

REVIEW

AN ALEUTIAN ETHNOGRAPHY

*By Lucien M. Turner, edited by Raymond L. Hudson, 2008. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks
Hardback, 242 pages, 58 figures and maps, 16 color plates, 4 tables, 2 appendices, index. ISBN 978-1-60223-028-6*

Reviewed by Debra G. Corbett

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After the purchase of Alaska by the U.S., American military and government scientists and explorers flocked north to take stock of the exotic new territory. Among the larger and better-known expeditions are those of Lt. Frederick Schwatka (1883), Lt. Henry Allen (1885), and the Western Union Telegraph Expedition (1865–1867). The Smithsonian Institution under Spencer Baird sent naturalists on these expeditions to make collections and observations for the museum. These men included Robert Kennicott, William H. Dall, and Henry W. Elliott. At the same time the U.S. Signal Corps began collecting meteorological information in the territory. Manning these weather stations were naturalists recruited by the Smithsonian, including Edward W. Nelson and the mostly overlooked Lucien M. Turner.

Turner set up a meteorological station at St. Michael and manned it between 1874 and 1877. After a brief stay at the Smithsonian cataloging his natural history collections, he returned to Alaska. Until 1881 he lived and worked in the Aleutian Islands as a meteorologist for the Signal Corps. Over more than three years in the Aleutians, he spent almost eighteen months in Unalaska, four months on Atka, and eleven months on Attu. While on Atka and Attu he was a lone outsider, but he learned to speak Russian and Aleut and shared the daily lives of the villagers.

I was familiar with Turner's work from "Contributions to the Natural History of Alaska," published by the Signal Service in 1886. Although primarily concerned with the natural history of the Yukon Delta and Aleutian Islands, it contains numerous ethnographic tidbits. The details presented made me wish Turner had written an ethnography

to accompany his natural history. Sometime in the 1990s, I met Ray Hudson, who had discovered the unpublished Turner ethnography in the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian. Actually the manuscript was a "Descriptive Catalog" of the artifacts Turner excavated from prehistoric middens or acquired from his hosts. It is liberally sprinkled with ethnographic observations and Turner's thoughts and speculations on Aleutian culture and history. Hudson expressed an interest in publishing this manuscript, but the long, rambling account, obviously a very rough first draft, needed considerable editing.

After many years the manuscript is at last published. Hudson has done a wonderful job. He is a gifted writer, and his clear prose is enjoyable reading. He is completely familiar with Turner and with the Aleutian Islands and their people. He has organized Turner's manuscript by editing the sometimes rambling thoughts of the original into topical chapters. These are supplemented by information from Turner's published works, and together provide some of the most complete information available on specific aspects of nineteenth-century Aleut technology and life.

About one-fifth of the book is a biography of Lucien Turner. Dr. Lydia Black always stressed to her students the importance of understanding the background and biases of ethnographers and historians. Hudson does an outstanding job of bringing Lucien Turner to life. He also provides a valuable critique of Turner's work and compares it to the well-known works of Dall, Elliott, and Ivan Petroff. All in all, Turner comes off well in the comparisons. He is an honest and reliable observer and genuinely

liked and respected the people he lived with. Hudson lists several aspects of Turner's sojourn that make his work particularly valuable. He learned both Russian and Aleut and could communicate directly with the people. He also spent considerable time living, often as the lone white man, in isolated communities. His observations make clear he participated in the daily lives of the people. He spent more continuous time in the Aleutian Islands than did any of the other observers. Turner's work provides the only observations on life in the villages on Atka and Attu.

Ethnographies of the people of the Aleutians are rare. Ivan Veniaminov (Veniaminov 1984) wrote the most detailed and extensive. Although he included information on the Central Aleuts (Atkhans), his information mainly concerns the eastern Aleutian Islands and specifically Unalaska Island. Most generalizations about Aleut traditional culture since Veniaminov are based on his work. Later ethnographic information in Jochelson (1925, 1933), Lantis (1970), Laughlin (1980), and Liapunova (1987, 1996) are also strongly biased toward the eastern islands.

That said, Turner's work is not a complete or standard ethnography. He does not systematically describe the culture of the Aleuts of any community. Instead the work is a collection of observations on aspects of the people's lives. His observations are punctuated by explanatory comments, either offered up by his hosts or from his own speculations. It is not always possible to tell which. The result is a personal narrative with very human glimpses of both the Aleut people and Turner living with them.

After the introductory biography of Turner, the book opens with a brief description of the Aleutians, the Near Islands, and the existing communities. The next five chapters elaborate aspects of the material culture—houses, boats, clothing, weaving, and fire making. Some of this information is invaluable, for example the descriptions of gut sewing, preparation of bird skins for sewing, and fire making. Of particular interest for an archaeologist are his correlations of the tools excavated from a prehistoric site with these activities. Chapter 8 is a description of hunting tools and techniques, again correlating archaeological specimens with the activities. His archaeological collections included materials ranging from fully formed, well-executed objects to broken, incomplete, and crudely made or expedient examples. He also provides a brief account of the introduction of European items into the world of the Aleut.

Following the general Hunting chapter are chapters entitled Mammals, Birds, Fish and Invertebrates, and Plants. Again these are not complete and comprehensive accounts of hunting these animals. Instead aspects of the tools, technology, and especially the attitudes and beliefs of the people are described and discussed. Hudson supplements these sections with information from Turner's other work, especially the natural history. The chapter on mammals is limited almost entirely to whales. The all-too-brief account of Steller's sea cows is unique. Some of the information on birds, and on fish and invertebrates, is quite detailed and also not to be found elsewhere. Tucked into the text are bits of information on the preferences, opinions, and usefulness of species from the Aleut point of view. Turner gives full credit to his Aleut consultants for their knowledge and experience. He also includes women and children in his descriptions of community life, who are often missing from the other sources.

The last few chapters range more widely, from language and origins, politics, social relations, warfare, to slavery. None is complete and they leave only a garbled picture, but all offer fascinating glimpses of life in Aleutian villages in the nineteenth century. They also offer the perspective of the Aleuts themselves on aspects of their past and former beliefs. The weaknesses of Turner's work are most obvious in these chapters. Nevertheless they contain information that will fill gaps left by other ethnographers and result in a more complete picture of historic Aleut life.

In all, this is a welcome addition to the literature on the Aleutian Islands. It presents a variety of new information and is easy to read. It offers a personal glimpse of life in the islands in the late nineteenth century and almost uniquely lets the voices of the Aleut people peek through in a way most ethnographies, especially from that era, do not.

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REVIEW

2000 YEARS ON THE KING SALMON RIVER: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FOR UGA-052

By Brian W. Hoffman, 2009. Occasional Papers in Alaskan Field Archeology, no. 2. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Region, Branch of Regional Archeology, Anchorage.

Paperback, 133 pages, figures, photographs, tables, two appendices. NTIS order no. PB2009-111442.

Reviewed by Don E. Dumond

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The King Salmon River involved here (there are others of this name) heads at Mother Goose Lake on the central Alaska Peninsula and flows 60 km or so in traversing the 30 airline km to Ugashik Bay on the Bering Sea, where it empties alongside the Dog Salmon and Ugashik rivers that drain lands farther to the northeast. On the right bank of the King Salmon at roughly its midpoint, the site UGA-052 lies on a Native allotment that has been awaiting ownership transfer. As the author notes, the cultural geographic context is enough to make the position interesting—between the northern Alaska Peninsula (sociolinguistic Yupik), the Kodiak Island group (Koniag), and the Aleut zone to the southwest (Unangan).

From 2003 to 2008, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) located and mapped at least sixty-six major depressions on the site. Excavations reported by Hoffman include not only those by the BIA archaeologists between 2002 and 2004, but also results of a field school of Hamline University that he himself conducted in 2003. With full-color illustrations throughout, the publication is visually striking.

UGA-052 is divided spatially and culturally between two zones, the higher “inland” zone a few hundred meters from the river and the lower “river” zone on the King Salmon banks. The former, trenched and pitted by BIA archaeologists, included at least sixty surface features, depressions largely round or nearly so in discernible outline, and between 16 and 44 m in max-

imum visible dimension. The river area, on the other hand, included three depression complexes apparently representing multiroom houses, plus two (recent) square depressions and a round one, and was taken on by the Hamline field school.

The work of the two parties demonstrated an overall age and cultural separation: seven age determinations in the inland area ranged from 1530 ± 40 to 1720 ± 40 ^{14}C years (calibrated and estimated to date between AD 230 and 620), with artifacts indicating aspects of the Norton cultural horizon; from the river zone six determinations in evidently prehistoric multiroom houses range from 150 ± 40 to 530 ± 60 ^{14}C years (calibrated and estimated to date from AD 1300 to sometime before contact), with artifacts suggesting a recent Thule- or Koniag-affiliated occupation (the Thule-Koniag distinction in this period being uncertain). In addition, an apparent Norton-affiliated occupation outside one of the multiroom houses provided a ^{14}C age of 1280 ± 50 years, and a sample from the presumed floor of a multiroom house was aged at 1020 ± 70 ^{14}C years, suggesting a Norton contamination (whereas another from a hearth in the same room was among those in the Thule/Koniag range). Putting these together, the Norton-related occupation is presumed to date from about AD 250 to 850, heavier and earlier in the inland zone, slightly later and much less evident at the river bank, with Thule/Koniag occupation beginning around AD 1400 and lasting for several centuries but ending before the Russian period.

The mid-period of abandonment, from AD 850 to perhaps AD 1300, is marked by relatively massive tephra deposits indicative of heavy volcanic activity.

For both inland and river zones, careful tabulations are presented of stone artifacts and waste material. For the river zone, to which organic preservation was entirely limited, are also tabulated a few hard organic artifacts as well as faunal and floral remains, and observable wooden structural remains are mapped and discussed. The artifactual material from the two zones, plus the carbon dates, provide a general confirmation of findings reported by Winfield Henn (1978) from his work in the Ugashik River drainage, of a massive Norton-period occupation succeeded in late times by an occupation reminiscent of the so-called Thule period of the northern peninsula. The tabulations for UGA-052 are followed by discussions of activities apparently engaged in at the site and the possible functions as a settlement in the two periods. Finally, the presence of the unmistakable volcanic episode between the two occupations leads author Hoffman to suggest that the multiroom house occupants were colonists newly moving into an abandoned area, making use of some special artifact forms as they accommodated to a region with resources partly unfamiliar to them. Much of this discussion is stimulating, although for various reasons is not convincing in all respects.

A major weakness in the data is the modest size of the sample. This is, of course, a direct result of limited time spent on the site. In inland-zone excavations, BIA crews of five persons spent a total of twenty-two days in the two years of 2003 and 2004, testing thirteen depressions in total, of which the nine covered in this report (all of those receiving more than a 50 x 50-cm test pit) had a total of 32 m² exposed, yielding 127 stone implements and a somewhat greater number of potsherds. In 2003, the Hamline field-school crew of six spent thirty-six days (including days off?), clearing a total area of 38 m², from which they recovered only sixty-three nondebitage objects, largely of stone but including some matting and a few organic artifacts. One is thus inclined to skepticism in terms of some blanket conclusions. There are two of these in particular.

The first is that the absence of apparent remains of the transverse slate knife (*ulu*) in the two multiroom houses chiefly tested at the riverside can be taken to suggest that three bipolar chert or chalcedony cores found in the floor of one of the houses represent a previously unsuspected Thule-period technique for deriving flake implements

with which to butcher fish. At the edge of the same house, of course, were reportedly undisturbed Norton deposits productive of chipped stone. And yet this suggestion in regard to the possibility that hard quartzite stone was used for some cutting tasks during the Thule-related period of polished slate is worth further consideration, given that chips of similar material have been reported consistently in excavations of houses of the period on the northern Alaska Peninsula (although almost all of these are in areas with juxtaposed or stratified Norton-period remains). But in terms of the overall limited number of slate implements recovered from the river-zone houses at UGA-052, the absence of even the fairly common transverse knives seems understandable as sample limitation (for instance, only seven examples of identifiable projectile insert blades, usually so plentiful, are reported). That this sample absence of knife fragments, together with the just-possibly intrusive bipolar cores, is sufficient support for the colonial nature of the Thule-period occupation, in which people were unfamiliar with local resources and were trying something new, seems to stretch a doubtful point.

The second is that the Norton houses of the inland zone (none of which received more than a single trench) were predominantly round, without any indication of a side entry. This may, the author suggests, be a possible indication of Aleut-zone influence, an area where Unangan people were partial to more nearly round houses entered through the roof. In my own experience in the region, the surface indication of any semisubterranean house more than a few centuries old is bound to be round, and traces of shallow, sloping side entries to Norton houses are invisible. This is doubly the case where volcanic ash deposits of some depth postdate the occupation. One must therefore hope strongly that in future excavations of houses like those of the inland area of UGA-052, major efforts will be made to more carefully clear the houses themselves as features worthy of interest—and worth more than a trench.

Somewhat the same unhappiness can be extended to the excavations within the apparent confines of the multiroom structures. The expanded excavation areas in those depression complexes are mapped as much more than mere trenches, but the extensive artifact and waste-material distribution maps seem to say that the excavators never ventured outside their squares. No presumed articulations between rooms were fully explored; where tunnel connections between rooms were encountered, it was only the portions of them lying within the excavation square that were revealed, and where room edges are

located it is again only those within an excavation square. The square grid, of course, is an imposition on a site that permits easy and effective measurement of the locations of objects found in an unsquare natural world. But that the square itself should have such a strong hold on the archaeological conscience that the specific feature—the house, in this case—is not followed in its own right is lamentable. The house form, after all, is a primary artifact indicative of much that is social and worth exploration in all its dimensions. Thus, in the UGA-052 excavations we do not really know the complete form of any house of any age.

As a last and final note (and I hope a constructive one, having been there myself), a flaw in this otherwise handsome contribution to a BIA publication series lies in some minor and mechanical editorial matters. In the present text, for example, “lead” appears more than once as the past tense of the verb “to lead,” rather than the more appropriate “led”; “laying” shows up where “lying” is indicated; and “bulk” is used rather than “balk” or “baulk” (at the edge of squares). These are only a few examples of the kinds of minor boggles that all of us are susceptible to, and which can be righted by a carefully chosen copy editor.

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REVIEW

ARCTIC SPECTACLES: THE FROZEN NORTH IN VISUAL CULTURE, 1818–1875

*By Russell A. Potter, 2007. University of Washington Press, Seattle
Paperback, 258 pages, index, notes, bibliography, and a special appendix entitled "Arctic Shows and Entertainments, 1819–1896: An Annotated Chronological Checklist." ISBN 978-0295986807.*

Reviewed by Robert E. King

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Russell A. Potter, a professor of English at Rhode Island College and the editor of the *Arctic Book Review*, has created a fascinating window to something mostly forgotten today: the western world's fascination with the Arctic during the nineteenth century and how it was depicted in visual culture. This nearly unquenchable interest in the Arctic, leading to its successful multifaceted portrayal for public consumption, was stoked by the various arctic explorers of this century, including many who barely survived to tell their tales. Ironically, many of their trips were launched to help rescue earlier explorers who didn't survive. At this time, the Arctic was still a little-known land of both beauty and danger and one ripe for conquering. It was a place as foreign as another planet is to us today, where heroic adventures could still be had. Nineteenth-century arctic exploration was a continuing soap opera of sorts. The many tales of hardship, suffering, and even death that were associated with these expeditions only added further interest for many people and fueled visual interpretations.

Sometimes realistic, sometimes not, the arctic visual culture of this time included book and (somewhat later) magazine illustrations, engravings, paintings, panoramas, magic lantern slides (shown in pre-electric projectors), and even early photographs, including some for sale at the 1876 Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia and the later stereo-view 3-D pictures created for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. My favorite of the early photographs shown in the book, however, is a rare

Ambrotype glass-plate picture from the 1850s of a dapper man in a top hat at a panorama show where he is seeing a romanticized painted background of an arctic inhabitant with caribou.

Related to this form of entertainment, the nineteenth century was also a time when public exhibitions sometimes included the display of living people from "exotic" cultures, so that Inuit people were at times shown alongside other arctic "curiosities." The book describes some of these types of events, including their often tragic results for the Natives removed from their homelands to other climates and diseases that claimed their lives.

As the subtitle indicates, the book first focuses on the year 1818 and three events. All relate to one of the underlying points of the book: growing popular fascination with the Arctic and yet how little was known about it. Chapter 1 starts with a quote from Mary Shelley's famous novel of 1818, *Frankenstein*, which was set in part in "those icy climes" of arctic mystery. Her fictional captain sails into open water at the North Pole, which was a popular misconception of the time. Turning to reality, under a British plan by Sir John Barrow (yes, the namesake for Barrow, Alaska), two real arctic expeditions were both launched in 1818. One commanded by David Buchan set off for the North Pole (and its presumed open water) while the second expedition, under John Ross, would search for Baffin Bay and attempt to locate the legendary Northwest Passage.

The latter was a long-sought prize that had been sought in vain by earlier explorers, including the late eighteenth-century legend, Capt. James Cook, who visited Alaska in the 1770s. And it was also one of the goals that drove many of the other nineteenth-century arctic explorers, including a young lieutenant under Buchan. This young man, along with the rest of Buchan and Ross' crewmembers, fortunately survived and returned home in the fall of 1818. While the Arctic had defeated them, they were not portrayed as failures but instead praised for their heroism and courage in surviving near disasters. Capitalizing on public interest from the two 1818 expeditions, in 1819, the London public was treated to an elaborately painted panoramic map of the "View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen," where Buchan had gone. It was displayed in two large circular rooms for which an entry fee was charged. It was a first for London and drew astonished crowds. Members of both expeditions became famous, and some were enticed to try again to conquer the Arctic, including, most notably, Buchan's prior-noted young lieutenant: the man later to be known as the ill-fated Sir John Franklin.

While public interest in these earliest arctic expeditions was great, and more panoramas would follow along with a rising flood of other types of arctic images to meet rising public demand, the real blockbuster was indeed Franklin's ill-fated expedition of 1845, which followed several earlier notable expeditions by the same man, with some also nearly ending in disaster. But his final disappearance after 1845 became a world mystery and a fourteen-year obsession to find out what happened to him and his men. Solving the mystery itself became a driving force for further expeditions, and with each one, more visual information was produced illustrating both the alluring beauty and enticing danger of the Arctic. The Arctic was thus portrayed as a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde kind of place, and the volume of illustrations about it only increased due in part to its "split personality."

Yet while telling about the obsession with Franklin and his own ill-fated obsession to find the Northwest Passage, Potter's book gives us many other fascinating arctic stories, including that of John Ross and what became of him after his earlier unsuccessful 1818 Arctic Expedition. Ross, a Scotsman who once dubbed Eskimos "Arctic Highlanders," ended up living for months with Inuit people over a decade later during a subsequent expedition. And these arctic adventures, too, would result in still more publicity and visual representations of the

Arctic. However, this didn't necessarily result in a truer understanding of its reality. A good example to the contrary was the 1835 exhibit in London of the northern "Continent of Boothia," a new and popular panoramic picture of the Arctic made of twenty-one panels. While reportedly based on Ross' expeditions, it incorporated earlier ideas of the Arctic. For many, the most popular feature of the new exhibit was the alluring way in which the sky was painted. Thus, people flocked to see arctic pictures sometimes as much for their artistic merit as their truth in representing the frozen north.

Photography arrived in time for Franklin and his 1845 expedition. It was the first one to be equipped with state-of-the-art Daguerreotype camera equipment. Accordingly, Franklin and members of his expedition were photographed before they left, and later engravings were based on these early glass-plate pictures. Otherwise, no other photos survive of their ill-fated trip. However, a multitude of images (often based on sketches) began appearing as early as the late 1840s of the various expeditions that tried to find Franklin. In 1851, a new panorama show opened for the London public, illustrating the search for him. Potter's book shows a rare handbill advertisement for it.

Another fascinating story in the book is that of American explorer Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, who helped turn attention from American Indians and the conquest of the American West to the Arctic. He, too, went in search of Sir John Franklin. However, Kane's untimely death in 1857, while in his thirties, only fuelled panoramic interpretations of his exploits that toured the United States even during the Civil War period of the 1860s. Interestingly, the year Kane died, a melodramatic play opened in London called "The Frozen Deep," which had been developed by Wilkie Collins, a protégé of Charles Dickens. Its arctic story, involving a supernatural subplot, was yet another way that the nineteenth-century public "learned" visually about the frozen north.

Potter's book concludes with more recent arctic expeditions, including one by American Charles Francis Hall, who returned from the Arctic in 1862, three years after the remains of the Franklin Expedition had been found. Thus, interest in Hall's expedition turned more toward the ethnographic revelations (and photos) he brought back of Inuit people of northern Canada. He also took some of them in person to visit Queen Victoria and London society in a disastrous pattern pioneered by earlier arctic explorers.

Other stories that conclude Potter's book include the history of the painted works of American artist Frederic Edwin Church and photographic artist William Bradford. Both were at the close of the Panoramic Era in the 1870s and the end of the period covered in the book. An interesting Epilogue added by Potter tells how in the 1880s and later, the ways of marketing images of the Arctic changed, in part due to the coming of motion pictures. Such are topics that other authors can, and do, explore in other books. But thanks to Potter, we have a most interesting and detailed history of this earlier period of how the Arctic entered the visual culture of the nineteenth century.

REVIEW

NORTHERN TALES: TRADITIONAL STORIES OF ESKIMO AND INDIAN PEOPLES

Selected and edited by Howard Norman, 2008. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

*Paperback; originally published in 1990 by Pantheon Books; 360 pages, introduction, maps, notes, bibliography.
ISBN 978-0-8032-1879-6.*

Reviewed by Patricia H. Partnow

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SUMMARY

Howard Norman, an English professor at the University of Maryland and a past finalist for the National Book Award in fiction, has compiled about one hundred tales of various genres from the arctic and subarctic regions of North America and Greenland. He has thrown in a handful of narratives from Hokkaido (Ainu) and eastern Siberia as well. Professor Norman has grouped the tales into eight categories based not on indigenous genres but on their central themes (e.g., village life, origin stories, trickster tales), prefacing each grouping with an essay that explains what the stories from the various regions have in common. The introduction and prefaces discuss some of the issues that are important in considering indigenous oral tradition: the underlying worldview of indigenous societies, spiritual and physical relationships between people and animals, repercussions of breaches of taboos, the nature of trickster characters, the importance of social connections, and the reestablishment of harmony as a plot focus. Each story (with a few exceptions) is referenced to a printed source. A few narratives that are apparently transcriptions from recorded sessions are not identified by date, interviewer, or the context in which the recording was made. A comprehensive bibliography completes the volume.

DISCUSSION

I was surprised not to have encountered this book before. It was originally published as one in a series within

the Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library, a trade publication. Despite its nonacademic origins, the book's sources are the standard ethnographies and folklore collections that are familiar to Alaska anthropologists and folklorists (e.g., Edwin Hall, Waldemar Jochelson, Richard Nelson, the Alaska Native Language Center, Osgood, Fredson, Cruikshank). A spot check indicates that Norman has reprinted the stories verbatim from their original sources without embellishments or stylistic changes. In addition to mining the literature available as of 1990, the editor added narratives he obtained from research of his own in Canada.

This collection's greatest strengths are well-written and thoughtful editorial comments and the cultural breadth of the selections within the context of northern societies. The book is best suited for an educated nonspecialist audience with an interest in world folklore motifs (though the editor does not tie the selections into a motif index). It is not particularly well-suited for use in an academic setting for several reasons:

- The stories are taken out of cultural context. For instance, although the editor speaks to several representative occasions in which the narratives might be recounted, his information is general rather than tied to specific events, locations, or situations. In addition, the reader is left to infer cultural beliefs and understandings from the stories, rather than having them explained at the outset. This approach is not a fatal

flaw in itself, but with several dozen cultural groups represented in the collection, the reader is left with far too much work to do. A little more guidance would have been helpful. When, for instance, is a story thought to be humorous by the storyteller? What is the attitude or affect of the storyteller when recounting a particular tale? Two examples from Alaska illustrate how the dearth of cultural information decreases the book's instructional value: first, an Inupiaq story about a grandmother and her orphaned grandson would be far richer if the editor had explained that this is a culturally meaningful duo in a predictable situation; and second, a John Fredson story about Wolverine is reprinted without an explanation of the special place Wolverine holds in Athabascan cosmology, his particular personality, and his unique spiritual powers.

- The collection makes no reference to folkloric conventions of motif or structure; that is, there is no meta-folkloric element to the volume.
- A number of important issues are absent in the editor's discussion. Among these are differences between oral and written lore, intellectual copyright, narrative frame, the storytelling event as a generative experience and time-bound performance, and indigenous narrative genres.

- The lack of an index and footnotes—ameliorated somewhat by the helpful list of sources at the end of the book—decreases the book's scholarly utility.
- Nearly all of Norman's sources are written. In a few cases, they were written by the original storytellers, but in most they consist of translations or paraphrases of original stories that were supplied by the researchers rather than storytellers.
- The editor has provided us with no indication of his criteria for including a story in the collection. The seeming arbitrariness is illustrated by the curious lack of coastal Tlingit lore—certainly among the best documented of any in Alaska.
- The book is attractive and illustrated with line drawings that are based on designs taken from the publication *Crossroads of Continents*. Unfortunately, the illustrations are not tied culturally to the stories. For instance, a Dena'ina story is accompanied by a Bering Strait bow drill design and a Nunivak Island seal drawing. In addition, I found a few minor typographic errors (Asen Balikci's name is misspelled, for instance).

In all, this is a book that would be a fine gift to a lay person, and the editor's nine essays would make a useful collection for a freshman college class that is beginning an exploration of indigenous folklore and oral tradition.

REVIEW

WILDFLOWERS OF UNALASKA ISLAND: A GUIDE TO THE FLOWERING PLANTS OF AN ALEUTIAN ISLAND

By Suzi Golodoff, 2003. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

Paperback, 272 pages, drawings, photographs, map, pronunciation guide, indices. ISBN 1-889963-18-6.

Reviewed by Douglas W. Veltre

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Wildflowers of Unalaska Island is the first book of its kind to deal solely with the Aleutian Islands. While focused specifically on Unalaska Island in the eastern Aleutians, much of this book is relevant to the whole of the archipelago and the lower Alaska Peninsula.

The book begins with a helpful introduction, in which the natural and human history of the Aleutian region is succinctly reviewed. Here, Golodoff touches upon possible geological explanations for the differences among the plant communities of the western, central, and eastern portions of the archipelago. She also outlines the variety of small-scale, local habitats that render plant communities on Unalaska Island diverse, and she provides a few notes on the Aleut (Unangan) language plant names that are included throughout the book.

The bulk of the book is devoted to descriptions of over 160 species of flowering plants. These are organized by taxa, not by color or by location as in some other flower guides. For each plant, a color photograph and a line

drawing supplement text describing the plant's features, habitat, and—particularly interesting from an ethnobotanical perspective—usefulness as a food, raw material, or medicine. In addition to common and scientific names, Aleut names, where known, are provided for the eastern, Atkan (central), and Attuan (western) dialects. *Wildflowers* concludes with a bibliography, a pronunciation guide for Aleut plant names, and indices to Aleut names, botanical names, and common names.

Overall, this is a welcome book. It is not overly technical or jargon-laden and thus will appeal to a wide range of readers, including those interested in Alaska Native ethnobotany. One of the clear strengths of *Wildflowers* is the contextual depth of the detailed, yet straightforward, plant descriptions, a quality attributable to Golodoff's long-term residence in Unalaska and her obvious familiarity with and respect for the larger natural and cultural world of the Aleutians.

The previously printed review of *Being and Place among the Tlingit* was an earlier version and failed to include several important changes that corrected errors and clarified several topics. THIS VERSION SHOULD BE REGARDED AS CORRECT AND IS TO BE THE BASIS FOR QUOTATION AND CITATION. The previous version is to be disregarded as it fails to reflect the full range of views of the reviewer. I would like to thank the editor, Owen Mason, for printing the correct version of the review.

Stephen J. Langdon

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REVIEW

BEING AND PLACE AMONG THE TLINGIT

By Thomas F. Thornton, 2008. University of Washington Press in association with Sealaska Heritage Institute, Seattle. Paperback, 247 pages, three maps, eight figures, eleven tables, one appendix, index. ISBN: 978-0-29598749-1.

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While numerous but generally limited studies of the complex place-naming practices and patterns developed by Alaska's indigenous groups have appeared over the years, Thomas F. Thornton's new volume offers a more expansive and holistic ethnographic view of how place characteristics and names are woven into the fabric of existence by the Tlingit people of southeast Alaska. *Being and Place among the Tlingit* is an outstanding contribution not only to Tlingit ethnography but also offers a powerful set of conceptual tools that other anthropologists, not only in Alaska, should find illuminating and stimulating.

The book consists of six chapters and includes a guide to the Tlingit language at the front, a preface, and a somewhat dangling appendix listing living resources used by Tlingit and their seasonality of use. In the preface, Thornton describes his fieldwork in various Tlingit village communities initially while working as a researcher for the Subsistence Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and then subsequently through numerous grants that enabled him to elicit and compile place names for virtually all of the Tlingit kwaans (regional groupings) from an impressive group of Tlingit-speaking elders, many of whom are now deceased. He also briefly mentions the research that was the basis for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Washington but does not inform us about the period and actual amount of time of any of his field-

work. In addition to this formal, direct elicitation of place names, Thornton has accessed and obtained numerous additional Tlingit place names from a variety of published (such as De Laguna's volumes on the Yakutat Tlingit) as well as unpublished (Thomas Waterman's manuscripts) sources and developed a database incorporating both the elicited and the manuscript-based place names. This integrated database, which has been used to prepare a fine set of GIS maps, is neither identified nor discussed in this volume but is the basis for another volume that is currently in preparation (Thornton, personal communication).

Theoretical perspectives are laid out in chapter 1 where Thornton positions his understanding of a "sense of place" as both a powerful universal dimension of human experience as well as an existential location of wide-ranging cultural construction involving language, image and power among other things. He holds the view that the experience and understanding of culturally constructed place can only be accomplished through the intersection of being on-site with a substantial degree of awareness of the cultural system. I am in full agreement with this claim. Thornton lays out four "cultural structures of emplacement" that he regards as central to the Tlingit fusion of place and being. These are social organization, language and cognitive structure, material production, and ritual processes. The next four chapters explore each

of these in turn. In the elaboration of these conceptual sites, Thornton frequently references Tlingit narratives collected in the 1940s by Walter Goldschmidt, a volume Thornton edited for its publication as *Haa Aanyí, Our Land* (Goldschmidt and Haas 1998), and Tlingit oratorical performances presented in volumes edited by Nora and Richard Dauenhauer.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the practices through which Tlingit bring their social organization (matrilineal descent, kwaan, moiety, clan and house principles) into contact with geographic locations by providing names that, among other things, illustrate critical events of the past that are viewed as creating the relationship of the people to the place. Here, as in chapter 4, Thornton draws heavily on his long-term, deep relationship with Sitka Kaagwaantaan elder Herman Kitka to demonstrate how understanding of place and past ancestral activities in places inform and dictate Kitka's sense of self. Thornton might have included discussion of petroglyphs (Figure 1) as Tlingit markers of emplacement, but this is an example of regional differences not addressed in the book; Thornton is not nearly as conversant with southern Tlingit cultural practice (where there are far more petroglyphs) as his research has primarily been with northern Tlingit.

In Chapter 3, Thornton elucidates the linguistic and cognitive foundations of Tlingit place-naming principles in answer to the query "What's in a Name." He provides a case study of Tlingit place names embedded in a version of the Salmon Boy story/myth told in Sitka that illuminates ancestral ecological conditions and provides detail useful for travel, resource timing, and locational contexts. Intriguingly, the story takes place from the vantage point of a salmon and thus demonstrates an important principle

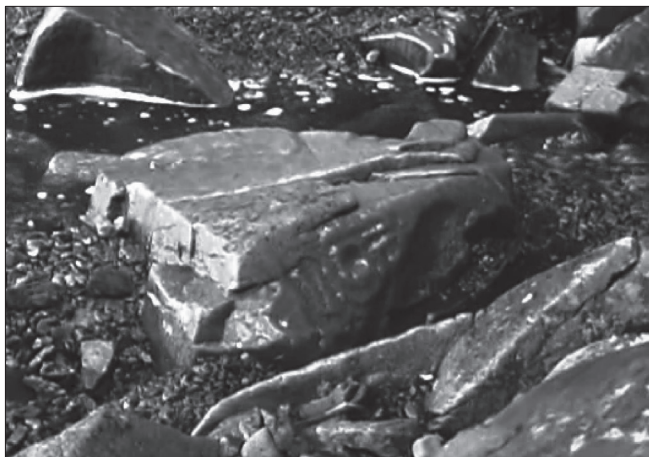


Figure 1. Noyes Island petroglyph

of Tlingit relationality—how to see from the perspective of another. In this chapter, the syntactic structure of Tlingit language that produces an active rather than passive orientation is presented, as are the Tlingit words (for example *heen* = stream, river) that provide the basic building blocks of Tlingit place descriptions and names. Thornton shows how Tlingit provides a fine-grained terminology for locating phenomena in relation to the observer.

Material production as a "structure of emplacement" is elaborated in Chapter 4. The seasonal round of activities of "subsistence" production occur in "locales" where "projects" of "procurement" take place and thus create the impetus for landscape-making through experiences and naming. Thornton lays out and discusses the way traditional (ecological) knowledge, embedded in the names and traditions, when linked to the relational and spiritual dimensions of Tlingit resource acquisition makes for responsible, sustainable resource continuity.

The exquisite Tlingit ceremonial, the memorial potlatch (*koo'ex*) serves as the focus of chapter 5, where ritual as a site of emplacement is explored. Thornton provides excellent examples of how potlatch oratory grounds Tlingit existence in place and links generations. He also shows how Tlingit potlatch speakers use powerful emotional themes, linguistic forms, and demonstrations of deep personal effect to fuse these elements and use them as an agent of collective bonding. In the conclusion, Thornton eloquently lays out how a philosophy of place and being that emphasizes connections and care-taking promotes "biocultural health," and persuasively argues that such enormously valuable, but endangered systems need to be cherished, celebrated, and emulated.

Throughout the volume, Thornton deftly weaves in accounts of how Tlingit practices associated with place were continually challenged and eroded by white immigrants and government officials and how various Tlingit resisted and found means to sustain their cultural system, albeit somewhat altered, in the face of this onslaught. He also explores how technological adoptions, economic changes, and governmental policies have also altered and eroded the manner in which Tlingit are able to experience place. Despite these significant changes, Thornton contends that Tlingit "emplacement structures" "persist and adapt... as axes of identity, community, and place-building" providing "wellsprings of being" (2008:196).

The ethnographic approach taken by Thornton provides an insightful foundation for encountering Tlingit

cultural practice, but it is important to recognize the limitations of that approach as well. It does not provide a systematic gazetteer à la Robert Galois' (1994) impressive study of Kwakwaka'wakw settlements in British Columbia, nor is it a single-source based comprehensive approach to a region like *Shem Pete's Alaska* (Kari and Fall 2003). Thornton's approach, which might be termed a panethnic presentist perspective (he refers to it as an "idealized temporal composite"), does not pose or even countenance variability along the well-recognized linguistic (dialectical), regional (kwaan division), or social (clan and house groups) divisions that characterize Tlingit life. Nor does he explore how that variability may in fact be the basis for contested claims in Tlingit existence, a reality that continues to surface in certain Tlingit groups. Another vantage point missing from the panethnic presentist perspective is a temporal one in which place name characteristics such as distribution and construction might be used to approach significant questions about Tlingit longevity on the coast, patterns of movement identified in clan oral traditions, and other topics related to change through time. However, it should be noted that Huna Tlingit place names in Glacier Bay (Sit' Eeti Geeyi) are used in the book to demonstrate the processual (becoming rather than existing) aspects inherent in Tlingit place naming, which in turn can be used to implicate temporality as it relates to periods in the past when processes revealed by the place name could be observed. Also missing is attention to the impacts of the historical period on place naming, although, as noted above, Thornton describes the forces that have increasingly separated Tlingit from the places and language that traditionally fused to provide their template of being. Since the late 1700s, the Tlingit have been in contact with and interacted with various westerners, but Thornton does not examine how those contacts might have affected places named and place-naming practices. Finally, although Tlingit groups interacted extensively with their neighbors such as the Eyak, Haida, Nishga, and Coast Tsimshian among others, Thornton does not examine the possibility that some Tlingit names may have entered the language as loan words resulting from contact with these groups. Particularly significant in this regard is linguist Jeff Leer's observations about the apparent Eyak linguistic foundation for a number of Tlingit place names in northern southeast Alaska.

It is interesting that while it is commonly assumed (and Thornton leans in this direction as well) that western (European and American) visitors typically engaged

in place-naming colonialism by ignoring or rejecting indigenous place names, such practices were far more characteristic of the early explorers and traders due to their minimal contact with and lack of linguistic comprehension of the Tlingit than they were of at least certain American colonizers who came later. John Muir, perhaps surprisingly, eschewed elaborate place naming schemas for locations he visited in order that subsequent mapping expeditions would identify and use local Tlingit names. While place-naming colonialism is characteristic of many U.S. governmental and military personnel, some of the later map and chart makers of the Coast Survey acted upon Muir's sentiments. An example of this effort to incorporate local Tlingit place names can be seen in the vicinity of Tuxecan Island (along the west coast of the Prince of Wales Archipelago) where virtually all the cartographic names are Anglicizations of Tlingit terms elicited from Tlingit experts, perhaps those hired to guide the Americans through these waters. In this area of the Prince of Wales Archipelago, it appears that the coast surveyors memorialized one such assistant by naming a prominent peak in the vicinity, Mt. Kogish, after him. This name is a relatively discernible Anglicization of Kukeesh (now Kookesh), a prominent Raven "chief" in the area at the time (Orth 1971).

One final note of interest concerns the cover of the book. I am quite familiar with the image, as it has been a powerful iconic statement for generations of Tlingit fishermen from the village of Hoonah linking them to their traditional fishing grounds in the Inian Islands of Icy Strait. The drawn image is of a rock formation that is called the "Indian Head" by the aforementioned fishermen. In that sense the rock formation and its name are emblematic of the processes that Thornton carefully and elaborately details. However, there are ironies here in that there is no current Tlingit language term for this rock (it has only an English name) and the rock only attained its iconic significance in the early part of the twentieth century when salmon purse-seine fishing in the Inian Islands began. The Tlingit likely adopted the English term at that time and wedded it in quasi-traditional fashion to their being.

We certainly expect that there will be future publications where Thornton will follow up on this truly special volume to provide us with additional analyses drawing on the extensive database he has developed and his excellent interpretive skills to illuminate more of the complexity of place and being in Tlingit life.

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