management Units 11, 12, and 13. Wheeler summarizes the existing federal C&T findings and regulations for caribou in these three units and then analyzes the eight factors that exemplify C&T use. The presentation relies on secondary source materials, including her co-authored paper on socioeconomic integration (see below), and describes the numerous existing ties between the Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans residing in the three units.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Matt Ganley. 1991. ***Socioeconomic Integration of Alaskan Athabaskans.* Unpublished report prepared for the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska.**

Legal issues surrounding changes in the configuration of Alaska Legislative districts proposed by the Governor as part of the reapportionment process, prompted preparation of a report that addresses the relative socioeconomic integration of Inupiat, Yup'ik and Athabascan areas. As an addendum to the larger report, this paper focuses on Interior Alaska Athabascans and looks specifically at the socioeconomic, political, and cultural integration of the Ahtna and upper Tanana Athabascans. Historical, genealogical, and kinship data are used to support the position that these two groups have high degrees of sociopolitical and socioeconomic integration.

**Workman, William B. 1977. Ahtna Archaeology: A Preliminary Statement. In *Problems in the Prehistory of the North American Subarctic: The Athapaskan Question*, J.W. Helmer, S. Van Dyke, and F.J. Kense, eds. Pp. 22-39. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Archaeological Association, Department of Archaeology, University of Calgary.**

This synopsis of archaeological investigations and findings in Ahtna territory as of the mid-1970s confirms the long-term presence of human habitation there and contains useful albeit dated background information. Workman refers to the close ties of the Ahtna with neighboring upper Tanana and Dena'ina Athabascans and notes that "substantial interchange of personnel occurred between the three groups."

**Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. 1998. *Environmental Assessment: Add the Villages of Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross, and Dot Lake to the Resident Zone for Wrangell St. Elias National Park*. National Park Service, Copper Center, Alaska.**

In response to hunting plan recommendations adopted by the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission, the National Park Service prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate the consequences of adding four new communities to the park resident zone. This is the first of two EAs and summarizes the information compiled to support the request that Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross, and Dot Lake be added to the resident zone.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1999a. *Information Regarding the Addition of Healy Lake as a Resident Zone Community for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park*. Prepared for the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission April 1999. National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.**

This report represents an initial response by the National Park Service to the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission's hunting plan recommendation requesting that Healy Lake be added to the park resident zone. It is a synthesis of information derived from public testimony, oral interviews with residents of Healy Lake and other area communities, and written sources.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1999b. *Environmental Assessment: Add the Village of Healy Lake to the Resident Zone for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park*. National Park Service, Copper Center, Alaska.**

In response to hunting plan recommendations adopted by the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission, the National Park Service prepared two environmental assessments (EA) in the late 1990s to evaluate the consequences of adding new communities to the park resident zone. This was the second of two EAs and summarizes information assembled to support the request that the community of Healy Lake be added to the resident zone. A chronology of events leading to preparation of this environmental assessment is included.

**Wright, Arthur. 1925. Saint Timothy's Mission at Tanana Crossing, Alaska. *Spirit of Missions* 90(3):172-173.**

This document was not available for review.

**\_\_\_\_\_. 1926. The Potlatch—What Is It? *Alaska Churchman* 20(1):18-22.**

Reverend Wright describes the Athabascan potlatch, but his main purpose apparently is to disparage this traditional ceremony and urge its abolishment. He cites a resolution adopted by the

Tanacross Village Council, “whereby no potlatches are to be held in this village from October to June in the future, and no invitations are to be accepted to attend potlatches....”

**Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc. 1966. T’OOD[HT’AIY AANDEEGN’ SUU’MARK UTNEETL’ADN HAA’ (The Gospel According to Mark, Upper Tanana and Today’s English Version). Paul Milanowski and Donald Joe, co-translators. New York: American Bible Society.**

This is a version of the bible in the Upper Tanana language.

**Yarber, Yvonne, and Curt Madison, eds. 1987. *Walter Northway*. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.**

This biographical sketch of a prominent upper Tanana Athabascan elder from Northway is primarily a series of transcriptions from tape recordings the editors made in the 1980s with Mr. Northway and family members. Of particular interest is the brief discussion of kinship ties with Ahtna people in the Copper River Basin.

\_\_\_\_\_. **1988. *Andrew Isaac*. Central Alaska Curriculum Consortium, Fairbanks.** This short autobiography is based primarily on interviews conducted by the editors with Chief Andrew Isaac in 1983 and 1985. It conveys in his words important cultural information about the role of the traditional upper Tanana Athabascan chief during a transitional period. Among the topics discussed are his childhood, subsistence activities, and the potlatch ceremony. Many of the practices described by Chief Isaac are no longer used and he does not make reference to his relationships and interactions with the Ahtna Indians. Little is said about his activities in his capacity as the Traditional Chief of the Doyon region.

**Yukon Native Language Centre, nd. *Publications. 2005-2007*. Yukon College, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. Last accessed on the Internet on May 26, 2006, at: [www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/ynlc/catalog/ynclpub2005](http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/ynlc/catalog/ynclpub2005)**

The Yukon Native Language Centre documents Yukon Native languages, trains language instructors, and produces curriculum and training materials. This list of publications includes publications and CDs concerning the Upper Tanana Athapaskan language.

**Zarnke, Randy. 2004. *Dean Wilson: “The Patriarch of Alaska Trappers.” (Part I)*. *Fur Taker Magazine* 40(6):16-17.**

Zarnke, a retired Alaska Department of Fish and Game veterinarian, began recording oral history interviews with veteran Alaska trappers and hunters in 1996 in conjunction with the Alaska Trappers Association and the Hunter Heritage Foundation of Alaska. This short article is excerpted from a longer interview with Dean Wilson (see Alaska Trappers Association 1999), who was raised in Northway and later moved to Copper Center. Wilson discusses boyhood activities in Northway, noting in particular his admiration of Chief Walter Northway (who is described as a talented hunter and teacher) and Walter’s younger brother Steven.