



West Cook Inlet

ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT
FOR LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Ronald T. Stanek, James A. Fall, and Davin L. Holen



Co-author Ron Stanek worked with the people of Tyonek to document their history and way of life from 1980 until his retirement from the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in April 2007. He is pictured here with Randy and Brandy Standifer while doing research for this book.

The western shores of *Tikahlu* – “Ocean River,” now Cook Inlet – form a central portion of the homeland of the Dena’ina, an Athabascan people of southcentral Alaska. Dena’ina Enoena (Dena’ina Country) also encompasses the mountains that rise to the west of Cook Inlet, as well as the watersheds of the rivers and lakes that now comprise Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



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Dear Friends:

Enclosed please find a copy of the *West Cook Inlet Ethnographic Overview and Assessment* for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. This report was prepared by Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

The National Park Service Cultural Resource Preservation Program provided the funding for this publication to identify the cultural and natural resources of the west Cook Inlet coastal area of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve that are of significance to traditionally associated peoples. This knowledge allows for respectful treatment of ethnographic resources through careful consideration of the effects that our management actions may have on them. Congress has mandated that we preserve these resources because they are important components of our national and personal identity.

We extend special acknowledgement and sincere appreciation to the Tribal Council of the Native Village of Tyonek and residents of Tyonek for their active participation, assistance, and support in compiling this book. We hope to continue to work with the community to carry out additional heritage preservation projects.

If you have any comments, questions or requests for additional copies, please contact Jim Fall, Subsistence Regional Program Manager, at 907-267-2359 or Jim_Fall@fishgame.state.ak.us or Karen Stickman, Cultural Anthropologist, at 907/644-3638 or the address above.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Ronald T. Stanek, James A. Fall, and Davin L. Holen

U.S. Department of The Interior
National Park Service
Lake Clark National Park & Preserve
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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.

The Cultural Resource Programs of the National Park Service have responsibilities that include stewardship of historic buildings, museum collections, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, oral and written histories, and ethnographic resources.

Our mission is to identify, evaluate, and preserve the cultural resources of the park areas and to bring an understanding of these resources to the public. Congress has mandated that we preserve these resources because they are important components of our national and personal identity.

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Mission Statement

The Division of Subsistence is the research branch of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game responsible for providing comprehensive information on the customary and traditional use of wild resources in Alaska. This information is furnished to meet resource management goals, aid in regulation development, facilitate collaborative agreements, assess environmental impacts, and to describe the unique role of wild resources in the lives, communities, and cultures of Alaskans.

In 1978, the Alaska Legislature passed the Alaska subsistence law requiring that subsistence uses of fish and game be authorized and protected, and established the legal basis for the Division of Subsistence within the Department of Fish and Game. The division's main duty lies in the area of human dimensions research which focuses on understanding human systems, that is, people and their ways of living, using systematic methods of gathering and analyzing information developed for the social sciences, including interviews, mapping, surveys, direct observation, and participant observation. The Division of Subsistence maintains the public's trust by adhering to high ethical standards in carrying out research, obtaining community approval before beginning research, including local residents directly in the research process, providing proper confidentiality, and presenting study results to community representatives before publication.

Front Cover: (Left) View of the Village of Tyonek and Tyonek Creek around 1900. Cordelia L. M. Noble Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives. (Right) View of Tyonek Creek and Randy Standifer's cabin at his fish camp in June 2004. Photo by Davin L. Holen.

December 2006



*Nora McCord and her siblings in front of her grandmother Annie Ephron's house at Susitna Station in the late 1920s to early 1930s.
Nora McCord Collection*

West Cook Inlet

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*Alexandra and Feona Allowan, date and location unknown.
Feona was the daughter of Robert and Alexandra Allowan.
Courtesy of Donita Peter*



*Photograph of the old store in Tyonek and a new house belonging
to Fred Bismark, taken in the 1960s when new houses were being
constructed and before the older structures were torn down.
Photo by Steve and Dolores McCutcheon Image No. 6605. Courtesy of Alie Stephan.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the culture and history of the people and communities of western Cook Inlet, southcentral Alaska. A primary goal is to identify the traditional and contemporary associations between the people and communities of western Cook Inlet and the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game prepared this report under a cooperative agreement with the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (Cooperative Agreement No. CA9088A0008). This report is part of the overall Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Ethnographic Overview and Assessment. The research featured working with the people of Tyonek, the single remaining Dena'ina community of west Cook Inlet.

The Park and the entire west Cook Inlet area share a common cultural heritage – that of the Dena'ina Athabascans. The Dena'ina of Cook Inlet most likely arrived on the Pacific Coast from the area now occupied by the inland Dena'ina associated with the Park. The two Dena'ina regional bands of west Cook Inlet, the *Tubughna* ("Beach People") and the *Qezdaghdna* ("Point People"), maintained cultural and economic ties with inland Dena'ina communities, as evidenced by a common language, place names, social organization, and belief system. Trade of subsistence products, intermarriage, and participation in ceremonies such as the potlatch supported these ties.

A common history also links coastal Cook Inlet and the inland communities in and near the Park, beginning with the establishment of the fur trade by the Russians. The fur trade built upon established Dena'ina subsistence patterns, traditional knowledge, and social relationships. Connections between Dena'ina communities were likely enhanced as traditional routes through passes and along the coast facilitated travel to trading posts at Tyonek or across Cook Inlet at Kenai. Results included the exchange of goods and ideas, intermarriage, and the expanded transactional activities of Dena'ina political leaders and middlemen called *qeshqa*.

The arrival of Europeans and Americans brought demographic change through intermarriage and the introduction of epidemic disease. Dena'ina villages consolidated as the population dropped. By the early 1930s, the remaining Dena'ina of Polly Creek and Kustatan had moved to Tyonek, along with most Dena'ina from the Susitna River villages. All Dena'ina communities also experienced the missionizing efforts of the Russian Orthodox church, and today share a syncretism of western and traditional Athabascan spiritual beliefs.

Links between families who resided in areas now within or near the Park and communities on the coast were strengthened as commercial fishing and processing developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dena'ina from Cook Inlet and inland villages participated in commercial fishing and processing at places such as Polly Creek and Kustatan. During the mid 20th century, development of natural gas and petroleum became significant along west Cook Inlet. These regional economic developments enhanced means of transportation between west Cook Inlet, the interior, and population centers on the Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage. Another result was stress to the natural resources upon which Dena'ina communities depend. New people arrived, mostly non-native, some of whom homesteaded within Dena'ina lands and settled in Dena'ina communities. Their stories enriched the history of west Cook Inlet places. Some of these newcomers married Dena'ina women and founded many of the families of Tyonek, Nondalton, and other Dena'ina communities today.

Relationships between Dena'ina communities in and near the Park and Preserve persist. The Dena'ina of Iliamna, Nondalton, and Lime Village are related through intermarriage to former residents of Polly Creek and Kustatan, and current residents of Tyonek. Cycles of visits for celebrations, funerals, marriages, and subsistence activities continue. In the early 21st century, all Dena'ina communities associated with the Park and Preserve face similar issues, such as expansion of recreational fishing and hunting and mineral exploration and extraction. Non-local fishers and hunters crowd lands once used solely for subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering by local residents, and resource development may further disrupt subsistence activities.

Continuing improvements in transportation and communication encourage exchange of information and ideas between Dena'ina communities that may facilitate the recognition of common issues and solutions. Examples include participation in language programs, exchange of traditional songs and stories, and sharing of subsistence resources. The resultant rediscovery of genealogical ties, common oral traditions, and a shared history could support efforts to reinvigorate Dena'ina identity.

The report concludes with recommendations for additional research. These include further investigation of Dena'ina and other family histories; collection and annotation of photographs, especially at Tyonek; additional documentation of the history of Dena'ina involvement in the Cook Inlet commercial salmon fishery; and investigation of the traditional associations of the Iliamna Lake Dena'ina to the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



*Anne Stephan Chukalusson and Alexandra Stephan Allowan at Anne's house, circa 1958.
Chukalusson Collection*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the elders who shared their past in stories and photographs to enrich the future of the youth of their communities. Thanks for allowing us to write about the things you told us; we hope your meaning is properly conveyed and if not, accept our apologies, for we are still learning. In particular we thank Fedora Constantine and Nora McCord for their photographs of Susitna Station and Chester Creek. We were very grateful that Harry Bartels told us about his life and his father's years as captain of the *Sea Lion* and their experiences with Sydney Laurence.

Thanks to the Native Village of Tyonek Tribal Council and Peter Merryman for supporting the project and helping us during our days in the village. Kathy Chickalusion helped coordinate interviews and gather photographs. Connie Burnell and her mother Harriet Kaufman drove us around and were always supportive and interested in seeing the project benefit everyone. Thanks to the families who shared their homes and fish camps with us.

Many people contributed photographs and we especially thank Pauline Allowan for sharing her large collection. Although not all the photos people gave to the project are included in this report, there will be an archive where copies are stored for future reference. Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI) historian Aaron Leggett provided valuable photos and background information. Walter A. Van Horn, Curator of Collections at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art made available important historic photos and the Sydney Laurence painting of Tyonek in 1905.

The authors especially thank Jim Kari for his continuing support for the project. Jeanne Schaaf, Rachel Mason, John Branson, and Michelle Ravenmoon of the National Park Service provided valuable comments on the draft report. Karen Gaul, Cultural Anthropologist for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, gave valuable ideas and guidance and patiently led us through the process to a timely conclusion. Molly Casperson completed the technical edits of the manuscript prior to publication.

Lastly, we thank Donita Peter of the Alaska Native Heritage Center for her inspirational writing, spiritual leadership, and tireless support and interest in the project.

THE DENA'INA SOUND SYSTEM AND ALPHABET

The Dena'ina alphabet can be displayed in a chart that indicates how and where in the mouth specific sounds are produced. Many sounds, such as the glottalized consonants which are written with a following apostrophe, have no English equivalents. Stephan and Kari (2005) formulated a set of Upper Inlet Dena'ina literacy exercises with a recording by Sava Stephan. The chart below is taken from those exercises.

The Dena'ina Sound System Upper Inlet dialect								
Consonants		Place of Articulation						
Manner of Articulation	Labial	Alveolar	Lateral	Alveo-Palatal	Palatal	Front Velar	Back Velar	Glottal
Stops								
plain	b	d	dl	dz	(j)	g	gg	'
aspirated	t	ti	ts	(ch)	k	q		
glottalized		t'	tl'	ts'	(ch')	k'	q'	
Fricatives								
voiced			l	z	(zh)	(y)	gh	
voiceless			t	s	(sh)	(x)	h	hh
nasals and glides	m	n			y			
Vowels								
long	i	a	u					
short		e						

As noted on the chart in parentheses, there are several sounds that are found in the other Dena'ina dialects that are not distinct in the Upper Inlet dialect. These are: **dz** vs. **j**, **ch** vs. **ts**, **ch'** vs. **ts'** and **s** vs. **sh**. Upper Inlet speakers favor the palatal (ch, j) pronunciation. Upper Inlet also lacks the front velar fricatives, **y** and **x**. We have adopted the convention for the Dena'ina language of spelling words in Upper Inlet with the sounds that are found in the other dialects.



*Dena'ina fish drying racks on north side of Chulana mouth
at Ladd's Station, 1902.*

Photo by A. H. Brooks, USGS Photo Library, 24000021.



*Robert's Creek Fish Camp in 2004. The site of Old Iyovek and
the present day fish camp of Robert Standifer, Sr.*

Photo by Rex Stanek

CHAPTER ONE STUDY BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The western shores of *Tikahtnu* — “Ocean River,” now Cook Inlet — form a central portion of the homeland of the Dena’ina, an Athabascan people of southcentral Alaska. Dena’ina Elena (Dena’ina Country) also encompasses the mountains that rise to the west of Cook Inlet, as well as the watersheds of the rivers and lakes that now comprise Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (see Figure 1.1). The extensive traditional territory of the Dena’ina also included most of the Kenai Peninsula along eastern Cook Inlet, and much of the Susitna River and Knik Arm drainages to the north (see Figure 1.2).

The first recorded encounter between the Dena’ina and Europeans occurred in May 1778 when the British naval vessels *Resolution* and *Discovery*, under the command of Captain James Cook, anchored off West Foreland, near the Dena’ina villages of *Qezdeghnen* (Kustatan) and *Tubughnenq* (Tyonek). Here they traded with native people who approached the ships in kayaks. Cook commemorated this interaction by bestowing the name “Trading Bay” on the body of water between West Foreland and North Foreland. Later, Cook’s crew landed at Tuyquin, or as they called it, “Point Possession,” where they traded with other Dena’ina, shot a dog that had bitten a sailor, and claimed the land for the British Empire by burying a bottle full of coins.

Cook wrote, “All the people we have met within this River are of the same Nation as those who inhabit Sandwich Sound” (Prince William Sound, i.e. Alutiq).¹ He was, however, almost certainly mistaken. While in Cook Inlet, the expedition’s surgeon, William Anderson, recorded an 11-word Dena’ina vocabulary, the first written in any Alaska Athabascan language.² Dena’ina oral tradition has also preserved several accounts of these first meetings with Europeans.

[The ship] was like a giant bird with great white wings All the Tyonek people were very frightened and ran and hid in the woods, except one brave man. He paddled out in his *bidarka* to see what it was. The strange people on the boat traded him some of their clothes for what he was wearing. When the courageous native returned to the shore he was a hero to his people, and the costume he brought back with him [the uniform of an English sailor] was faithfully copied down through the years, to wear in ceremonial dances.

— Simeon Chickalusion, former chief of Kustatan and Tyonek³

Chief Jimmy Nicolai and Doris Nicolai related stories of the meeting with the English. The people of the village saw Cook’s men coming and thought it might mean war, so they got their spears and weapons ready and went down to meet the English. The Natives ended up giving the English a porcupine or a deer [i.e. caribou or moose], and the English buried a jar of coins with a proclamation of ownership. The small children of the village would always take a jar or can they found floating on the beach to Doris Nicolai to see if it was Captain Cook’s.

— Feodora Pennington of Point Possession⁴

This first set of interactions between the Dena’ina and Europeans introduces several themes that will be explored in this report. These include questions about the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of Cook Inlet, the ebb and flow of cultural groups, the maritime adaptation of the Inlet’s Native peoples, and the importance of trade. Of course, Cook’s expedition was the first of many that brought profound changes to Cook Inlet and the surrounding country. These include economic change, first through the fur trade and later through commercial fishing and mining; demographic change caused by the arrival of new people and diseases; political changes through shifts in land tenure and forms of government; and changes in the traditional belief system through the introduction of Christianity. This report will briefly explore this history by examining published and unpublished written sources, oral traditions, photographs, and family histories.

The key goal is to demonstrate ties between the peoples of western Cook Inlet, and especially the Dena’ina and their history, to the land that now comprises Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

Figure 1.1
West Cook Inlet Ethnographic
Overview and Assessment
Study Area

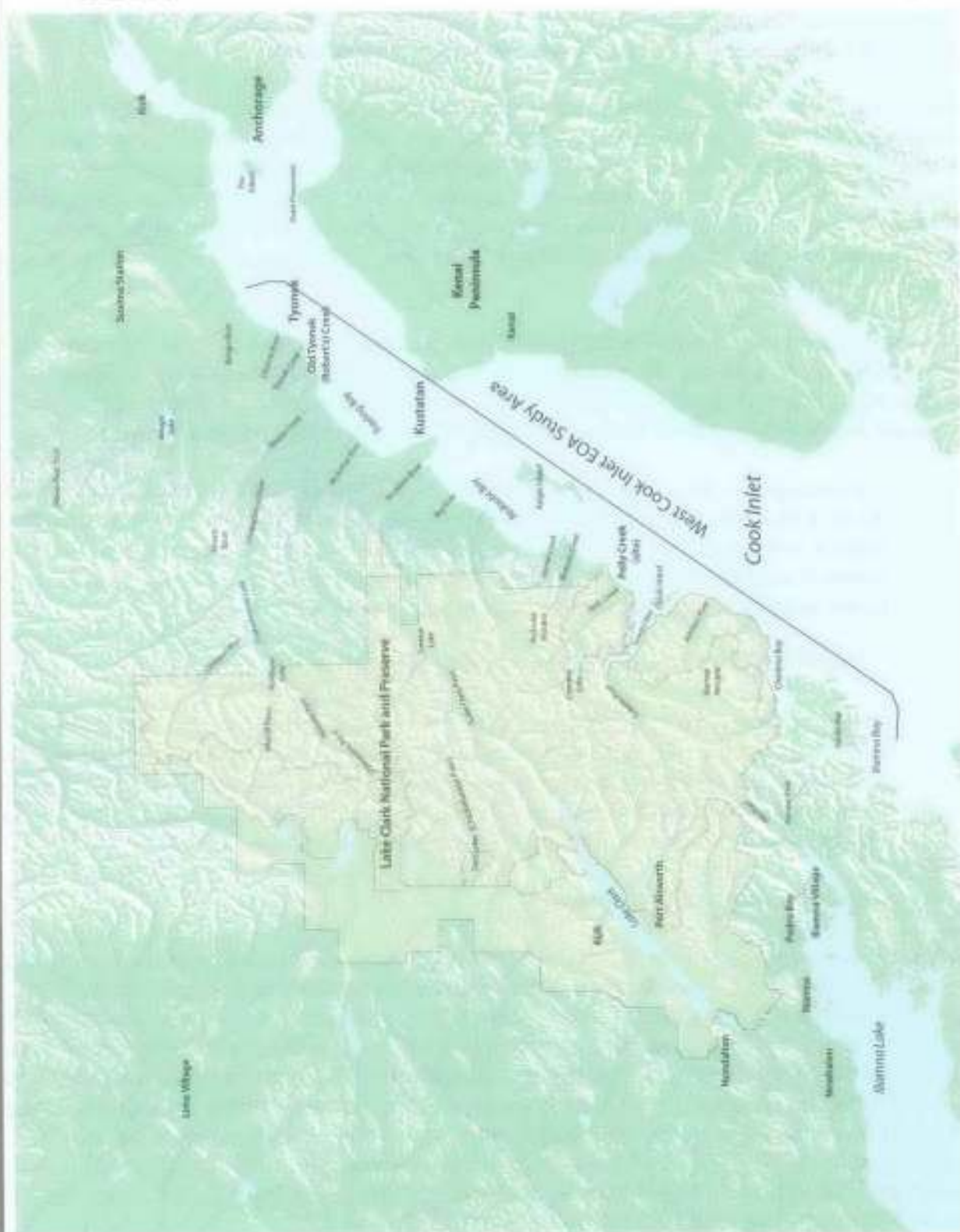
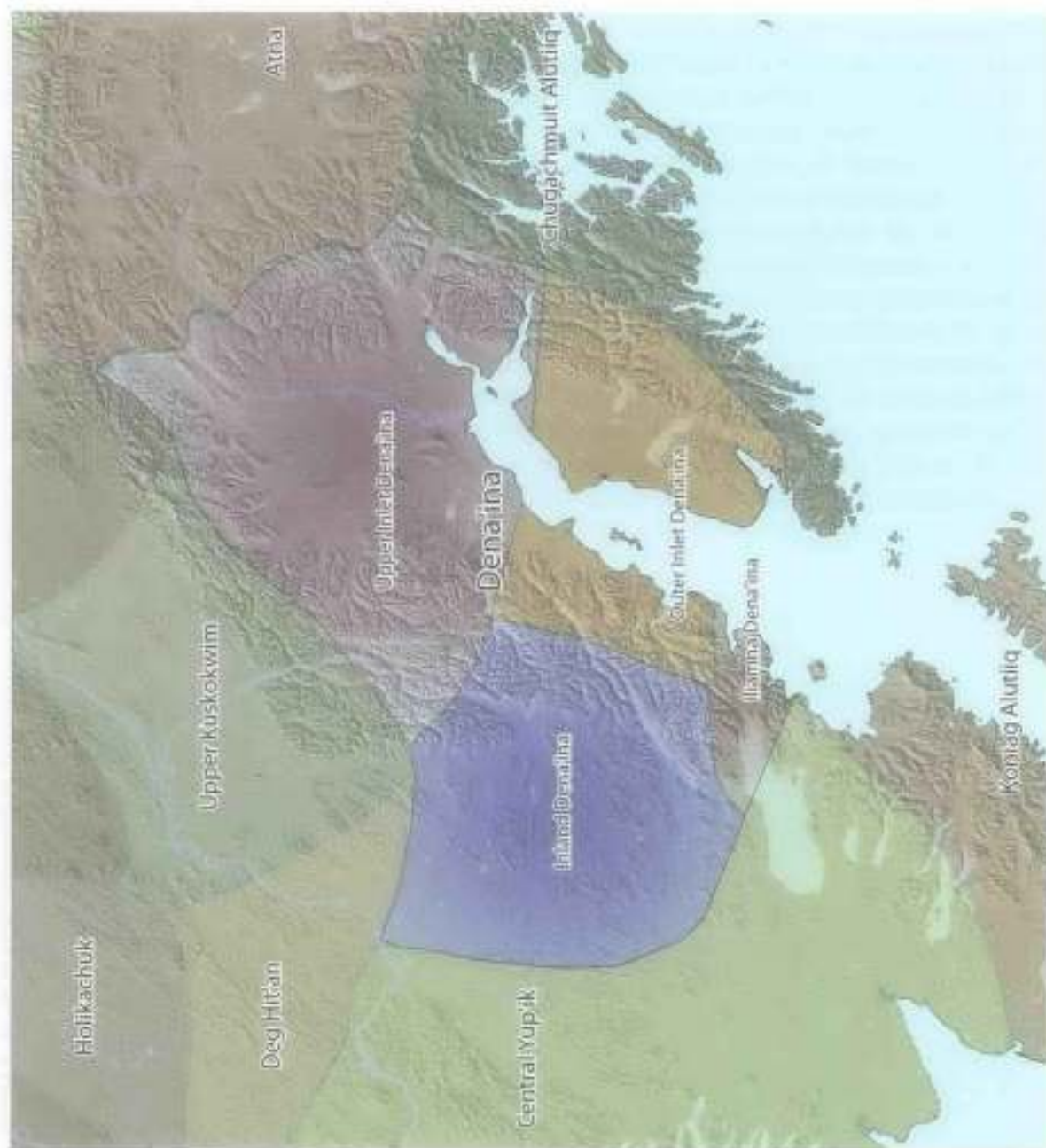


Figure 1.2
Alaska Native Language
Families & Dena'ina Dialects



STUDY PURPOSES

Congress created Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (LACL) in 1980 when it passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA; Title II [201(7)]). The park's Strategic Plan⁵ notes that, "the lands and resources encompassed by LACL continue to be significant to the Dena'ina people now residing in villages such as Nondalton, Newhalen, Lime Village, Pedro Bay, Iliamna, Stony River, and Tyonek."

This study was conducted by the Division of Subsistence of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game under a cooperative agreement with Lake Clark National Park and Preserve (Cooperative Agreement No. CA9088A0008). The National Park Service (NPS) requested that the Division of Subsistence undertake the project because of the division's 20 years of experience conducting applied social science research in Tyonek and other Dena'ina communities associated with the park. The overall purpose of the project was to document traditional land and resource uses in and around the west Cook Inlet area within and adjacent to Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. This area extends from Iliamna Bay in the south to the Beluga River just north of present day Tyonek (see Figure 1.1). This documentation is intended to complement the preparation of an overall Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA) for the park and preserve. NPS policies require the identification of peoples who are traditionally associated with the park as well as the cultural and natural features that are of traditional significance to these peoples. The emphasis of the project was on the cultural history of the Alaska Native residents of west Cook Inlet and the relationships among the different indigenous groups who have traditional associations with the area that is now Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The primary product is a report that summarizes ethnographic and historical literature, photographs, and other records (see Appendix I for research methods). This research was a collaboration between researchers and the Dena'ina, the indigenous people who have a traditional association with Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

CHAPTER TWO

WEST COOK INLET AND DENA'INA

PREHISTORY

Ethnographic, linguistic, and archaeological evidence reveals a dynamic history of human occupation of the Cook Inlet Basin, including western Cook Inlet. Several successive waves of people of Eskimo and Athabascan origin settled along Cook Inlet's shores, developing subsistence strategies that reflect both marine and interior adaptations.

West Cook Inlet is presently home to the Dena'ina, an Athabascan people (see Figure 1.1). Most of the Cook Inlet Basin is part of traditional Dena'ina territory. The Alutiiq, speakers of an Eskimo language, reside in the outer Cook Inlet area, as well as Prince William Sound, Kodiak, and portions of the Alaska Peninsula (see Figure 1.2).

Archaeological evidence suggests that before the arrival of the Dena'ina, a cultural group of an Eskimo people, bearers of the Kachemak Tradition, occupied most of the Cook Inlet Basin.¹ Kachemak Tradition archaeological sites occur along the shoreline of Cook Inlet and river systems draining into the inlet; the Susitna and Kenai Rivers have such sites dating between 3,800 to 1,000 years ago.² These include sites along west Cook Inlet at Chinitna Bay, Tuxedni Bay, and Kustatan, and other locations. The Kachemak Tradition subsistence strategy focused on coastal marine such as marine mammals, migratory waterfowl, seabirds, intertidal resources, and ocean fish.³



← Rock art of Eskimo (most likely Kachemak Tradition) origin at Tuxedni Bay Cove. The glyphs indicate that Tuxedni Bay and Polly Creek were areas utilized first by Eskimo peoples and later by Dena'ina Athabascan de Laguna (1934).

EWI Collection

During a period of climatic change, marine resources in Cook Inlet may have diminished. The bearers of the Kachemak Tradition withdrew from most of Cook Inlet to the outer Kenai Peninsula, the Alaska Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak Island where marine resources were still abundant. Around 1000 years ago, they mingled with the Bering Sea Norton people of western Alaska to form the Alutiiq culture.

The withdrawal of the Kachemak Tradition people left Cook Inlet open to occupation by the Dena'ina Athabascans. The earlier Dena'ina homeland was probably west of the Alaska Range in the Stony River area and perhaps north towards the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River.⁴ Exactly when the Athabascan ancestors of the Dena'ina moved into the Cook Inlet area is uncertain. Dena'ina oral traditions and archaeological and linguistic evidence suggest a presence for a thousand years or more.⁵ There is currently renewed discourse among anthropologists and Dena'ina people as to when and by what route the Dena'ina moved into the region. Dena'ina tradition bearers cite oral traditions that describe migrations into new territories that may have occurred in several waves and resulted in the establishment of clans.⁶ One or more earlier Athabascan occupations may have been interrupted by extreme cold periods and glacial intrusions into the basin or the arrival of the Kachemak Tradition people.⁷

As a people originally of interior Alaska, the Dena'ina used boreal forest and open woodland resources plus freshwater fish and salmon migrating to the inland reaches of river systems. They arrived at Cook Inlet with this interior subsistence pattern and began to integrate marine resources into their diet. Eventually, the Cook Inlet Dena'ina developed a semi-maritime subsistence strategy, borrowing from the Kachemak and Alutiiq cultures such technologies as kayaks and harpoons. However, they also maintained their inland technology and adapted it to the coast. For example, the Dena'ina hunted the beluga whales of Cook Inlet not only from kayaks, as is usual with Eskimo peoples, but also by utilizing the *yuyqul*, a spearing platform placed on the tidal flats, likely adapted from game lookout platforms used along rivers to hunt bears.⁸ Similarly, the Dena'ina transformed the dip netting platforms used by some interior Athabascans to harvest salmon from rivers into the *tanik'edi*, a construction of poles set on the Inlet's mud flats.⁹ As a result of the combination of effective harvesting of coastal resources with intensive salmon fishing and hunting of land mammals, the Cook Inlet Dena'ina were unique as the only Alaska Athabascans who adapted to a marine environment.¹⁰

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND POPULATION

When the first European explorers arrived in the late 18th century, the Dena'ina Athabascans occupied most of the west side of Cook Inlet. In pre-contact times the Dena'ina were probably the most populous of any Alaska Athabaskan people, with a total population throughout their territory of perhaps 5,000.¹¹ The Cook Inlet Dena'ina lived in villages (*qayeh*) in late fall and winter. Each village contained one or more multifamily, semi-permanent houses called *nihtil*. Known village sites along west Cook Inlet include Polly Creek (*Talin Chiltant*), Harriet Point (*Ts'qezdegh*), Kustatan (*Qezdaghnert*), Old Tyonek (*Tubughnenq*), North Foreland (*Qaggeyshlat*), and the mouth of the Chuitt River (*Ch'u'itnu Hdakaq*). The combined population of these villages in pre-contact times is unknown, but likely numbered at least several hundred people.

Dena'ina villages were associated in larger, named social groups called "regional bands."¹² Regional bands shared a common territory for hunting, fishing, and gathering. Two regional bands occupied western Cook Inlet. To the south of Trading Bay were the *Qezdaghdna* ("Point People"), whose primary village in historic times was Kustatan. The *Qezdaghdna* were speakers of the Outer Inlet dialect of the Dena'ina language, also spoken across Cook Inlet on the Kenai Peninsula. The Outer Inlet dialect is closely related to the Iliamna dialect traditionally spoken at Old Iliamna and Pedro Bay and to the Inland dialect of Nondalton, Kijik, and Lime Village. To the north of Trading Bay were the *Tubughna* ("Beach People"). Their primary village was Tyonek. The *Tubughna* spoke the Upper Inlet dialect, and were thus linked to the Dena'ina of the Susitna River (*Susitnapt'ana*) and Knik Arm (*K'enaht'ana*), speakers of the same dialect. The Upper Inlet dialect is the most divergent dialect within the Dena'ina language. This suggests several centuries of separation from other Dena'ina speakers before the occupation of west Cook Inlet by Upper Inlet speakers arriving from the Susitna and Yentna river basin and by Outer Inlet speakers arriving from the Lake Iliamna, Lake Clark, or Stony River areas to the west.¹³

Although they lived in winter villages, the Cook Inlet Dena'ina used a series of seasonal camps in other locations for specific resource harvests during their annual seasonal round (see Figure 2.1). In support of subsistence activities, they established trails and trade routes, named landmarks, and built settlements, camps, and shelters within the territory of their regional band. Their physical strength and endurance were evidenced by their ability to walk great distances over rugged terrain between these sites and paddle skin boats in the treacherous waters of Cook Inlet. The Dena'ina used all the river systems in all major bays along west Cook Inlet, such as Chinitna, Iliamna, Ursus, Redoubt, and Trading bays. Trails connecting the Cook Inlet shoreline and eastern slopes of the Chignik Mountains with the Lake Iliamna and Lake Clark drainages supported active trade and social interactions between the Cook Inlet and Inland groups of Dena'ina. Some of the best evidence of Dena'ina knowledge of travel routes and hunting, fishing, and gathering areas is preserved in the intricate system of Dena'ina place names.¹⁴

DENA'INA TRADITIONAL ANNUAL ROUND AND SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS¹⁵

Information about the seasonal round of subsistence activities of the west Cook Inlet Dena'ina is available from traditional stories called *tsukdu*¹⁶ and other oral traditions told by Dena'ina elders. More detail for the pre-contact period is available for the *Tubughna* ("Beach People") than for the *Qezdaghdna* ("Point People").¹⁷

Dena'ina elders have asserted that subsistence resources around Tyonek were diverse and abundant in the past. The Tyonek area was called *Einen Bunkda*, "the-mother-of-the-earth," because of the rich marine products available there. In contrast, the Susitna River drainage was *Einen Tukda*, "the-father-of-the-earth," because large land mammals and furbearers were more common.

A new round of subsistence activities began each spring with the arrival of migratory waterfowl in *Nut'ag'i n'u*, "goose month" (April). Waterfowl were snared or shot with blunt-tipped arrows at local marshes, lakes, and river mouths. Also in the spring, people placed fish traps in lakes for trout and speared beavers, which were also taken in deadfall traps. Tyonek people obtained razor clams by traveling to Redoubt Bay or further south, or by trading with the Kustatan people. Trade also took place with the Susitnuht'ana at the mouth of the Susitna River.

In April, people moved from the winter villages to spring camps to harvest eulachon (hooligan) with dip nets and to prepare eulachon oil. Marine mammal hunting took place from these camps. Harbor seals were harvested from kayaks (*baydargi*) with harpoons or clubs. Men harpooned belugas from spearing platforms called *yuyqu* that consisted of trees embedded upside down in the mudflats.¹⁸ The *Tubughna* rendered beluga fat into oil and dried the meat for use throughout the year and for trade.

Major Resources Used by the Dena'ina of West Cook Inlet

English Name	Outer Inlet Dialect (OID)	Upper Inlet Dialect (UID)	Literal Translation
beluga whale	qunshi	qayushi	'one that swims up' (OID)
seal	qutsaghi'i'y	qutsaghi'i'y	'one that holds its head up'
brown bear	agagga	ghedishia ts'iq'a	'black bears partner' (UID)
black bear	elt'eshi	ghedishia	'the black one' (OID)
beaver	k'enuy'a	k'enuy'a	
caribou		ghenoy	
fox	q'anul'asha	ninyagga	'little animal' (UID)
ground squirrel	qunsha	qunsha	
lynx	kazhna		'black-tailed one' (OID)
moose	dnigi	dnigi	
porcupine	qanchi	qanchi	
sheep	nuji	nuji	
snowshoe hare	nqeba	ggeh	'greyish' (UID)
Chinook salmon	luq'aka'a	luq'aka'a	
sockeye salmon	luq'a	q'uya	
silver salmon	nudlaghi	nudlegha	
eulachon	dilha	dilha	
trout	shagela	chagela	
waterfowl	dalishia	dalishia	'little flier'
willow ptarmigan	deiggema	deiggema	'makes noise'
white-tailed ptarmigan	dus yicheghi	dzel yicheghi	'distant crier' (OID)
razor clams	qiz'in	qiy'hi	'the situation' (OID)
butter clams	choq'ush		'flared beaver carcass' (OID)

Note: A general term for each animal may not have a direct meaning.

Most species have several names depending on: the season, location of the animal, or the stage of the animal's life cycle.

Source: Kari 1994

Even with the abundance and variety of available resources, the *Tubughna* relied most heavily on salmon. Salmon begin passing along the upper west Cook Inlet beaches in late May and June. June is *tiq'aka'a n'u*, "king salmon month." King and sockeye salmon were harvested with dip nets from *tanik'edi*, platforms constructed of poles placed over the tidal flats.²⁹ Salmon were also caught in basket traps and weirs in small streams and lake outlets. Most men, women, and older children spent the summer fishing for salmon and preparing large supplies of dry fish for winter use.

Although hunting land mammals was important for the *Tubughna*, they had more limited access to big game than did other Dena'ina regional groups. Elders report that moose were scarce in the Tyonek area until the 1940s. Hunting of caribou, sheep, and bears occurred in the fall in the mountains west of Tyonek near *Ch'akaja Bena* (Chakachamna Lake). The *Tubughna* also hunted in the country to the north around Hiline Lake and Beluga Mountain. In addition in the fall, groups of *Tubughna* (men, women, and children) crossed *Tubughna Katidiftuni*, the Hayes River Pass, into the Skwentna and Yentna river drainages to hunt caribou and sheep and to trade with the Yentna River Dena'ina.

The *Tubughna* spent early winter, from November to January, in winter villages living off caches of dry fish and meat, oil, berries, and other resources. They also visited other communities to trade, tell stories, sing and dance, and attend potlatches. The Upper Inlet people called November *Qatggentdaiina*, "visitors," and January was "Benen q'ank'elich'deldili," "the-month-to-go-about-singing." Song and dance were key elements of Dena'ina life:

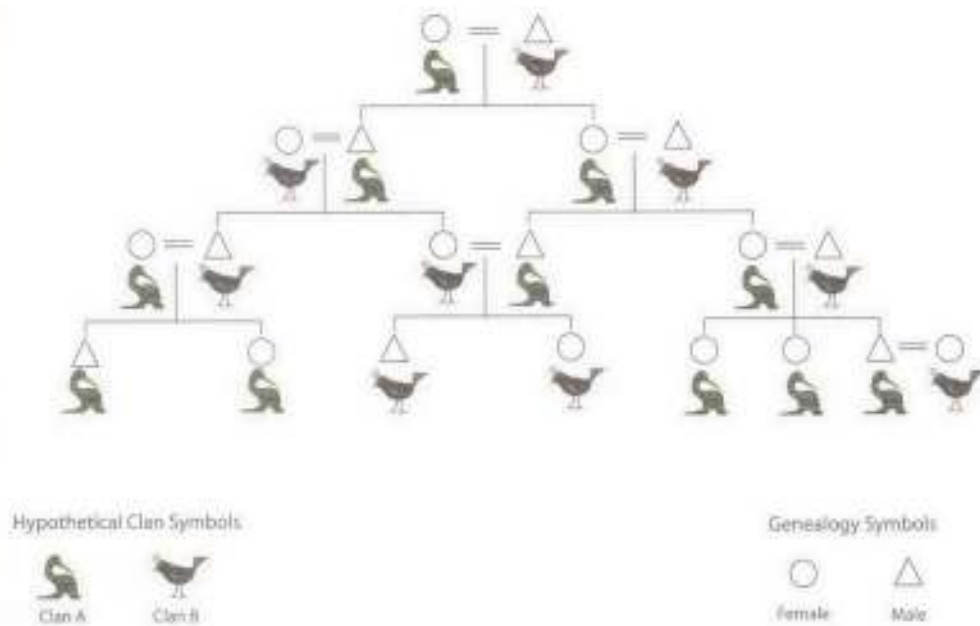
Dancing is dear to the heart of the Tanaina as it is to most of the other Northern Athapaskans. They seem to regard the dance as a natural physical and emotional expression, but they have done little to give it form. The natives perform their dances in a circle, often around the fire, sometimes to the accompaniment of drums and sometimes without them. The performers simply jump from one foot to another as they move around the circle. Men add individual twists, sometimes shifting their hips with such energy as soon to become exhausted. The women scarcely move their bodies. There is no intricately defined pattern of movement. Both sexes participate and individuals of all ages, from the toddling youngsters to the white-haired wrinkled fathers.³⁰

The Dena'ina composed several kinds of songs. They performed some at public occasions, such as dancing songs at feasts and mourning songs at potlatches. Shamans used songs as part of their healing rituals. Other songs that brought hunting luck, controlled the weather, or attracted the opposite sex, were more private, and might be purchased from their owners.³¹

Storytelling, too, was a highly valued Dena'ina art form that took place within the *nich'i* on long winter evenings. "The Tanaina like storytelling and prestige is gained by excelling in the art."³² As with songs, the purpose of some stories was primarily entertainment, although many also had instructional elements. On the other hand, other stories were private and shared only with kin because of their educational value or the esoteric knowledge they conveyed.³³ Supplemental winter subsistence activities included ice fishing for trout, hunting large and small game (hares, porcupines, ptarmigan), and trapping furbearers for raw materials and trade. If food supplies ran low, village residents dispersed to more distant hunting and fishing areas. Using specially-trained dogs, hunters sought out bear dens.³⁴ A new round of subsistence activities began again in April.

Similar detail is not available for the pre-contact seasonal round of the people living at Kustatan and further south. It is very likely, however, that subsistence activities were much like those of Tyonek, with the exception of more harvesting of the more available marine fish and marine invertebrates of the middle and lower Cook Inlet.³⁵ In a short account of "How They Lived at Kustatan," probably pertaining to the 19th century and before, Kalifornsky³⁶ mentions beluga hunting, clamming, and hunting ground squirrels. Interestingly, he mentions the lack of moose along west Cook Inlet and tells of hunting parties from Kustatan crossing the inlet to hunt moose on the Kenai Peninsula. To these resources should certainly be added salmon, eulachon, migratory birds, small game, and bears.³⁷

Figure 2.2
Matrilineal Kinship System



Note: Clan based societies usually have more than one clan per moiety in a community. This diagram uses only two clans for simplicity.

Sources: Osgood 1937; Fall 1981, 1987

TRADITIONAL DENA'INA SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Every Dena'ina person was a member of a named, matrilineal clan. "Matrilineal" means descent through the female line. In other words, every Dena'ina belonged to his or her mother's clan (see Figure 2.2 Matrilineal Kinship System). All the clans, about 15 total for the entire Dena'ina area, were grouped into two "sides," or "moieties." The clans and the moieties were exogamous: members of the clans of one moiety or "side" could only marry people from the clans of the other "side."²⁸

Osgood, an early ethnographer of the Dena'ina, placed the clans into what he referred to as "Moiety A" and "Moiety B." Each of the moieties had associated colors. Those clans associated on one "side" with blue colors include *Tulchina*, "the Water Clan," which the Upper Inlet Dena'ina say were the original inhabitants of Dena'ina territory along Cook Inlet, and the *Nulchina*, "the Sky Clan." White is also associated with the *Nulchina*. The second moiety is marked by the color red and includes *Chishyi*, the "Red Ochre Clan" and *K'kalayi*, "Fish Tail Clan."²⁹ Figure 2.3 lists clans found in the Upper Cook Inlet villages.

The origin of clans is chronicled in Dena'ina oral history (*tsukdu*). In the following story, Dena'ina elder Shem Pete (SP), who was originally from Susitna Station, related the *Nulchina* clan origin story to Jim Fall (JF) with assistance by Billy Pete (BP), Shem's son.³⁰

JF: You're *Nulchina*, right?

SP: *Nulchina*, yeah.

JF: Then, your Mom was *Nulchina*?

SP: *Nulchina*, yeah.

JF: How about your Dad then, what was he?

SP: *K'kalyi* nation [i.e. clan].

JF: (To Billy) You're *K'kalyi* too?

BP: Yeah.

SP: I'm *Nulchina*.
Come down from the sky.

BP: All over, [from] Copper Center, probably around half of the Yukon River, and Stony River and Iliamna Lake, you go around and you'll find bunch of *K'kalayi* [and] *Chishyi*. They're all related to me somehow or other.

SP: My relation's *Tulchina*.
Tulchi, out of the water.
They get them from the water, all of us.

BP: There's two tribes belong to each other -- *Nulchina* and *Tulchina*.

JF: *Tulchina* and *Nulchina* belong to each other?

SP: Yeah, they're two brothers. Just like brothers.

BP: On my side, I don't know how many of them.

SP: *Ggahyi*, *Chishyi*, *K'kalyi*. I don't know how many more.

JF: There's two sides, then?

SP: Right.
Oh, they were trying to go make a war with us, because, *K'kalayi*, *Chishyi*, they got more people than we are.
So we, *Tulchina*, first they get 'em.
Then, their relation up in the air. They called them up.
They told them to come down and help us.
They coming down just like an airplane.
"Bzzzzzzz" -- they're coming down.
Big bunch of them *Nulchina*.
That's we.
We're going to help the *Tulchina*.
That's my part too.
So we help each other; pretty soon we are more people than them people.
They said, "We can't get along that way," because they're ready to fight, you know.
"Let's go get married to each [other's] sisters."
So, [they became] brothers-in-law, *shtlen* ["my brother-in-law," man speaking].
They tell each other [that].
They say, "OK."
They did that. They got married to the sisters.
They're brothers-in-law, just like brothers then.
So they don't fight.
[to Billy] That's why you people are alive yet. They were going to clean the whole nation out.
They didn't.
They married to their sisters.
[They were] brothers-in-law, just like brothers then.
They came together, mixed all pretty good, you know.
[Then] they lived just like one people, you know.

This story is a clear expression of the importance of clans in maintaining peace through regulating marriage and extending kinship obligations, especially with the arrival of new migrants into already established territory. Each group must fit within the social context of the larger group, and this in turn establishes individual kinship relations.³¹

The *nichil* – multifamily houses – in each village were occupied by people related through kinship, usually men of the same clan, their wives, and children. Leading each house or group of households was a *qeshqa*, generally translated as “rich man,” “boss,” or “leader.”³² The *qeshqa* organized his *ghelchitna* (“followers,” “people of the same clan”) into cooperative hunting and fishing groups, and managed the harvests of his followers. He was, in the words of the late Susitina Station and Tyonek resident Billy Pete, the “master of the cache.”³³ The *qeshqa* also settled disputes, managed relations with other groups, and instructed the young.³⁴ The wives of *qeshqa* were called “*qiy'u*” (“rich woman”) and their children (male and female) were called “*jiggi*” (translated as “princes” and “princesses” by some Dena'ina; also translated as “favored child”).³⁵ *Qiy'u* played a key role in the selection of husbands for their *jiggi* daughters; they selected young men who demonstrated hunting and leadership skills, usually during a period of service to the *qeshqa* as one of his “*ukilaga*” (young clan helpers) followed by a period of bride service.³⁶

In the traditional Dena'ina matrilineal system it was not only the *qeshqa* who instructed the young, but also the mother's brothers who taught young boys how to be men. Nikafor Alexan,³⁷ a Dena'ina from Tyonek, wrote a story about a young boy who was living with his grandmother and wanted to learn how to take care of himself after his grandmother was gone. According to the story, he approached his uncles for guidance. In his youngest uncle he found a teacher. The uncle made him work, but in doing so the young boy learned how to take care of himself and others, and how to follow the proper rules for living. By following his uncle's advice, this young man became a rich man (*qeshqa*) when he grew up. Osgood³⁸ relates that uncles taught their nephews how to hunt because parents, realizing the dangers of hunting, held back on their sons' training. The Dena'ina also considered it inappropriate for a person of one clan to direct the activities of someone of another clan (a young man was a member of different clan than his father, but of the same clan as his mother's brother).

The training of girls was supervised by their mothers, mothers' sisters, and mothers' mothers (women of the same clan). Young Dena'ina men and women observed strict puberty rites, including seclusion for several months or more.³⁹ Such young people were called “*hultsanat*,” which one Dena'ina elder translated as “in training.” While isolated, girls received instructions in sewing and other female tasks. In addition, both girls and boys at this transitional stage in their lives were taught about the rules for dealing with spiritual power, including those actions deemed *angge*, dangerous or taboo, and those necessary to show respect to the powerful spiritual entities that, in the traditional Dena'ina world view, animated the universe.

TRADITIONAL BELIEF SYSTEM

A key Dena'ina concept is that everything, both organic and inorganic, has an animating spirit.⁴⁰ “Whatever is on this earth is a person [has a spirit], they used to say. And they said they prayed to everything. That is the way they lived.”⁴¹ This idea ties the world together in reciprocal relationships between the land, animals, and humans. It reflects a complex order in the universe in which every action has a consequence. This concept is a key feature to traditional religious and spiritual beliefs among all northern Athabascan peoples.⁴²

Students of Athabascan spiritual beliefs have emphasized individualism as another key feature. As Van Stone⁴³ noted, “Each [Athabascan] individual tended to select from the belief systems of the culture those concepts that seemed particularly suitable to his own needs.”⁴⁴ Any assessment of Dena'ina traditional religious systems must account for 150 years of Christian missionization. Religious syncretism in what today might be viewed as “traditional” beliefs needs to be taken into account.

Figure 2.3

Dena'ina Clans Found in the Upper Cook Inlet

Moiety (side) A

Occur in Upper Inlet Villages:

Chishiyi ¹	Red Paint Clan
K'kalayi	Fish Tail Clan
Ggahyi	Raven Clan
Nichishyi	Second Paint Clan

Not found in Upper Inlet:

Nuhzhi ⁴	Clean or Neat Clan (Inland) ⁵
	Overland Clan (Kenai) ⁶

Moiety (side) B

Occur in Upper Inlet Villages:

Tulchina	Water Clan
Nulchina	Sky Clan
Diq'agiyi	Fireweed Clan
Dusdi Ghelchina ²	Point Clan
Ullch'e Dray ³	One-Way Clan

Not found in Upper Inlet:

Q'at' anht'an	Head of Lake Clan
Qeghkuht'an	Downriver Clan

Notes

- ¹ Chishiyi is called "Chishlant'an" at Nondalton and is placed in Moiety B.
- ² Dusdi Ghelchina is called "Yusdi Ghulchina" at Nondalton and is placed in Moiety A.
- ³ Ullch'e Dray is found mostly among the Ahtna.
- ⁴ In the late 20th century, this clan was introduced to Tyonek through intermarriage with Nondalton.
- ⁵ Elanna and Balluta (1992:107) translate Nuhzhi as "Clean or Neat Clan."
- ⁶ Kalifornsky (1991: 204) translates Nuhzhi as the "Overland Clan."

The following clans are recorded in older sources. They have no members today and are not recognized by Dena'ina speakers.

Dzel Ht'ana	Mountain Clan (Moiety B)
Yuyqushq' Nughelchina	Northern Lights Clan (Moiety B)
Sbdolaxdana	A Raven Clan
Tikeng'at'uh Ht'ana	Corner Clan (Moiety A)
Bent'uh Ht'ana	Below the Wall Clan (Moiety A)
Tl'egh Ht'ana	Sedge Clan (Moiety A)
Tsaghelchina	Unspecified Clan

Sources: Kari 1994:57-58; Fall 1981a:220-233,409-427; Osgood 1937:128-131

Boraas and Peter⁴⁵ offer a thoughtful discussion of Dena'ina spiritual beliefs based upon the writings of Peter Kalifornsky, a Dena'ina person who strove to be a *k'ech'eltanen*, "true believer". According to their analysis of Dena'ina cosmology, human existence is one of six overlapping 'dimensions,' and human actions are observed and recorded by the inhabitants of the other five dimensions. This first human physical dimension is described by the terms "body" and "breath" (*nitq'ech'*).⁴⁶ The second dimension is the human spirit or soul of that body called a "shadow spirit" or *k'eyiga*.⁴⁷ When a person dies, his or her spirit moves to the "ancestor dimension" through a cremation ritual and subsequent potlatch. Ancestor spirits, *q'egh nutnughe'an*, the 'spirit of the recent dead' (literally the-one-seeing-his-tracks-again),⁴⁸ represent the third dimension. Human souls can be reincarnated. Ancestor spirits are generally discomfiting and potentially dangerous to the living because they know a person's thoughts and can detect information from personal possessions.⁴⁹ This is one of the reasons that the ritual burning of one's belongings with the body is important. The destruction of possessions with the dead removes the traces of knowledge and action that have been acquired during their use because "artifacts could absorb and exude information and events associated with their use, and this potentially negative information was believed to send unwanted messages to animals, ancestor spirits, and other spirits."⁵⁰

In Boraas and Peter's analysis, animals and their spirits represented a "fourth dimension" in the Dena'ina cosmology as described by Peter Kalifornsky.⁵¹ Potent animal spirits can become one's spirit helper and have tremendous power to aid an individual. Like ancestor spirits, animals can detect actions and even thoughts of the living and react accordingly. Animals can also detect information from human artifacts. After harvest, animal remains are burned to return their spirits to their dimension. Like humans, animals can be reincarnated.⁵² It is only through the proper handling of animal remains that animals re-enter the spirit world to be born anew.



↑ The Dena'ina writer Nikafor Alexan (left) pictured here with Charlie Kroto at Tyonek in the 1920s. Nora McDowl Collection.

Boraas and Peter describe a "fifth dimension" which includes over 20 spirits that populate the Dena'ina world.⁵³ They are embedded in places or universal spirits that a person can encounter in the course of travel. Kalifornsky mentions some of these spirits in his writings, such as *Dghili dnay*, the "mountain people," and *K'unakda Jelen*, the "mother of everything."⁵⁴ Each of these spirits has associated stories. Embedded in the stories are rules for proper treatment of animals and objects. Through the stories people learned rules and could avoid danger while obtaining luck and power.⁵⁵

The final "dimension" in the Dena'ina cosmological order, according to Boraas and Peter's analysis, is that of "*Naq'eltani*."⁵⁶ Some Dena'ina describe *Naq'eltani* as a "supreme being" and today the word is often used as a synonym for the Christian God. *Naq'eltani* was responsible for the weather according to a Kenai source.⁵⁷

In his description of Dena'ina spiritual beliefs, the Dena'ina writer Nikafor Alexan⁵⁸ emphasized, among other things, the Dena'ina rules for treating animals respectfully. This is consistent with VanStone's⁵⁹ view that, "the single most consistent feature of aboriginal northern Athapaskan magico-religious belief systems [is] the significant reciprocal

relationship that exists between men and the animals on which they were dependent for their livelihood." VanStone⁶⁰ also noted that, "a variety of magical practices and taboos were used to placate animals and insure good hunting."

Alexan explained the origin of some of these practices as follows: ⁶¹

Once upon a time all the animal was talking like us and have masters like fish. One time they had a meeting and each animal decide how human should take care of them if they got killed for food. For example, beaver say if anybody got him for food, they should take care of his bone, put in fire so dogs won't chew it fresh. And if they have to club them to kill, they shouldn't use other kind of stick or wood except what beaver eat. And not to bring any fresh spruce branch where they carry that beaver. Fur animal don't like spruce branch. Some say they don't supposed to carry fresh water where they carry that beaver. And they shouldn't drop the fresh beaver, and so on.

I want to tell this because some time if our food supplies are cut off from outside and this country become famine, then some young generation might think about how did old people use to make a living. This story of old time might help some one if they read it and understand.

Alexan⁶² also describes the origin of the rules governing the treatment of salmon, which became related to humans when a young girl was transformed into a fish.⁶³

As in many indigenous cultures, Dena'ina shamans were specialists who served as intermediaries between humans and the spirit world. The shamans' roles in Dena'ina society were complex.

The shaman had their specific way of belief. They believed in what they could see. Their belief involved the spirit of every living animal and every living plant. Through prayer, they would contact the living being with their mind and they would start gathering the spirit of that thing through a transfer of power from one to the other.⁶⁴

The shaman was called an "*el'egen*." Shamans, either male or female, enacted and gained their powers through public performances in which they used rattles and donned masks. For example, the mask of the bear gave the shaman the powers of the bear. During a performance, a shaman gained the superhuman farsightedness of the spirits from which his powers derived.⁶⁵ Shamanistic power was also obtained through dreaming.⁶⁶ Shamanistic training began by fasting, during which one's powers became manifest. Shamans differed by reputation. Shamans who practiced "simple cures in their own village and having no reputation beyond it" were called "little shamans."⁶⁷ More powerful shamans were called *k'ech'eltanen*, or "true believers."⁶⁸ The *k'ech'eltanen* had additional powers and specialties beyond those that were practiced by the *el'egen*. One specialist was the *qatsitsexen*, or "dreamer" who foretold the future through dreams. A second was the *yug'hdni'anen*, or "sky reader" who predicted the weather,⁶⁹ providing important information for planning travel and hunting.

Shamans were medical practitioners as well. The *hkut' k'el'anen* was a "doctor." This person had knowledge of human anatomy and the ability to heal with medicinal herbs. The *behnaga dnadlunen* or "prophet" could foretell the future. One famous prophet lived at Polly Creek and predicted the coming of the Russians.⁷⁰

At Polly Creek there was a man who slept for three days. He woke up and he said, 'Things will be different.' They go around on the land. In the water they have huge ships and they travel around in the sky. They talk different from us. Their buildings are large, and inside there is everything. Inside it is bright. Everything is there.

There is an immense thing with smoke and fire. And the people were in two groups. Their movements looked dangerous.

There is one building where it is noisy. And those people are acting crazy. They are sitting on some kind of animal. And it is running around carrying them.

And salmon are loaded in this boat that makes exploding sound. He went to sleep and did not wake up.⁷¹

More discussion of shamans' interaction with the Russians and Americans is in the next chapter.

TRADE

Before the influx of Euro-Americans, Southcentral Alaska was a "mosaic of peoples" with two thirds of Dena'ina territory abutting areas exploited by Eskimo-speaking people who are referred to today as the Alutiiq and Central Yup'ik⁷² (see Figure 1.2). The social and economic interactions between the Dena'ina and Alutiiq people were managed by leaders of these groups.

For the Dena'ina, the *qeshqa* was the leader who controlled the redistribution of goods and was responsible for trade with other groups, through formal partnerships with other "rich men."⁷³ Alutiiq trading parties traveled to Cook Inlet Dena'ina communities to trade whale meat and *baidarkas* (kayaks) for land furs such as marmot skins, lynx, and sheep horns to be made into spoons.⁷⁴

At the time of contact with Europeans the Dena'ina were at the center of a major trading network. Their vast territory linked the different ecological zones of southcentral Alaska. Marine resources were at the heart of the economy for the west Cook Inlet people, especially those of Tyonek, Kustatan, and Polly Creek who had access to Outer Cook Inlet resources such as marine mammals and shellfish, as well as eulachon (hooligan). The resources could be traded to the Ahlta and other groups further inland. Many marine resources are rich in fat, a valuable commodity in the Alaska Native trade. The name for Point MacKenzie, *Dilhi Tunch del'usht Beydegh* ("eulachon-are-transported-point") points to the importance of the subsistence and trade of oil for the Dena'ina.⁷⁵

Although the Dena'ina of the Cook Inlet used large skin boats to transport goods, much travel was overland due to the dangerous tides in Cook Inlet, and occurred mainly in winter when hard packed snow facilitated the easy movement of people and pack dogs. Travelers wore snowshoes carrying large loads on their backs using ropes tied with sticks to form a pack. An account of a nineteenth century exploration in the Susitna Region noted that,

The natives are very strong and make fine packers, carrying at times over a hundred pounds. A girl of 12 years old carried 60 pounds for 16 miles one day, the greater portion of the distances over a mountain trail very rugged and rough.⁷⁶

Trails were blazed with stone adzes. In Upper Cook Inlet, moss was hung from trees to mark the trails. Even though, most trails were mapped in people's memory.⁷⁷ These trails allowed trade goods to pass from groups who occupied rich marine and riverine environments to other Dena'ina bands of the interior⁷⁸ (see Figure 2.3). Important routes to the interior included Merrill Pass and Telequana Pass which met at Chackachamna Lake.⁷⁹ This was the main pass used by Tyonek and Kustatan Dena'ina to trade with their relatives at Stony River and Lime Village.

To the east of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina were the Ahtna of the Copper River Basin, another Athabaskan-speaking group who remained in a relatively peaceful state with the Dena'ina. The Ahtna had access to copper, a resource that was greatly desired across Alaska through the pre-contact period for making tools and ornaments. The Ahtna traded copper for the marine resources gathered by the Dena'ina.⁶⁰ Centrally placed among these abundant resources, the Coastal Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet were able to work as middlemen between different groups, obtaining marine and inland resources for trade.

The agreements controlling trade had expectations of fairness and reciprocity, and conflict could arise if one party felt cheated. Many of the oral histories recounted by Dena'ina elders are stories of the interaction between *qeshqa*, and of raiding parties and conflicts.⁶¹ The *qeshqa* controlled the resource stores, internal and external trade, distribution, and the labor involved in procuring the resources for households and groups of households. *Qeshqa* were able to amass large amounts of resources, and in doing so, by their generous redistribution of these resources, were able to gain prestige, one of the most valuable assets in Alaska Native culture.

History of Tyonek Nickafor Alexan (1957)

As my story was beginning, old chief of Tyonek was a friend of Chief of Knik Alaska. They had made agreement that this Tyonek Chief will sell dried and smoke fish to the Knik Chief and his people. At all time. When they need. Because Knik people couldn't get enough fish to put up for the winter: as much as this beach people of Tyonek could. And so they made that agreement same with Knik Chief and his people to sell caribou hide, moose hide and all the dried meat and sinew. Since they are a lot closer to the mountain where there lot of caribou, moose, goat, sheep, and other meat food.

Tyonek Chief and Knik Chief also made agreement that they would be friend always no matter what come between them. So they call each other, Slew Chin which mean in our language, Be Friend Always. But I am sure that agreement didn't stand according to the story. Of course they was friend and trade all the time. For quite some time. Until one time, their insult or rather their joke was too much for these two friends.

In order to acquire prestige, the *qeshqa* managed procurement of a variety of resources from the network of seasonal camps throughout the group's regional territory. Access to streams, lakes and rivers, lowland woods and highland open areas were needed to acquire a variety of resources such as salmon, caribou, and in later years, moose.⁶² Fanning out to the different camps in the spring, the Dena'ina worked throughout the summer into late fall gathering resources for the coming winter, which would then be stored to last until spring. The *qeshqa* was then responsible for the redistribution of the resources to his dependants throughout the winter. If one of these ecological zones was missing in the group's territory, or the resources within that zone were scarce or failed, the *qeshqa* traded with other groups.⁶³

If a *qeshqa* successfully managed subsistence activities during a given year, or if a special ceremony was to be held, he called other villages to participate in a potlatch, redistributing the resources within his community and to neighbors.⁶⁴ This was an opportunity for the *qeshqa* to convert his economic wealth into prestige. This redistribution of goods was especially important in times of hardship, since the social groups receiving the goods at the potlatch may have difficulties procuring food resources or raw materials. Receipt of potlatch goods created an obligation that these gifts would be repaid in the future.

CONFLICTS WITH OTHER ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE

Trade fostered cooperative and interdependent relationships between various Dena'ina villages and regional bands as well as with other Alaska Native people, yet conflicts between these groups sometimes erupted. Following (page 28) is a story told by Nickafor Alexan that explained how a trading relationship deteriorated into a series of battles between several Upper Inlet Dena'ina groups. Intra-Dena'ina conflicts tended to focus on avenging a death or an insult, and were likely not undertaken for material gain in the pre-contact period.⁸⁵

Battle Between Alutiiq and Dena'ina

As told by Chugach Alutiiq Stephan Britskalov in Johnson (1984:29-31)

The Tanaina from Cook Inlet used to come here [to Prince William Sound] and kill people. There was a chief on Montague Island. He called all the people of the Sound – from Ishamy, Nuchek, Chenega, Ellamar...all over. All the chiefs met at Montague. The Montague chief told them, "We do not want to go to another place and start over again. Strong men must fight and kill the other people, kill them with bare hands, not with club or spear. We are tired of those people from Cook Inlet coming here. They come and try to kill us at night while we sleep. Get ready, and we will go to Chenega. Kiss your wives and children and be ready to die...."

In the morning they all left Chenega....They arrived at the middle of Cook Inlet. The chief saw something like ducks coming; it was baidaras (open skin boats) and baidarkas (kayaks). Some people are able to prophesy the weather. They let one of them look, they thought it was an approaching storm. He stood up and looked, saw the baidars and said, "I suppose those people are coming to fight us." Shanua went right between the other baidars and told the men to get ready. They were all ready before. Then they got together with the Tanaina. Atlutaq went right in between them and asked them why they had come. The Tanaina said, "We have come to kill you." Atlutaq answered: "We are all ready. Land or sea, all the same with us, any place. If you prefer to fight on land, all right. Strong men can do just as well on land as on the water." The baidars all got in one place, lying alongside each other. Atlutaq told the Tanaina to fight and not be afraid. He put his baidar dead on into the side of a Tanaina baidar and let two of the men spear it in the bottom. He was killing men in the baidar. Shanua did the same thing. The paddlers kept on pushing into Tanaina boats and would not allow them to move. Two men, Shanua and Atlutaq, handled all the baidars and killed the people. They save the lives of all the inhabitants of Prince William Sound.

When they had finished they all returned. They brought back one Tanaina baidar with its crew. The first arrived at this place (Chenega) and then they went to Montague. They told the Tanaina to fight with their hands one at a time, but they were too afraid, so they took them for slaves. They divided them up among all the villages. "Which has more men, they give them two." That time all the water at the mouth of Cook Inlet was bloody, and that is a big bay. After that the Tanaina did not come to Prince William Sound any more. This happened before the arrival of the Russians.

Dena'ina oral historians tell us there were conflicts over territory and resources with other indigenous groups, mainly the Alutiiq from Kodiak, but also the Yup'ik to the west.⁸⁵ Sometimes as Alexan's story illustrates, trade erupted into warfare. This led not only to casualties, but to the mixing of cultures and peoples through the capture of slaves.⁸⁷ At any particular time, a Dena'ina community might have hostile relations with some Alutiiq communities while maintaining peaceful trading relations with another.⁸⁸ These relationships were fluid in that once peace was re-established with one community, a trade disagreement or insult might lead to conflict with one or two others. Alutiiq informants relate that the Dena'ina were labeled as the aggressors and it was not until Dena'ina villages in Cook Inlet were defeated that hostilities ceased between the Alutiiq and Dena'ina.⁸⁹

SUMMARY

In the period before the arrival of the Russians and Europeans in the mid and late 18th century, the Dena'ina had firmly established themselves along the shores of west Cook Inlet. Two divergent dialects of the Dena'ina language were spoken: the Upper Inlet dialect in the territory of the *Tubughna* ("Beach People") and the Outer Inlet dialect in the territory of the *Qezdaghdna* ("Point People"). This suggests two distinct origins, from the Susitna/Yentna River Basin and the Iliamna Lake/Lake Clark/Story River area, respectively. Matrilineal kinship structured Dena'ina community organization and economic activities. Individuals achieved leadership positions through skills in hunting, fishing, and managing subsistence harvests through redistribution, trade, and potlatching; the most successful gained prestige and acquired the status of *qeshqa*. The Dena'ina's complex spiritual system provided guidance for interacting with the non-human realm. Specialists called *el'egen* (shamans) assisted their people by communicating with the non-human world through songs, dance, and dreams. The Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet, both the *Qezdaghdna* and *Tubughna*, traveled extensively throughout their territory in search of subsistence resources in areas that now make up parts of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. They were also actively engaged in trade with the inland Dena'ina whose descendants today live in Pedro Bay, Nondalton, and Lime Village; with the Ahtna Athabascans with whom they had kinship ties; and with Alutiiq people at the periphery of Cook Inlet. Peaceful relations sometimes deteriorated into armed conflicts because of insults, or disputes over territory and trade.



*Old Tjonek around 1900 (exact date unknown).
Courtesy of the Josiah Edwards Spurr Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming*



CHAPTER THREE

THE COMING OF THE RUSSIANS 1780s-1867

ESTABLISHING THE FUR TRADE

In 1778, the Dena'ina experienced an event on the western shore of *Tikahtnu* that, according to their oral traditions, was foretold by their ancestors: the arrival of a new, foreign people — the crews of the British naval vessels *Resolution* and *Discovery* under the command of Captain James Cook.¹ The British were on a voyage of discovery. The Russians, however, had already established trading stations in the Aleutian Islands. With the decimation of sea otter populations there, Russian trading companies expanded their activities to the east. In 1784, the Shelikhov-Golikov Company established permanent headquarters at Kodiak, from which it began operations within Cook Inlet, which the Russians called "Kenai Bay." Over the next ten years, Russian trading companies established several posts along Cook Inlet, initiating significant demographic, economic, and cultural changes among all the Dena'ina regional groups.

There were four known early Russian posts along Cook Inlet. The first, founded in 1786 at the entrance to Cook Inlet by the Shelikhov-Golikov Company, was called Alexandrovsk (later English Bay, and presently Nanwalek). The rival Lebedev-Lastochkin Company founded three others: one, built at the mouth of the Kaslof River in 1787 called St. George; another, built in 1791 at the mouth of the Kenai River called St. Nicholas (later Kenai); and a fourth post, perhaps called St. Paul, near present day Tyonek sometime before 1794.²

Conflicts developed between the two rival Russian trading companies in the 1790s, which drew in the Dena'ina as well.³ Dena'ina oral tradition suggests that the Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet and the upper inlet resisted Russian attempts to directly control the fur trade and subjugate the Dena'ina people, as they had the Aleuts and the Koniag Alutiiq. Dena'ina middlemen (*qeshqa*) had begun traveling to the Russian posts to trade their furs for Russian goods (see Figure 3.1 for a list of Tyonek *qeshqa*). Because sea otters were not found in great quantity in upper Cook Inlet, the Russians began trading with the Dena'ina for furs from land animals. Beaver pelts were one of the major trade items sought by the Russians.⁴ Trade expanded to a wide variety of animal pelts including caribou skins, muskrat, black bear, and wolverine.

Figure 3.1
Qeshqa of the Russian & American Periods
Tubughnenq' & Qaggeyshlat – Tyonek

Name	Clan	Moiety	Dates
Chadaka'a		B	Early 19th century
Nunk'ilash			Mid 19th century
Nugheiduf Tukda	Chishyi	A	Mid 19th century
Benita Ch'ulyafen	Chishyi	A	1840s to circa 1918
Behenatsili Tukda	Chishyi	A	Died 1930
Simeon Chickalusion	Tulchina	B	1880-1957

Source: Fall 1987/88

As this trade grew, the Russians attempted to gain direct access to Dena'ina territory, but the Dena'ina acted to prevent this. As noted, a small trading post had been established at Tyonek, but the Dena'ina destroyed it in 1797.⁵ An employee of the Russian American Company (RAC), Vladimir Stafeev, wrote an account of this attack in Russian in the 1860s, based on the same Dena'ina oral traditions that were later related by Nickafor Alexan and by Shem Pete in his unpublished story about Quq'ey, the leader of the Tyonek war party. In Stafeev's version, the Russians built a fort at Tyonek for trading purposes. In the evenings, the Russians often took the wives and daughters of the Tyonek people for their own pleasure. This continued for some nights until the leader of Tyonek organized the men of the village to kill the Russian leader and his forty men. The Tyonek Dena'ina men were successful in their attack on the Russians. However, after their successful attack on the Russians, they grew bold, continuing the violence. Stafeev describes how the Tyonek men then attacked a Dena'ina trading party from Susitna for their goods. They later attacked a second trading party from Kustatan, and it was only in a battle of wills that the party from Kustatan managed to escape.

The Russian garrison at Kenai became aware of the killing of their men after a mail boat failed to find any Russians at the Tyonek post and quickly retreated back to Kenai. Each year men from Tyonek traveled to Kenai to trade. Upon their arrival during this annual trading expedition the Tyonek men entered a Russian post that was prepared for trouble.

The Russians disarmed the Tyonek men and then killed them as an example.⁶

In the accounts by Stafeev, Alexan, and Shem Pete, the Russians became more wary of the Dena'ina after this series of conflicts. Osgood⁷ also concluded that "the bitterness of the natives towards the Russian intruders certainly limited Russian expansion and probably many of the Tanaina-escaped exploitation by keeping out of reach."



↑ Old "Second Tyonek" Beach in 2004. Photo by Ron Starek.

A Dena'ina elder noted:

The Russians had their headquarters in Kenai. They killed lots of people and they took their women. They didn't move into the [upper inlet] Dena'ina villages. They were scared the Dena'ina would kill them. They didn't trap much. The Dena'ina never let the Russians up there [into the Susitna River country]. The Russians were too cheap in trading. The Dena'ina did not allow them. They kill them. Not even ten or twenty in a group go there, because too many natives.⁸

In 1799, the Russian Tsar Paul I granted a trade monopoly to the Russian American Company (RAC). Subsequently, Russian policies changed and direct subjugation of the Dena'ina was no longer a goal. Instead, the Russians interacted with the Dena'ina through the *qeshqa* as middlemen in the fur trade. Many of the Upper Cook Inlet *qeshqa* traded at the Russian posts on the Kenai Peninsula. The Dena'ina *qeshqa* jealously guarded their monopoly over trade in their territories and their Dena'ina followers were the sole participants in harvesting furs. Because participation in the trade and the control of western trade goods created prestige for *qeshqa*, the Dena'ina became firmly entrenched in the fur trade.⁹

The fur trade in Cook Inlet spread from the posts at Kenai inland to Iliamna Lake. Reports in the mid 19th century by Russian American Company employee Vladimir Stafeev,¹⁰ who stayed in Alaska and worked at the Tyonek trading post for the subsequent Alaska Commercial Company, noted that Dena'ina from Iliamna and Lake Clark had been coming to trade at Tyonek for some time. Lieutenant Zagoskin's travel journals from the 1840s¹¹ also demonstrate that Russian influence had been penetrating deep into Dena'ina territory.

The new trade also enabled the Dena'ina *qeshqa* to work as middlemen between the Russians and other interior Athabaskan groups.¹² Trade passed far up the trails, reaching the Interior Athabascans of the Upper Kuskokwim River. According to Dena'ina oral tradition, Diqelas Tukda, a *qeshqa* from Alexander Creek, regularly crossed the Alaska Range to trade Russian wares available to him at Cook Inlet with the Upper Kuskokwim Athabascans.

Long ago, when the Russians came, Diqelas Tukda would carry around a Russian gun. With his maternal uncle he would go to the interior Athabascans and trade with them, selling tobacco, tea, and matches in exchange for furs. From this Diqelas Tukda became a rich man.¹³

Trade continued in the upper Cook Inlet throughout the Russian Period. According to anthropologist Linda Ellanna,¹⁴ the Dena'ina of Stony River traded with the Russians in the Iliamna Lake area and at Tyonek. Several travel routes were used including traveling across Tutnutl'ech'a Tustes (Merrill Pass) to Tyonek (see Figure 2.1). At Tyonek they obtained commercial goods such as powder, shells, lead, and tobacco.¹⁵ One pass that the Dena'ina of Lake Clark and Tyonek used for trade was Chikalushen Tustes (Chickalusion Pass). This trail branched off from Nan Gelah Tustes, the Telaquana Trail, to travel by way of Twin Lakes and then down the north fork of the Tlikakila River to Qizhkeh Vena Tustes (Lake Clark Pass).¹⁶ The pass was named after Chief Chickalusion from Tyonek and Kustatan.¹⁷ This was a shorter but rougher route and the last time the pass was used was in 1920.¹⁸ Stony River Dena'ina traveled to Cook Inlet for trade purposes as described by Pete Bobby (PB) and Macy Hobson (MH),¹⁹ who tell of traveling up the Stony River through Two Lakes and over Merrill Pass to trade at Tyonek.

MH: The people from the Stony River would trade for goods with the Russians in the Iliamna Lake area. They would also go from Stony River through Merrill Pass to Tyonek. A lot of Kijik people came from Stony River.

PB: People used to travel from this river through Merrill Pass to Tyonek to get commercial goods. They did this in both his father's and grandfather's time.

Travel by inland Dena'ina to Tyonek and other west Cook Inlet villages for trade resulted in intermarriage between these Dena'ina regional groups. For example, an inland Dena'ina oral tradition relates that three sisters from Tyonek married into the Stony River and Lake Clark bands and are the ancestors of many inland Dena'ina today. Such marriages likely facilitated trading relationships between Dena'ina communities.²⁰

Trade between the Dena'ina and the Russians continued throughout the Russian occupation of Alaska. However, due to the dwindling population of sea otters and other fur bearing animals, the focus of the Russian fur trade shifted to southeast Alaska. By the 1860s, the Russians were also attempting to bypass Dena'ina middlemen by establishing direct trading relationships with interior Athabascans.²¹

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND TRADITIONAL DENA'INA BELIEFS

The traditional Dena'ina worldview was based on a respect for the natural world, which focused on reciprocity. In this view, animals give themselves to humans and in return humans must treat the animal remains and their spirits with respect. Interaction between the spiritual and the natural world was mediated by shamans, as discussed in the previous chapter. During public performances, shamans healed the sick, located game, predicted the weather, or found lost souls, depending on their strengths and specializations.

The Russian Orthodox mission to Alaska began at the request of Gregory Shelikof in 1784. Upon their arrival in 1794, the clergy set about performing baptisms and marriages. Later they protested the abusive treatment of Alaska's indigenous peoples by the fur traders.²² The clergy won concessions to provide basic health care and education for native people where possible. However, the relationship between the Dena'ina and the Russians was fluid and constantly changing. "Dena'ina country represented a common frontier situation with its lines of uncertainty and a kaleidoscope of interactions that included trade and clashes, peace and occasional military conflicts, cooperation and intermarriage, abuses, and reciprocity."²³ When Russian traders and Orthodox priests first attempted to expand their influence to parts of the Cook Inlet area, they met resistance on several occasions. In addition, upon entering the Iliamna country, they were quickly repulsed by Dena'ina inhabitants. As they were leaving the area by a different route north into the Kuskokwim Drainage, one Russian expedition was killed by a hunting party.

A devastating small pox epidemic of the late 1830s took the lives of at least half of the Cook Inlet Dena'ina (see below), after which Russian missionary activities in the Cook Inlet area intensified.²⁴ In 1845, Hieromonk Nikolai established a mission at Kenai, from which clergy made regular visits to the west side of Cook Inlet, to the settlements of Polly Creek, Kustatan, Tyonek, and Chuitna as well as to settlements in the Susitna Drainage and Knik Arm. By the 1840s, the Russian American Company's policies of aggressive encroachment into indigenous territory had changed. The Russian Orthodox Church then played an important role in mitigating the prior negative impacts of this ill treatment.²⁵

According to his own accounts, Russian Orthodox Priest Nikolai experienced early success in converting the Dena'ina to Christianity. "Kenai natives willingly became Christians and obeyed his teachings of the Bible. They listened attentively and obliging the missionaries; they abandoned their old dances and songs, substituting religious songs that had been translated into the language. All of the shamans became baptized and most of these became the best Christians."²⁶ Nevertheless, later orthodox missionaries continued to battle the influence of shamans. At this time Dena'ina religious beliefs and practices likely became a syncretism of traditional beliefs and Christian teachings (see the next chapter for more on this religious syncretism).

DISEASE AND DENA'INA DEMOGRAPHY

Waves of diseases brought by Euro-Americans had devastating impacts on the Dena'ina population.²⁷ The exchange of goods such as beads, tea, and simple household items for fur was the primary motivation for early Russian explorers and traders to contact the Dena'ina. With this contact came a one-way exchange of disease. For thousands of years Europeans had lived in close proximity to animals acquiring both their diseases and immunity to these diseases. There were no immunities among the indigenous people of the New World against these devastating illnesses.

Figure 3.2
Estimates of Dena'ina Population

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Source</i>
Pre-contact	3000	(Listiansky 1814)
1800	2378	(Khlebnikov 1976)
1819	1471	(Tikhmenev 1978)
1825	1299	(Petroff 1884)
1830	1537	(Fedorova 1973) ¹
1835	1564	(Fedorova 1973)
1840	1206	(Fedorova 1973)
1845	816	(Fedorova 1973)
1851	1070	(Fedorova 1973)
1856	1800	(Fedorova 1973)
1860	1099	(Fedorova 1973)
1865	764	(Townsend 1965)
1870	709	(Townsend 1965)
1875	666	(Townsend 1965)
1880	972	(Petroff 1884)
1890	817	(Porter 1893)
1899	1170	(Elliot 1900) ²
1910	672 (+25) ³	(U.S. Bureau of the Census 1913)
1932	650	(Osgood 1937)
1974	900	(Krauss 1974)
1982	800	(Krauss 1982)
1990	784	(DCED 2005)
1997	900	(Krauss 1997)
2000	1274	(DCED 2005)

¹ The figures from Townsend (1965) and Fedorova (1973) only pertain to the Dena'ina population under the jurisdiction of the Kenai Mission.

² This includes the 1030 Dena'ina living in the Cook Inlet area and 140 Dena'ina of the Nushagak area.

³ The additional 25 individuals are classified as creoles.

Adapted from Fall (1987:16) with additions from Krauss (1997) and DCED (2005).

From an estimate of 4,000 to 5,000 people prior to European contact, the Dena'ina population likely began to decline in the late 18th century as a result of armed conflicts and diseases (see Figure 3.2 for Dena'ina population estimates). In the 1830s, Russian estimates averaged around 1,500 Dena'ina, but these estimates are probably low because of the remoteness of some Dena'ina groups.²⁸ In the late 1830s, a smallpox epidemic decimated the Dena'ina population, and at least half the population died. Although the Russian missionaries went to great lengths to vaccinate the Dena'ina, the population continued to decline as new diseases and the accompanying low morale affected them. By 1860, as the Russian period in Alaska's history was coming to a close, the Dena'ina population had dwindled to around 937.²⁹

SUMMARY: KEY DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE RUSSIAN PERIOD

During the Russian period, the Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet remained independent of direct control by Russian authorities. No permanent Russian settlements or trading posts were established in their territory. The Dena'ina retained free and open access to all subsistence resources. Their involvement in the fur trade built upon existing subsistence skills, trade networks, and social relationships. To trade their wares with Russian posts in Cook Inlet the Dena'ina of Iliamna and Lake Clark traveled long distances across already established trade routes through mountain passes to Tyonek and other Cook Inlet villages. This trade encouraged marriages between the inland and coastal Dena'ina. Although the trade brought new goods such as clothing and weapons and prestige items, full dependence on local natural resources continued. On the other hand, diseases cut the Dena'ina population by half or more, placing extreme stress on traditional social organization and opening the Dena'ina community to new religious ideas. Nevertheless, at the eve of the Russian sale of Alaska to the United States, the Dena'ina were still the majority population in their homeland.

CHAPTER FOUR THE EARLY AMERICAN PERIOD 1867-1900

THE FUR TRADE

After the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, the assets of the Russian American Company were transferred to Hutchinson, Kohl, and Company, which was bought out by the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) in 1872. Euro-American trappers began to slowly filter into the Cook Inlet area, creating a demand for local sources of western goods such as clothing, cooking implements, rifles and shells, and tobacco. Independent traders and ACC employees traveled throughout upper Cook Inlet, trading western goods to the Dena'ina and others in exchange for furs. Trappers benefited from the competition between fur buyers.¹ Also, the ACC established additional permanent fur trading posts around Cook Inlet. By at least 1875, a permanent post operated at Tyonek, followed by stores at Susitna Station and on the upper Knik Arm.² Thus the supply of western goods available for trade from the Americans was much greater than during the Russian period. These imported goods became increasingly important in the Dena'ina economy. Traditional Dena'ina leaders, the *qeshqa*, gained wealth and prestige by acquiring western goods and taking advantage of the high prices that resulted from the competition between rival trading companies. *Qeshqa* also transported western goods, especially supplies for miners, over their own established trails and new trails set down by the growing population of Euro-Americans. Some *qeshqa* (such as Chief Pete of Tyonek)³ also ran their own stores, and some were hired by American traders to conduct business on their behalf.⁴



← Dena'ina in the Knik Arm of Upper Cook Inlet in the early 20th century. Boats such as this were used for transportation and trade over the shallow shoals and sandbars. U.S. Navy Collection.

The west Cook Inlet shoreline provided the interface for commerce between traders traveling by boat and the land-based Dena'ina. While the trade in fur drew upon sources from all around the Cook Inlet area, several natural trade routes funneled fur from the Lake Clark area to trading posts at Tyonek and Iliamna (see Figure 2.1). Trading posts at both Tyonek and Susitna Station furnished the means for trappers to exploit the fur resources of the interior.⁵

Like the Susitna and Matanuska River Valleys in the northern part of the inlet, west Cook Inlet travel and trade routes followed major river drainages and traversed mountain passes. The Chakachatna River drains the Neacola, Chilligan, and Nagishlima rivers, and trails leading to and from Cook Inlet followed these systems. The Nagishlima River was an alternate route from the upper Skwentna River. The Chilligan River had a route that led to the upper Kuskokwim, and the Another River route led through Merrill Pass to the upper Stony River and on to Lime Village. "Big Chilligan" Phillip, after whom the Chilligan River is named, was a Tyonek *qeshqa* and chief who built a cabin on this river in about 1896⁶ and guided Stephen R. Capps of the U.S. Geological Survey through the area in the late 1920s.⁷

→ Chief Chiligian Philip or "Big Chiligian," originally from Sositna and later chief of Tyonek, and his wife, Olga, in the late 1920s. According to Shem Pete (Kari & Fall 2003:25) the chief's Dena'ina name was Beghuduch'di'ishen, meaning "we refrain from talking about him." Alexandra Allaway Collection.



According to Dena'ina from Lime Village, Chief Chickalusion⁹ and others traveled through Merrill Pass (*Tutnuff'echa Tustes*) and Telaquana Pass (*Dilah Vena Tustes*) from Kustatan with seal and other marine mammal products. In turn, Lime Village people traveled to the inlet to trade and visit. Most of this travel occurred in late winter.⁹

Lake Clark Pass is a more difficult southern route also used for trade by west Cook Inlet and Inland Dena'ina.¹⁰ Today this route is often used by planes traveling between the cities and towns of Cook Inlet and the small communities of the Lake Clark-Iliamna Lake area. Before the arrival of Euro-Americans, the Dena'ina forged a trail along the Tiikakila River northeast from Kijik on Lake Clark up into the headwaters of the north fork of that river by *bidarka* (kayak or *vigidin* in Dena'ina) and then down into Redoubt Bay near Kustatan.¹¹ Chickalusion Pass (*Chikalushen Tustes*) is a branch of the Lake Clark Pass. The trail started at Twin Lakes, located north of Lake Clark, and proceeded east over the pass and down into the valley that holds the Tiikakila River.¹²

At one time a glacier blocked Lake Clark Pass. Pete Koktelash of Nondalton described the dangers associated with crossing the glacier.¹³

Once a family was crossing a glacier going to Tyonek and a baby was dropped into a crevice. The baby was lashed into a basket so it didn't fall out of the basket and wasn't hurt. The man lowered himself into the crevice with moose raw-hide rope (*babiche*) and got the baby.

In 1975, Pete Trefon of Nondalton reported that this glacier had receded considerably over the past 50 years.¹⁴

The Iliamna Portage (*Tus Nuch'elyasht* "pass-where-we-bring-things-back") is a centuries- old trail approximately 12 miles long, extending from the mouth of the Iliamna River through the mountains, along Chinkelyes Creek to the head of Iliamna Bay. In 1818, Peter Korsakovsky, an early Russian explorer and his party – most likely the first Europeans to use the pass – were guided by Dena'ina over this portage during his trip to assess the fur potential in the Iliamna Lake region.¹⁵ The trail became the main route for bringing fur from the interior near Lake Clark to Cook Inlet. The ACC, which ran a post on Iliamna Lake, had a substation 5 miles from the head of Iliamna Bay during the 1880s and 1890s at a site called AC Point. John W. Clark ran the Iliamna Post from the 1880s to 1897. He encouraged Bristol Bay Yup'ik people to hunt sea otters on the Cook Inlet side.¹⁶

In 1891, A.C. Schanz¹⁷ visited the village of Kilchikii (Kijik) on Lake Clark on his expedition for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. His description is clear evidence of trade between the inland Dena'ina and the west Cook Inlet Dena'ina.

The head-man of the village wore cowhide boots and a tailed coat, and in fact, all the natives were more or less dressed in civilized garments. The houses and caches were neatly built of hewn logs and planks, the houses having windows made of the tanned skin of mountain sheep intestines. The whole village bore an air of respectability and cleanliness almost startling to one accustomed to the filth of Esquimaux mud-huts. This impression was enhanced when upon entering the chief's house we found there a small box-stove with four holes for cooking. The chief had also built himself a table and a sleeping bunk. It seems that the articles of civilized clothing and furniture are obtained by these people through intertribal commerce with the natives of Cook's Inlet. The chief himself had paid repeated visits to the posts of Cook Inlet.



↑ The "Second Village" of Tyonek at Tyonek Creek in 1898.
Mendenhall Collection, U.S. Geological Survey

Much of the trade on the west side of Cook Inlet in the early American period occurred at Tyonek, where Dena'ina from Knik and Susitna Station exchanged their furs at the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) post for western items. Interestingly the log books list these people as being "Kinnick" and "Suchntina," more likely indicating the regional band of these Dena'ina rather than their specific villages.¹⁸ The ACC post at Tyonek hosted Ahtna fur trappers as well. For example, on May 26, 1885, the ACC¹⁹ records from Tyonek state that in the "morning come 4 canoe and 1 skin boat from Shuchitna, and 1 skin boat of Copper River Natives bringing fur."

The establishment of fur trading stations and the competition for trade with these posts by the Dena'ina and Ahtna created conflicts. On December 26, 1885 the manager at the Tyonek ACC, Vladimir Stafeev, recorded the following conflict that occurred at the Knik station that caused the Dena'ina to fear their Ahtna neighbors.²⁰ "Come Natives from Kenick, tell one Copper River Natives killing agent of Kenick, Mr. Hold [sic; sb George Holt], Morning 18th December. -15th Dec." He then goes on to relate what happened.

15th December: Come two Copper Natives, sells his fur, one Native start to succeed,²¹ agent throw out him from store. After that three day him quiet. 18th December: Morning, agent come out from house, that moment natives kill him from double gun, natives shoot him in the back and bullet to trace out through to breast, natives to watch him from woods. — Kenick, Shuchitna, and Tyoneck Natives in fear, that Copper Natives go killing all natives.

This incident relates how an Ahtna person tried to bargain with, or perhaps intimidate, the ACC agent and failed. The Ahtna then killed the agent, spreading fear of further killings among the local Dena'ina population. Although the logbooks suggest that order was restored following this incident, this passage demonstrates that the presence of outsider traders could disrupt traditional social relations. (This is similar to the incidents at Tyonek in the 1790s summarized in the previous chapter.) There is no more indication in the records for that year that the Ahtna returned to Tyonek to trade.²²

In 1897, demand for furs declined and the ACC dropped its prices substantially. The value of furs decreased by half and the ACC stopped extending credit to Dena'ina trappers.²³ These changes were a major blow to the Dena'ina economy and the position of the traditional leaders, the *geshqa*.²⁴ With the decline in the fur trade, the focus of trading companies shifted to supplying Euro-American mining operations.

MINING

Euro-Americans moved into the upper Cook Inlet Region in the late 19th century in greater numbers than during the Russian period as gold was discovered on the Kenai Peninsula and Susitna Basin. Although mining did not play a large role in the development of the west side of Cook Inlet until the mid 1960s, the quest for and extraction of commercially viable deposits of ore and minerals in the Cook Inlet area began in the 1850s with Russian traders and mining engineers such as Doroshin and Paveloff.²⁵ Doroshin was known for his work in the coal and gold fields on the Kenai Peninsula. In 1853, Paveloff found oil seeps at Oil Bay and Dry Bay east of Iniskin Bay, the first discoveries of oil in Cook Inlet. A man named Edelman later staked claims for oil in the area, the first such claims staked in Alaska.²⁶ Between 1896 and 1909 prospectors with several companies attempted to drill for oil at Oil Bay. In 1896, two men named Pomeroy and Giffin staked oil claims at Oil Bay, and organized the Alaska Petroleum Company. Another company, The Alaska Oil Company, drilled at neighboring Dry Bay. While the former drilled and found considerable deposits of gas, they ceased operations due to the high pressure and influx of salt water. The latter company found nothing in Dry Bay. In 1910, all oil lands in Alaska were withdrawn from exploitation, and not until 1920 did the federal government pass legislation for leasing oil lands.

While gold in any significant quantity was never discovered on the west side of Cook Inlet, the search for it following its discovery on the Kenai Peninsula and the Susitna River Basin established Tyonek as a major transit and supply hub for miners. The Turnagain Arm Gold Rush of 1895-1898 generated business for Tyonek Station as it became an outfitting point for many prospectors, a role it retained into the early 20th century.²⁷ Deep draft vessels could unload at Tyonek and be transferred to smaller vessels for trips inland.

Copper deposits at the head of Cottonwood Bay (off of Iliamna Bay) were worked by George W. Dutton of the Dutton Mining and Development Company. Operation of the copper mine by Dutton lasted from 1901 to 1909.²⁸

COMMERCIAL FISHING

The first commercial salmon fishery in Cook Inlet began on the Kenai River in 1878, operated by the Alaska Commercial Company.²⁹ Early fishermen used dip nets, traps, and weirs with the fish salted in barrels for transport. In 1882, the Alaska Packing Company established the first Cook Inlet cannery at Kaslof near Kenai and commercial fishermen consequently increased their harvest efforts at other locations including Tyonek.³⁰

Cannery vessels purchased salmon from the Dena'ina. They also fished at Tyonek and other west Cook Inlet locations. These sales and commercial harvests created shortages of subsistence salmon for the Dena'ina and displaced them from their traditional fishing sites. For example, in 1897, the Russian Orthodox priest Bortnovsky wrote in his journal:

The quantity of fish [salmon] grows smaller each year. And no wonder: each cannery annually ships out 30,000 to 40,000 cases of fish. During the summer all the fishing grounds are jammed with American fishermen and of course the poor Indian is forced to keep away in order to avoid unpleasant meetings with the representatives of American Civilization.³¹

The journals of the ACC agents at Tyonek in the 1880s and 1890s contain reports of hunger among the Tyonek Dena'ina that they attributed to sale of salmon to cannery ships and reduced runs of fish. In June 1895, the ACC agent wrote that, "No fish are running this year."³²

Cannery operations reached the west side of Cook Inlet in 1900 when C.W. Ladd built a small saltery at the mouth of the Chuitna River, six miles above the old village of Tyonek.³³ The cannery did not employ local residents and instead was staffed by Euro-Americans and Chinese. Fishing efforts consisted of four fish traps and 20 gill net boats. In contrast to the other already established canneries at Kenai and Kaslof, this new cannery was profitable, at least temporarily. Although it made money in 1902, just two years after it opened this small cannery was squeezed out by a price war with larger companies and was abandoned in that year. It was never reopened. Cannery operations were minimal during the next few years, and canneries did not return to the west side of Cook Inlet until 1919 when the Surf Packing Company built a cannery at Snug Harbor.³⁴ Hand-driven fish traps were set up by independent fishermen and canneries near Tyonek throughout this period. The beginning of a boom in the Cook Inlet commercial fishery in the early 20th century will be discussed further in the next chapter.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX MISSION ACTIVITIES

Russian influence in Cook Inlet continued after the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 through the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church. After 1867, the Orthodox Church in Alaska found itself with fewer economic resources and personnel, although it continued to receive minimal funding from the Russian Tsarina. Due to the lack of Orthodox priests in Alaska, the Orthodox Church had an accepting attitude and self-governing policy regarding the Dena'ina that encouraged them to accept the new beliefs.³⁵ Many parishes trained local leaders to perform ceremonies and a greater degree of tolerance was given for local traditions. In addition, the partial success of vaccinations in the 1860s by Orthodox priests led the Dena'ina to connect the healing powers of the vaccinations with the power of Orthodoxy.³⁶ As a result, according to Znamenski's history of the Dena'ina and Russian Orthodoxy, the church gained a popular following of worshippers. In Znamenski's view, given the weak presence of the Russians in Cook Inlet, adoption of Russian Orthodoxy can be considered not an imposition, but rather the Dena'ina's own choice.³⁷ Chapels were established at Kustatan, Tyonek, Susitna Station, and Eklutna after the sale of Alaska to the United States. Russian Orthodoxy became a viable part of Dena'ina spirituality.³⁸

Over time the Orthodox religion had a profound effect on the Dena'ina, exhibited in their settlement and land use patterns. Because the Dena'ina were motivated to participate in the highly ceremonial and iconic practices of the church, they were influenced by the clergy to move settlements, construct chapels, and contribute money.³⁹

Alaska Commercial Company⁴⁰ records for Tyonek note that the Russian Orthodox Church remained active after the transfer of the territory to the United States. The ACC manager in Tyonek in 1882 records the progress of the building of a new church. The arrival of priests from Kenai is noted as well. Tyonek elder Sava Stephan⁴¹ describes the way Orthodox instruction was transmitted in Tyonek between the 1920s and 1940s. This account likely reflects practices in the late 19th century as well:

Old Chief [Simeon] Chickalusion used to be working in church, he knew how to read Russian. He was trying to learn from Father Paul Shadura. He was trying to learn Russian to hold service. Chickalusion learned how to read in church and he was teaching a Tyonek boy, Nickafor Alexan. He was teaching him how to read in church. Nickafor held services then after Chickalusion died.

Shamans continued to be leaders within their communities, taking positions within the Orthodox Church.⁴² The Orthodox faith became a blend of the traditional animistic and the new Christian religion. An example is the "Kustatan Bear Story" as related by Maxim Chickalusion of Tyonek, who learned the story from his father Theodore Chickalusion,⁴³ one of the participants in this story.⁴⁴ In the story, told in the early twentieth century, two Iliamna shamans battled with the people of Kustatan. A hunting party from Kustatan discovered a cache, robbed it, and returned to their village. The people of Iliamna learned their cache had been raided and, suspecting the Kustatan people, sent two shamans in the form of a giant brown bear to kill the people of Kustatan. The bear attacked the village each night and for three days the men of the village shot at the bear but never injured it. Not until the final night when they used shells they had filled with incense from the church were they able to kill the bear. The story then relates how a Kustatan shaman drove the Iliamna shaman back to Iliamna. At the same time, in retaliation, the Kustatan shaman sent wolves to eat the Iliamna people out of food, by burning effigies of wolves in a fire. Consequently, the Iliamna people starved.

This story not only relates aspects of traditional shamanistic power, but the growing importance of the new religion. While Dena'ina shamans continued to do battle in the spiritual realm, it was only through harnessing the power of the church that people were able to protect themselves. It is also a potent demonstration of how people have not separated the new and the old religions but have constructed a syncretic belief system. In effect, Dena'ina were able to gain power and protection from each set of beliefs.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Epidemic disease was rampant among the Dena'ina during several periods in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Descriptions of these events among the Dena'ina who lived on the Kenai Peninsula can be found in the journals of early settlers,⁴⁵ logs kept by trading post officials,⁴⁶ and Dena'ina oral history. Russian priests and later American missionaries did their best to vaccinate Alaska's indigenous people against disease. However, efforts came too late in some cases. In the 1890s and early 1900s the Dena'ina population of the west Cook Inlet villages of Polly Creek, Kustatan, and others began to converge on Tyonek after disease reduced their numbers. By 1890 many Dena'ina had abandoned their smaller settlements and had moved closer to the Euro-American trading posts and missions. The effects of the 1918 influenza epidemic were so great that by the early 1930s the inhabitants of western and upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina villages of Kroto Creek, Susitna Station, Alexander Creek, Kustatan, and Tyonek consolidated at Tyonek under the leadership of Simeon Chickalusion.⁴⁷

The commercial fishing industry established processing facilities at several locations, of which Tuxedni Bay was the first and primary focal point. In the late 1800s, Tuxedni Bay offered the only deepwater anchorage for large vessels transporting gold miners and settlers. Settlers homesteaded on lands along Cook Inlet but their population was sporadic. Cannery operations were established in 1919 at Snug Harbor on Chisik Island.⁴⁸ Other sites where packing plants were set up included Kustatan (the Kustatan Packing Company) and at the mouth of the Chuitna River north of Tyonek, where C.D. Ladd established a trading post in 1890 and a saltery in later years. These companies and those mentioned above brought in Euro-Americans and Chinese to work in the canneries. Few of these workers stayed more than a few months, especially as the fisheries were seasonal and the canneries remained closed for a portion of the year. In many cases, after one processing facility closed, workers moved on to other canneries elsewhere in Alaska.⁴⁹

SUMMARY: KEY DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE EARLY AMERICAN PERIOD

With the sale of Alaska to the United States, commercial activities in the Cook Inlet area increased. High fur prices, fueled by competition among rival trading companies, benefited the Dena'ina economy, but the fur trade collapsed by 1900. Commercial fishing and exploration for gold and other minerals resulted in a much greater non-native presence in the Cook Inlet Area than during the Russian period. There were more stores and more supplies of western goods, but also more competition with these newcomers for resources. Trade increased traffic between the coast of west Cook Inlet and the inland Dena'ina communities through passes such as Merrill Pass, Telequana Pass, and Lake Clark Pass. Introduced diseases continued to take a heavy toll of Dena'ina lives. A syncretism of traditional and Russian Orthodox beliefs took hold within most Dena'ina communities. The reduced Dena'ina population began to consolidate at a few villages, with Tyonek growing at the expense of smaller places because of its church, store, and central location within transportation networks.



Hunting camp at McArthur River, date unknown.
Chickalester Collection

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EARLY AND MIDDLE 20TH CENTURY: 1900 – 1960s

OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS, EARLY AND MID 20TH CENTURY

Introduction

A strong sense of place is embedded in the memories of the people of the west side of Cook Inlet. When current and former residents tell their stories of this area they do so in a way that describes particular locations. Although the west side of Cook Inlet may seem remote today, it has not been isolated from the developments of the late 19th and 20th centuries in the larger Cook Inlet area. These changes included the expansion of the commercial fishing industry; oil and gas exploration; development of new modes of transportation; the continuing effects of epidemic disease; the arrival and settlement of non-native trappers, fishermen, miners, and homesteaders; and the continuing consolidation of the Dena'ina population in fewer villages and in urban centers such as Anchorage and Kenai.

The following discussion begins with an overview of the changes that occurred in the west Cook Inlet study area during the late-19th century and continued through much of the 20th century. This discussion continues with a focus on the people and events that shaped the west side of Cook Inlet in particular places (see Figure 1.1). The discussion covers the changing face of the Dena'ina world, how the Dena'ina influenced the direction of development of Cook Inlet in economic and social terms, and how Euro-Americans became integrated into and transformed Dena'ina society.

Demography

In the early 20th century west Cook Inlet was sparsely settled and was utilized by Dena'ina residents and recent Euro-American immigrants largely for its fish and wildlife resources. There were no permanent settlements in the foothills of the Aleutian Range and Chignik Mountains, although Dena'ina trails traversed the area, with camps and caches scattered along these routes. The Dena'ina were the primary occupants of the area and continued their seasonal movements up and down the coast and through the mountain passes to Old Iliamna village, *Qizh'eh Vena* (later to be named Lake Clark), and the Telaquana/Stony River country.¹ This pattern of land use changed with the transition of the regional economy, which became focused around trade centers and canneries in communities such as Kenai, Tyonek, Susitna Station, and Knik.

The series of disease epidemics discussed in the previous chapter took the lives of many Dena'ina. Their control of the area diminished because of the consequent breakdown of the traditional family units and clan organization. During the 100-year period between the 1840s and 1940s, other factors also changed Dena'ina settlement patterns, including an expanding cash economy, religious and social changes, government land settlement programs, and Bureau of Indian Affairs education policies. As the viability of west Cook Inlet Dena'ina communities declined, survivors from various settlements consolidated in larger communities such as Iliamna, Nondalton, Kenai, Ninilchik, Tyonek, and Anchorage.

During this time of flux among the Dena'ina population, there was an immigration of non-native people, primarily from the lower 48 states and western Europe, associated with late 19th and early 20th century mining, commercial fishing, and the fur trade. Most were men who came without families and married Dena'ina women. Contemporary surnames in Tyonek such as Standifer, Bartels, McCord, and Trenton are clues to the history of these families. These men often adopted traditional Dena'ina ways of life, especially related to subsistence practices. However, they also introduced many western European and American social practices, and the marriages may have disrupted the traditional matrilineal clan organization. On the other hand, the children of these mixed marriages were raised in Dena'ina villages with the assistance of extended Dena'ina families, and were enculturated into many Dena'ina beliefs and practices, as well as the Russian Orthodox religion. As a result, these Euro-American men became a part of Dena'ina society as a whole and added their memories and history to the west side of Cook Inlet.



↑ This photograph was taken around 1915 when many Dena'ina men from Tyonek went to work constructing the Alaska Railroad that tied Cook Inlet to the Tanana Valley.
Nora McCord Collection

The integration of Euro-American men into Dena'ina society came about at the same time that American missionaries and educators were endeavoring to assimilate Alaska Natives into mainstream American society. While the Euro-Americans who married into Dena'ina families were learning to trap, hunt, and fish within the context of Dena'ina practices and worldview, educators with the Bureau of Indian Affairs were trying to force children to learn English and adopt American ways of living.² As Hensel³ notes, learning traditional means of subsistence is one of the few aspects of Alaska Native lifestyle that has been valued by mainstream Euro-American culture in Alaska.

Euro-American immigrants brought concepts of land ownership that did not formerly exist among the Dena'ina. Many immigrants also took advantage of the apparent "open" land and the disrupted political condition of the Native inhabitants to establish home sites, trapping areas, and fishing locations of their own. Even though the Dena'ina had left their earlier winter villages, they had not left the region and continued to return to their traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping areas for subsistence purposes and for commercial fishing. Some Euro-Americans maintained respect for the long-time Native occupants who they encountered. For them it appeared that the west Cook Inlet area was still occupied and "controlled" by the Dena'ina. For example, life-long Seldovia resident Fred Elvsaas,⁴ who began traveling throughout the West Cook Inlet area with his father in the 1940s, observed that, "At the turn of the century, Tyonek people (Dena'ina) controlled the area." He continued his observations of the people who had moved into the Dena'ina territory in later years as follows:

Scattered along the shoreline (west Cook Inlet), there were people with homes. And you could almost say that the people who lived along there were almost as scattered as the Natives were before them. There was never enough food for a hundred people, but there was a family here and there. Just like Seldovia, there was never a town here until the church came. People were at every little creek, and there was a home. When the priest came he said they had to be in sight of the church. They didn't know why, but that's what they did. Then they had to live in log homes. They were getting modern then.⁵

In the early 1900s, independent fishermen, trappers, and miners settled and established camps at former Dena'ina sites including Kustatan, Harriet Point, Polly Creek, Tuxedni Bay and Chisik Island, Johnson River, and several locations in Chinitna and Iliamna Bays. Some of these newcomers occupied the area year round, while others moved seasonally between their cabins and campsites in these areas, and Kenai, Ninilchik, Homer, Seldovia, Tyonek, and Anchorage.⁶ Some of the people who moved into the area were Alaska Natives who had ancestral ties to these lands.

The west side of Cook Inlet was not considered "remote" to Dena'ina people who had lived there for generations and lived in villages. But the area did seem remote for some of the new settlers because of their more independent way of life and their perception of being distant from other settled areas. These settlers never established new communities that resembled a Native village or non-native town. Staple supplies were usually obtained from schooners supplying canneries and tenders or barges transiting the area. Everyone relied heavily on the local wild resources and gardens for their supplies of meat and fish and fresh produce. All the salmon species, the majority of freshwater fish, halibut, smelt and clams marine mammals, including seals and beluga, were harvested as were moose, bear, caribou and many small game species.⁷

Construction of the Alaska Railroad in 1904-1915 brought a new wave of immigrants into southcentral Alaska. Most were men who had skills in engineering, construction, and mechanical trades. After the railroad was completed many of these people found cash jobs in other parts of Alaska, while others began commercial fishing and trapping in the country along the west side of Cook Inlet and the Susitna River Basin.⁸

In the 1920s and 1930s, the U.S. Government implemented land settlement programs in Alaska intended to boost the depressed economy in the lower 48 states. By the 1940s, homesteading programs opened up territorial land, legitimized settlement, and deeded ownership of lands formerly occupied by the Dena'ina.⁹ Slowly, through competition for resources and private settlement, the Dena'ina were forced out of much of their traditional use areas. The Bureau of Indian Affairs' approach to assisting the Natives was through establishing schools at Kenai, Tyonek, and Eklutna where attendance and speaking English were mandatory requirements. Their primary goal was to assimilate Natives into the American culture "and make them useful to the white-man."¹⁰

World War II was the next event that brought a new wave of immigrants to Alaska. Japanese military occupation of two Aleutian Islands resulted in the U.S. and Canadian response of constructing the Alaska Canada Highway, military bases, and related infrastructure, which brought another surge of people. After the war, many people stayed in Alaska and established themselves in businesses and furthered other pursuits. Some people moved into the commercial fishing industry, trapped, or guided hunters along the west side of Cook Inlet.

Commercial Fishing

As discussed in the previous chapter, commercial salmon fishing was one of the major activities that directly affected the Dena'ina beginning in the 1880s. In the second decade of the 1900s, the commercial fishing industry expanded rapidly in Cook Inlet owing in part to the demand for canned salmon during World War I. At this time the Alaska fishing industry was run largely by outside west coast interests. They controlled the fishing grounds by financing fish traps and boats from which they bought fish, and often they used strong-arm tactics to keep out independent fishermen.

Cannery operations began in earnest on the west side of Cook Inlet in 1919 when the Surf Packing Company built a small cannery at Snug Harbor, Chisik Island in Tuxedni Bay.¹¹ This cannery began as an experiment to determine if clam resources were abundant enough to process and sell. This proved successful and opened the way for the processing of salmon and the abundant clam resources available on the tidal flats around Crescent River and Polly Creek. The clam cannery lasted until 1927 when market conditions necessitated the shift from clams to salmon. Although processing clams continued on a small scale at a few Cook Inlet canneries including Seidovia and Kustatan, the major emphasis was the canning of salmon.¹²

A slump in the fish market caused by the over-production of canned salmon ended in 1922, when the salmon industry in Cook Inlet began a ten-year boom. Twenty-six new canneries were built, including two on the west side of Cook Inlet at sites important to the Dena'ina: the Kustatan Packing Company built a cannery at Kustatan in 1929, and the West Coast Canning Company built a cannery at Polly Creek in that same year.¹³

While canning was the preferred method of fish preservation in the larger operations, the smaller plants salted salmon. When canneries developed the capability to keep fish cold and quickly haul them on tenders to large processing plants at Kenai or Snug Harbor, most of the canneries were bought out and closed. The number of Cook Inlet canneries dropped from 22 in 1930 to 9 in 1932.¹⁴ The only west side facility to remain open was Snug Harbor Packing Company at Chisik Island, which operated until 1980.

Some non-native fishermen who were able to make a good portion of their annual cash income from fishing settled along the west side. For many, trapping became a winter time activity and cash source. Other fishermen used their camps seasonally and moved back to communities to work in wage jobs during the winter months. A few entered the fledgling guiding industry.¹⁵ Most west Cook Inlet Dena'ina lived in Tyonek and traveled to fishing sites along the shoreline. In winter they trapped much of the traditional use area south of Tyonek to Kustatan and between the mountains and Cook Inlet.

Early fisheries regulations and restrictions in Cook Inlet included the establishment of a fisheries reservation in order to protect the resource. A permit system replaced the reservation system through the White Act in 1924 and set up small districts that could be more easily managed.¹⁶

The greatest change in commercial fishing in the second half of the 20th century occurred in 1959 when Alaska achieved statehood and the Statehood Act transferred control of fisheries resources to the state. One of the first acts of the Alaska legislature was to outlaw salmon traps, which had been a major means for catching fish for the canning industry.¹⁷ This law broke the monopoly on fish harvest held by the industry, and allowed independent fishermen to obtain permits and harvest an allocation of the resource. One of Cook Inlet's main processors, Libby, had established cannery sites throughout Alaska and sold its canneries immediately after this act.¹⁸ Fortunately for Cook Inlet fishermen, another company bought the cannery and processing of fish in Kenai continues to this day.

In 1917 and 1918, the Beluga Whaling Company briefly attempted a commercial harvest of beluga whales at Beluga River on the west side of Cook Inlet. Beluga fat and skins were processed into oil and hides.¹⁹ A second commercial beluga whaling operation occurred in the 1930s; Tyonek residents worked on the project. The whales were flensed and the oil from the fat and the meat were sold in Anchorage. In later years, beluga whales were taken by hunters from around Cook Inlet including Tyonek, and the products of fat and meat were sold to the Native Hospital and to anyone who wanted the food.²⁰

Mineral Development

As noted in the previous chapter, all oil lands in Alaska were withdrawn from exploitation in 1910. In 1920, the federal government passed legislation for leasing oil lands. Immediately, 30 lease applications were filed, covering nearly 80 thousand acres of land around Iliamna and Chinitna bays on the Iniskin Peninsula.



↑ *Snug Harbor Cannery pictured around 1950.*
NPS Collection H-550.

In 1911, Union Oil of California (Unocal) began drilling and marketing oil products on the Kenai Peninsula²¹ and this shifted the focus of oil development away from west Cook Inlet. In 1936, Iniskin Drilling Company, led by R.E. Havenstrite, drilled test wells on the west side at Fitz Creek in Chinitna Bay. In the 1950s, exploration continued, this time by the Havenstrite Oil Company, but the wells were dry. Meanwhile, Unocal and Marathon Oil discovered gas in the Swanson River fields on the east side between 1958 and 1960.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Kenai Peninsula and west Cook Inlet oil and gas discoveries and development brought another surge of immigrants to the Cook Inlet area who mostly settled in urban areas. These newcomers differed from earlier arrivals in that their focus was profits from petroleum. Associated with this urban population growth was an increasing interest in the recreational pursuit of wild resources. For this group of people the light airplane became a common means of personal transportation into the bush. Skilled pilots were able to quickly access lakes, gravel bars, tundra, and beaches that earlier would have taken days travel.

Oil and gas exploration was rekindled along west Cook Inlet in 1960 when the Beluga River gas field north of Tyonek was discovered. A series of discoveries on the Middle Ground Shoal, at Granite Point, and at McArthur River, brought offshore production to a reality beginning in 1967. Most of the early oil exploration and development did not directly affect west side Dena'ina. Exploration activities did reveal gas deposits on Tyonek lands, however, and in the 1960s the Tyonek natives received over \$11 million for drilling rights (more on this development will be discussed in the next chapter).

Transportation

At the turn of the 20th century, all transportation to Alaska was by schooner and steamship. As the gold rush intensified, trading companies took advantage of the commercial opportunities by using their schooners to haul passengers and freight northwards. The main ports of call were Valdez, Seward, Kodiak, Tyonek, and Seldovia. Within the inlet, the system of transportation from Tyonek and Seldovia initially included a fleet of shallow draft sloops and later gas-power boats that serviced smaller communities like Hope, Sunrise, Susitna Station, Knik, and Ship Creek (Anchorage). These craft were necessary because of the shallow waters in the river mouths of the upper inlet, exposed mudflats and sandbars at low tide, and swift tidal currents.²²

One of the gas boats, the *Sea Lion*, was built, owned, and operated by Johann "Red" "Jack" Bartels. "Red" was born in Germany in 1860, and as a young man, worked on a British whaling ship. He went to San Francisco in the late 1800s and worked on a sealing boat that went to the Aleutian Islands. He eventually arrived in Tyonek and ran a gas boat called the *Lina K* hauling passengers and freight, between Tyonek, Susitna Station, and Knik. He was involved in various business deals, and eventually built the *Sea Lion* which he used on mail contracts, freighting, and passenger services around the upper inlet including Hope and Sunrise. "Red" Bartels also ran cannery tenders for H.J. Emard, who had canneries at Polly Creek and Ship Creek, and for Al Jones, who owned the Kustatan Packing Company.²³ Among Bartels' many friends was the Alaska landscape painter Sydney Laurence. In the early 1900s, while waiting out the winter in Tyonek, Laurence stayed at Bartels' house and used a second-story room for his studio. The room had a very small window and because Laurence needed more light in order to paint, Bartels accommodated by enlarging the window. While there, Laurence painted a little known portrait of Tyonek at its 1800s location on Tyonek Creek. Laurence did not normally paint portraits of people, but on at least one occasion he made the exception by painting "Red" with his characteristic short-stemmed pipe in his mouth.²⁴

Bartels married Tuxenna "Minnie" Trenton of Tyonek in 1885. She had been born at the trailhead to one of the Lake Clark trails, probably Kustatan. Their family later lived in Anchorage and spent much of the summer months in Tyonek where Minnie liked to put up fish and



↑ A view of Second Tyonek Village at Tyonek Creek painted by Sydney Laurence in 1905. Redoubt and Iliamna Volcanoes are in the background of the painting. Anchorage Museum of History and Art Collection. Photograph by Walter Van Horn 2005.

be with her relatives. They had three sons, and one son, Harry, served as a marine in the South Pacific and in Japan post World War II. Harry resided in Tyonek with his family until the spring of 2005 when he moved to Anchorage.²⁵

Other well known gas boat owners and operators who worked the inlet in the early part of the century included W.E. "Billy" Austin who ran the *Alert*, N.J. "Nick" Gaikema who also ran the *Sea Lion*, and Jack Fields who ran the *Dime* out of Seldovia. These boats provided vital transportation in the shallow waters and river mouths of the upper inlet.

By the early 1950s, the west side of Cook Inlet remained relatively remote and inaccessible from east side communities. Tyonek had lost its importance as a trading, transportation, and freighting hub. Light aircraft, motorized skiffs, and cannery tenders were the primary means of access, and safe navigation of the inlet required extensive knowledge of the tides and weather. Winter access was possible for non-locals by snowshoe and dogsled and the newly developed snow machine, but cold weather travel was mainly braved by permanent west side residents or ski-equipped aircraft.

In the 1950s and 1960s, commercial air taxi services became the primary link between the Nondalton, Iliamna, and Tyonek areas. Spornak Airways, also known as the "Indian Airways," was founded by George Spornak in 1951. Based at Merrill Field in Anchorage, they served Tyonek, with beach landings, and other west Cook Inlet sites throughout the decade to present day.²⁶ Oren Hudson, established Hudson Air Taxi and was originally based at Nondalton in 1952. He later moved his base of operations to Merrill Field and flew for over 50 years throughout the region.²⁷



↑ "Red" Jack Bartels at the wheel house of the *Sea Lion* in 1919.
Anchorage Museum of History and Art B56.10.21.



↑ The *Sea Lion* at Knik in 1926.
Anchorage Museum of History and Art B70.19.524.

PLACES, PEOPLE, AND PATTERNS OF USE

The following is a description of specific locations on the west side of Cook Inlet that are important for the Dena'ina and for historically later arriving Euro-Americans. This discussion begins in the southern reaches of the study area and moves northward to the upper boundary above the community of Tyonek (Figure 6.1 Dena'ina Geographical Map). Dena'ina names are utilized where possible. This overview does not draw from all the potential sources of information.



↑ George Spertak at Merrill Field in 1949 with a Noorduyn Norseman aircraft. Courtesy of Spertak Airways.



↑ Ruth Hudson and her children Kerry and Kent in Nondalton in 1953. Skins are from (left to right) a land otter, four wolves, and another land otter. The Plane is a SRJR Stinson which is now in the Alaska Heritage Museum, Hudson Collection.



↑ Bidarkas in Iliamna Bay in the early 20th century. Iliamna Dena'ina would travel to AC Point at the head of Iliamna Bay to trade. NPS Collection N-1171.

Figure 5.3.
Denali National Geographical Map
Source: Fall and Russell Karl
(1982).



Rather, it provides examples that exemplify the general patterns of settlement and occupancy. The lack of archaeological or oral history information for a particular place does not mean that a human presence did not exist. Many individuals and families lived in and used west Cook Inlet, and those with knowledge or written documentation about a particular place may not have been located during the research for this report. Further research to document additional family histories is strongly recommended.

Iliamna Bay

Although a Dena'ina name for Iliamna Bay has not been recorded, there are several names for places within the bay. These include *Esdghuk'a Tel'ibt* "where-cockles-are-gathered" (Diamond Point located at the mouth of Cottonwood Bay), *Hkaytakhi'u* (Cottonwood Bay), and *Q'anich Nul* "fox sleeping" (the beach at the head of the bay where Williamsport is now located).²⁸

As discussed in the previous chapter, Iliamna Portage was the primary travel and trade route between lower Cook Inlet and the Iliamna and Lake Clark region. A number of traders, explorers, geologists, and travelers, including the Russian explorer Korsakovskiy in 1818, ethnologist Johan Adrian Jacobsen in 1883, and biologist Wilfred Osgood in 1902, used this route.²⁹

Hannah Breece³⁰ gives an excellent description of the hardships faced when traversing this pass in 1909. Although other routes cover the distance between Iliamna Lake and lower Cook Inlet (for example, from Cottonwood Bay to Meadow Lake through *Valiggena Tustes* "dry glacier pass") the Alaska Road Commission developed the Iliamna Portage route in the 1920s.³¹

In the 1930s, Fred Roehl took over ownership of a warehouse at *Q'anich Nul* (Williamsport) used for receiving and storing freight headed for Iliamna Lake. Mail was also hauled from Cook Inlet over this route to Old Iliamna Village, by carriers such as Mike Jensen.³² The warehouse had been built by Hans Severson sometime between the mid 1920s and the 1930s.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Morrison-Knudsen Construction Company constructed a automobile accessible road through the Iliamna Portage that was used to haul boats from Cook Inlet to Iliamna Lake. This enabled commercial fishermen bound for Bristol Bay to travel a much shorter route down Iliamna Lake and the Kvichak River instead of the long trip around the Alaska Peninsula.³³ This route is proposed for use by the Pebble Mine project to haul gold and copper ore from the mine site west of Iliamna to tidewater on Cook Inlet.

Elvsaa³⁴ noted that several Kenai Peninsula Dena'ina (Kenaitze) have allotments on the west side of Cook Inlet including in Iliamna Bay. Also, the late Percy J. Blatchford, who was originally from the Seward Peninsula and was a longtime resident of southcentral Alaska, hunted marine mammals on Cook Inlet and had a homestead parcel in Cottonwood Bay.

***Viqidin Ts'iznigittnu* "someone-is-holding-kayak river" ~ Iniskin Bay**

This bay is immediately north of Iliamna Bay and has served as a deep water port because of its protected waters. It has often provided shelter for cargo ships delivering goods to the Iliamna Bay portage.

Russian traders were the first to note oil seeps in Cook Inlet at Iniskin Bay. Eventually, in the 1920s, the entire Iniskin Peninsula became the focus of coal and oil exploration and development. Iniskin Bay is one of the proposed deep water ports for the Pebble Mine project.³⁵

***Tsanitnu* "rock island river" or "rocks-are-there-river" ~ Chinitna Bay**

During the early Russian era in Alaska, Chinitna Bay was noted for a large population of sea otters. The shellfish-rich shallow waters of the bay were ideal sea otter habitat. The bay was frequented by sea otter hunters until otters were eventually eliminated from the area.³⁵

In 1898, the US Geological Survey gave "Chinitua" as the native name for the bay. A trail goes from the head of the bay up Trail Creek through Portage Pass along Portage Creek and into the right arm of Iniskin Bay. By taking this route, Dena'ina traveling to Iniskin and Iliamna Bays avoided the exposed outer coast of the Iniskin Peninsula.

The Iniskin Peninsula was the location of some of the earliest oil exploration and development in Alaska. Havenstrite Ridge was named after R.E. Havenstrite, who headed the Iniskin Oil Drilling Company that explored for oil along Fitz Creek in 1936. The drilling operation never produced any oil due to trouble with salt water in the drill hole, a lack of money, and expired drilling permits. Consequently, drilling ended in 1939.

Gaikema Creek is named after "Nick" Gaikema who, in the 1930s and 1940s, ran the gas boat *Sea Otter*, hauling drilling supplies and equipment for the Iniskin Oil Drilling Company to their site on the south side of Chinitna Bay. After oil drilling operations closed down, Nick was a watchman at the site and died there of a heart attack in June 1943.³⁷

Another longtime resident of the area, George "Greg" Brown, was born in the late 1890s. He was of German, Athabascan, and Aleut heritage and grew up in Kenai. Brown moved to the west side of Cook Inlet in the 1930s. He trapped furbearers and guided hunters there. His cabin was located at Chinitna Bay. Brown died in a mid-air crash over Chinitna Bay in 1945 while bear hunting.³⁸ On the outside of Chinitna Bay to the east and just beyond Spring Point is Herb's Lagoon, named for Herb Brown, George Brown's brother and a trapper in the area.

Fred Elvsaas³⁹ described traveling from Seldovia to Chinitna Bay in the 1950s. He and his father and other fishermen went there primarily for fall fishing for silver salmon. There was no early season fishing for kings like there was farther up the inlet at Redoubt and Trading Bays. On their trips to Chinitna Bay they also hunted moose and dug clams. On one trip, Fred and one of his uncles towed a large dory, and planned to camp at Seal Spit and then go up Portage Creek to hunt moose. By the time they had their camp set up, they had killed two moose very nearby. On that same trip, they fished for



↑ George (Gregory) Brown who grew up in Kenai and trapped at Chinitna Bay in the 1940s. He is photographed here in 1945. NPS Collection H-346.

silvers at Seal Spit, but caught nothing but chum salmon, about 200 in all. They moved their net across the bay to Clam Cove, and caught the silvers. While there, the group also dug clams and stored them in wooden kegs.

Robert and Mary Haeg provide another example of the pattern of dispersed settlement within the west Cook Inlet area. In 1975, the Haeg's bought property for a cabin site on the north shore of Chinitna Bay. They moved to the area, cleared land for a cabin, and grew hay for their horses. They began commercial fishing for halibut and salmon. They also raised and home-schooled their son David who later learned how to fly airplanes and established his family's big game guiding business and lodge at Swift River and Lucky Lake in the Mulchatna River country. After the Exxon Valdez oil spill they experienced lower fish prices and fewer fish. With these conditions, and as they got older, they quit commercial fishing and began to offer tourists the experience of the remote area and the opportunity to view bears in a natural setting. They continued to obtain much of their food from wild resources in the surrounding area.⁴⁰

Chinitna Bay is a popular location for clamming. During low tide small planes can land on the soft beaches. This allows for 4-6 hours of clamming before the planes must leave. Each summer residents of Iliamna and Newhalen charter planes to fly to Spring Point at Chinitna Bay for clamming. A number of tour businesses and guides take visitors to the bay for sport fishing and bear viewing. Several lodges now in the area also cater to visitors. There are several Native allotments on the south side. These included Witbro's, that was later subdivided into a no-plat subdivision, and another owned by the late Herman Lindgren, a Kenaitze Indian who also operated a commercial set gillnet operation in the bay.⁴¹

Tunilchun "murky water" ~ Johnson River

Fred Elvsaas described the shoreline north of Chinitna Bay on the "Iliamna Peninsula" and the people who lived there. He recalled an old sawmill site and house outside of Chinitna towards Silver Salmon Creek on the outer beach, and that several trappers lived in the area.⁴²

Above Silver Salmon Creek, at Johnson River, my first wife Gladys, her and her first husband trapped there with George Brown who also had a place in there. They trapped muskrats up in that valley. There were a lot of



↑ Joe and Solly Munger at their trapping cabin at Johnson River south of Tunedni Bay in the early 1960s. Joe is displaying fox and wolverine hides.
NPS Collection H-2317.



← Joe Munger cabin on Chisik Island in Tuxedni Bay. The cabin had two rooms with water piped in from the hillside behind. Furnishings included a bathtub and pedestal sink.
NPS Collection H-348.



← Wilber Morris's sawmill south of Silver Salmon (Johnson River Area) in the 1940s.
NPS Collection H-434.

beaver, muskrats and they got a few wolves also. They wintered there in the late 30s. George Brown had cabins all over Alaska. He was a true guide, hunter and fisherman. He was based out of Kenai. He was a cousin of mine, and up until George died, my family always got salmon up Johnson River.

Joe Munger was another trapper who lived, trapped, and commercially fished around Chinitna Bay and towards the northeast along the shoreline of Silver Salmon Creek and Red River. Munger had a house at Silver Salmon Creek where he resided year round. He also commercially fished on Chisik Island where he had cabins that were burned when the federal government enforced rules on the Chisik Island wildlife refuge that encompasses the island. Chisik Island is now part of the Maritime National Refuge system.⁴³

***Tuk'ezitnu* "fish-stranded-in-tide river" ~ Tuxedni Bay and River**

Dena'ina from Kustatan and Tyonek lived around Snug Harbor in 1917 and 1921. Simeon Chickalusion of Tyonek had joined with George Palmer in an agreement to organize a cooperative venture for Tyonek people to fish and dig clams to support a new cannery.⁴⁴ Chickalusion and his family moved to the area, and had camps and a small settlement at nearby Polly Creek where the daughter of Simeon and Annie Chickalusion, Catherine, was born sometime between 1921 and 1924 (also see Alexan in the next section on Polly Creek).⁴⁵

Tuxedni Bay had a protected anchorage for large vessels plying the upper inlet with equipment and supplies for the new fishing industry, as well as transporting gold miners and settlers. Cannery operations were established in 1919 at Snug Harbor on Chisik Island by the Surf Packing Company for processing salmon and clams.⁴⁶ Johnson Ringsmuth⁴⁷ provides a history of the cannery operations at Snug Harbor on Chisik Island and at Polly Creek.

Contemporary inhabitants of Tuxedni Bay include Hank Kroll, Jr. and his family, who live at Squarehead Cove on the north shore of the bay. In the 1940s, Kroll's father and mother moved to Tuxedni Bay to commercial fish and trap furbearers. They also built a sawmill in the area.⁴⁸

***Tatin Ch'iltant* ~ Polly Creek**

Tatin Ch'iltant "where we found the whale" acquired its name from when Dena'ina whale hunters from Humpy Point went to the area to hunt whale, an event described in the story *Tatin T'e'anen*, The Whale Hunter:

One man went out to sea in a one-hole skin boat to look for a whale. When he came to a sleeping whale, he shot a crossbow arrow into its blowhole and then he got away fast. The next day he looked for it and found it floating. He went home. And the south wind blew. When it stopped blowing, then all the people from the different villages went to Polly Creek and looked for it. They found it floating and tried to move it toward shore. And at Polly Creek it drifted ashore. Thus they named the place "where we found a whale."⁴⁹



← Chief Theodore Chickalusion at Kustatan in the 1920s. Chief of the Kenai Peninsula, Johnson River, and Polly Creek 1910-1920s.

The surname "Chickalusion" derives from the personal name *Begh Chik'e'l'ishen* "The one who kills or brings game for him." Kalifornsky (1991:285)
Chickalusion Collection.

Orth⁵⁰ indicates that Polly Creek is a name the USGS reported as used by prospectors in the area around 1920. Whether this name is attributable to the Polly Mining Company, active near Hope in the late 1800s, is not indicated.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, William Rickteroff and members of his family from Old Iliamna village traveled to Cook Inlet to hunt sea otters. They searched for sea otters in the west side bays and stayed at Polly Creek. In 1912, the late Paul Zacker, Sr. was born at Polly Creek, and later moved to Nondalton (see Chapter Six).⁵¹

Agrefena (Chickalusion) Kalifornsky figures prominently in Dena'ina genealogies. She was originally from Polly Creek and was the sister of Simeon Chickalusion (1880-1957), the chief of Tyonek from the 1930s until 1957. She married Nikolai Kalifornsky in Kenai. Peter Kalifornsky was their son. In the "Kustatan Bear Story," Theodore Chickalusion, a son of Peter Chickalusion and brother of Simeon, was one of the men who killed the bear. He was the chief of Polly Creek in the 1910s and 1920s. One of Theodore and Doris (Carp) Chickalusion's sons, Maxim Chickalusion, Sr. was born at Polly Creek in 1921.⁵² He currently resides in Tyonek.

In his description of Simeon Chickalusion in the "Sixth Chief of and Governor of Tyonek," Nickafor Alexan⁵³ explains that Simeon attended the Russian school in Kenai, worked at the gold fields in Hope and Sunrise, built the government school at Susitna Station in 1909, and then worked on the steamer Tyonek, which delivered freight and passengers around Cook Inlet and Kodiak Island. Then, after the influenza epidemic in 1917, Simeon and his brother Theodore moved to Polly Creek, to be "close to Snug Harbor."⁵⁴ Alexan wrote:

Theodore had wife that time, but Simeon didn't get married until after they [s]ettle down there. [H]is present wife (Annie Stephan) came down there to work on clam with the people from Tyonek. So [S]imeon and her became to like each other so got married. [T]here they raise their children Olga, Katherine, Annie, Theodore[.] Simeon and his brother was very good hunter and good trapper. After his last brother made his death down there. He move back to Kustatan river, where he stayed for while. He decide to move up to Tyonek to send his children to school. Well he came up 1928 and children went to school.⁵⁵



↑ Otto and Estelle Tiede at Polly Creek.
Photo courtesy of Patricia Laub.
NPS Collection H-347.



↑ Cache built by Chief Chickalusion at Polly Creek
on the property now held by John Swiss.
CIRI Collection.



↑ *Hank Swiss at Polly Creek in the early 1970s. In the background are airplanes on the beach. They landed here from Anchorage to dig for razor clams.*
NPS Collection H-363



↑ *Maa Chickalusion, Sr. clamming at a sand bar near Harriet Point in the early 1980s.*
Chickalusion Collection

Polly Creek Story

Kalifornsky (1991: 2-4)

They set up a factory at Snug Harbor to can clams. Different people came to Polly Creek. Some came from Iliamna, others from Seldovia, Kodiak, Niihchik, Tyonek, or Kenai. There were no houses there. They all pitched tents. They just stayed in them. When the tide went out, they all went out on the flats. They gathered clams. They kept a scow anchored for them. There they bought the clams from them. They paid a \$1.25 for one gas box full of clams. Some people were good at clam digging. My uncle Chickalusion, with whom I stayed, was the best digger. On a good day he would gather twenty boxes. They came back ashore when the tide came in. A boat would come to the scow and take it and leave another in its place. Then the people came back ashore. They played the stick gambling game, cards, quoits, and a game where they pushed and pulled on a pole. They played different kinds of games. And they would wrestle. Some of them would hunt in the woods for black bear, porcupine, and beaver. Some would hunt beluga and seal. I would fire up the steam bath for the old men. And they would all take a steam bath. I put rocks on the fire for other people. When evening came, the old men would gather and tell stories. "Come," they say to me. And I would listen to them. Before the year 1921, I heard those songs and stories there. I don't know the names of all the people who were there, because they addressed each other as they were related. When fall came, the company boat took them all back to wherever their home villages were.

The archaeologist Frederica de Laguna⁵⁶ visited Polly Creek in 1930. She concluded that none of the house ruins were very old, and were typically made of dirt walls 2 feet high with a main room 3 feet deep and 12 feet by 18 feet square. She noted that house ruins found in the area on the west side of the creek were in “the camping place of the late Chief Chickalutian.” Her sources were Mrs. Man from Kenai and Otto and Stella Tiede, who lived at the site in the 1920s and 1930s. The Tiede’s eventually established a homestead there and built the first cannery operation in 1935.⁵⁷ In addition, a cache built by Chief (Theodore) Chickalusion still stands and there is evidence of family gravesites in the area.⁵⁸

There were no Dena’ina living at Polly Creek when de Laguna visited in 1930. Polly Creek village and neighboring sites were no longer inhabited as a result of disease in the early 1900s. The survivors moved to Kustatan, Tyonek, and the east side of Cook Inlet, as well as Nondalton and Iliamna.⁵⁹ In subsequent years, Dena’ina continued to use their traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping areas as well as cabins and camp sites around Polly Creek.⁶⁰

The sand bars at the mouths of Crescent River and Polly Creek are rich in razor clams, and a prosperous commercial clamming operation took place in the area.

When Polly Creek and Kustatan were abandoned, some Dena’ina residents moved to the east side of the inlet. Some of their descendents traveled back across the inlet to use west side resources and work in canneries. Oskolkoff⁶¹ described traveling across the inlet from Ninilchik with his family in the 1970s and 1980s to harvest salmon for commercial and subsistence purposes, as well as to hunt for moose, black bear, and harbor seals. They usually stayed on their boats, but they also had campsites in Tuxedni Bay, and stayed at friends’ cabins and homesteads. The Oskolkoff and Chickalusion families had close family ties and hunted, fished, and trapped together.⁶²

In a 1975 survey of Cook Inlet historic sites, the elevated cache built by Chief Chickalusion was examined at the Polly Creek homestead of the late Henry Swiss.⁶³ Swiss moved to Alaska in 1936 and purchased the site in 1949 from Bob Woods who in turn had purchased it from the Tiedes.⁶⁴ The Tiedes moved to the area around 1925. Henry Swiss willed his property to his brother John who homesteaded a site on the south side of Polly Creek in 1946 as part of a commercial fishing business. John Swiss and his family still commercial fish in the area and run a commercial game guiding operation.⁶⁵

***Ts’iqezdegh* “straight point” ~ Harriet Point or Point Harriet⁶⁶**

Ts’iqezdegh is the Dena’ina name for Harriet Point. The creek closest to the point on the east side is *Tesitnu* “cut river” or Redoubt Creek, while immediately to the west is *Ts’qestnu*, “Straight Point Creek” or Harriet Creek. A village site was located near the mouth of this creek although little information about it is available.⁶⁷ The sandbars nearby have long been used for subsistence clamming. Tyonek residents have for decades traveled in their dories to harvest clams and hunt waterfowl in the area. They then return to the village to distribute their harvest among households.⁶⁸

The Redoubt Bay flats, a state critical habitat area, lie between Harriet Point and West Foreland. The rivers and streams within the flats are important to Tyonek residents. The area is widely used for hunting, trapping, and fishing, and oil and gas extraction also takes place. All the rivers draining into Redoubt Bay have their headwaters in Lake Clark Park and Preserve and the park boundary is within a few miles of the coast. The sand bars out from the mouth of *Bangach’agh* “open mouth” or Little Jack Slough have possibly the most northern cockle beds in Cook Inlet. Along the lower reaches of *Dghezha Betnu* “needle fish river” or Drift River is the Marathon Oil Terminal and loading dock. The course of Drift River was drastically altered by the 1989-90 eruption of Mt. Redoubt volcano.⁶⁹ At *Ch’atuhnulggezhi Betnu* “forked-water-comes-out-river,” or Montana Bill Creek, are duck hunters’ cabins. This stream is known for its fall run of silver salmon. The *Nayesh K’etnu* (Kustatan River) and *Bajatnu* (Bachatna Creek) drainages was used extensively by Kustatan village residents for many wild resource harvest activities. These streams were travel routes to Lake Clark Pass and the Tiikakila River, which lead to Kijik Village and Lake Clark.

***Qezdaghnen* "point land" – Kustatan and West Foreland⁷⁰**

Throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, Russian Orthodox priests documented their travels from Kenai to Dena'ina villages around Cook Inlet. Kustatan was the farthest southwest Cook Inlet Dena'ina village appearing in the journal entries, and it is referenced many times over the years by different priests serving the Kenai Parish.⁷¹ Of particular interest in 1896 Priest Ioann Bortnovskii, "nominated Petr Chickalusion, then a toion at the Kustatan village, and Stepan Tuchketelketen, *zakazchik*, as possible recipients of awards for both their religious and secular work."⁷² Petr Chickalusion was the father of Theodore Chickalusion and Simeon Chickalusion, who became chiefs of Polly Creek, and Kustatan and Tyonek, respectively. Petr Chickalusion may also be the brother of Katherine (Chickalusion) Constantine whose Dena'ina name was *Vegh k'ich'atyitna*. She went to the Stony River country sometime in the late 1800s and married Gustingene Constantine (see reference below at McArthur River).

In the 1880 census, Ivan Petroff reported that 65 Athabascans lived at Kustatan.⁷³ Peter Kalifornsky's writings describe Dena'ina life at Kustatan. In his opening remarks in the "Kustatan Bear Story," he notes the two settlements at West Foreland at around 1900:

A long time before my time there was a village at Old Kustatan, and there was a newer village on the north of the Kustatan Peninsula *Tl'egh Ditchik*, "yellow sedge" called the New Village of Kustatan, or New Kustatan. Quite a few people lived at Kustatan. They were trapping all over that country, all the way down to Tuxedni Bay, and up to McArthur River, and all over in the mountains.

✚ The upland areas of Kustatan where several villages and camps were located over time.
DNR Collection





↑ A July 4th picnic in 1930 at the Kustatan Packing Company, NPS Collection H-1066.

There were two brothers from Old Kustatan. They were trapping in Lake Clark Pass, and they went into the canyon up toward Lake Clark. They found a cache with some food in it. They stole some of the food and furs and carried it back to where they had their camp at *Nutenq'a* (an upper Bachatna Creek).⁷⁴

The story also describes the use of the area for trapping and documents camps along the courses of these rivers. Such camps, often called "brush camps"⁷⁵ or *skihnulchin*,⁷⁶ were usually temporary and seasonal, and served as rest stops, overnight camps, or base camps while trapping. Because the setting for the Kustatan Bear Story is in this area, it holds the aura of this long-standing legend.

In the journals of the Russian Orthodox Priest, John Bortnovsky⁷⁷ is the following description of Kustatan village on June 22, 1896 and a partial description of the activities of people living there.

Kustatan is a very small settlement, with only three houses, yet in these three chimneyless huts are crowded 54 souls of Kenai Indians (30 male and 24 female). We did not find anybody in the village this time, as all the inhabitants have moved to their summer place where they store a winter supply of fish.

Frederica de Laguna visited Kustatan in 1930, traveling on the gas boat *Dime* owned by Jack Fields of Seldovia.⁷⁸ She relied on a number of Dena'ina and non-natives for information on the sites she studied. For West Foreland, she reported the Native name "*Qeda'naq*" given by Nikita from Knik Arm and "*Qeda'na*" as the name of the Natives living in the area. She reported that the Kenai Dena'ina called the old village *Kusta'nuq*, and that it had been "peopled by Indians from Polly Creek"⁷⁹ and abandoned in 1910. Some of its Dena'ina residents moved to Kenai while others moved to Chief Chickalusion's camp to the north of Kustatan, which Kalifornsky called *Ti'egh Dilchik* ("yellow sedge") or "New Kustatan." New Kustatan was abandoned as a year-round village in the 1930s when its last residents moved to Tyonek.⁸⁰

Peter Kalifornsky⁶¹ describes life at Kustatan in the story "How They Lived at Kustatan":

When they stayed at Kustatan they made oil from beluga, seal, and other things. Then they went after clams. They cooked the clams. They put them in a beluga stomach and poured in oil to preserve it for winter. When they opened it up, they washed the clams in hot water. They cooked clam soup whenever they wanted to make it. There were no moose over there. They would go by boat to Kenai and kill moose. They dried that too, and they brought it back over. It was for winter. And then, in the places where they put up fish, they would go after ground squirrels. That, too, they cooked, and they put it away, packed in oil, for winter.

Although de Laguna mentioned no Dena'ina living at Kustatan when she visited in 1930, Dena'ina from Tyonek and Kenai worked at the cannery and harvested wild resources in the area. Peter Constantine's story, "The Kustatan People – A Hunting Story,"⁶² describes a hunting trip at Kustatan in 1930.

When I stayed in Kustatan, I stayed with Walter Pete. And Simeon Chickalusion visited us at nine o'clock one morning. At twelve o'clock midnight, Bedrushga said to me, "Let's go porcupine hunting." It was moonlight and it had frozen up. Then we took some dogs, and at five o'clock in the morning we killed nine black bears. Two days after that we had taken it all home to camp on sleds. After that, the ice went out of the Inlet. We loaded them all in the dory and took it to Tyonek. We brought bear meat to the Tyonek people in 1930.

In 1927, Al Jones founded the Kustatan Packing Company and built a plant on the south side of the forelands. Jones was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1900. He grew up in the Seattle area and moved to Anchorage in 1923. Jones first worked for the Alaska Railroad, then (after his marriage) he ran a number of small businesses including a grocery store in Anchorage, gold mining, commercial aviation, big game guiding, and a hunting lodge. He and his family ran the cannery at Kustatan until 1933 when he moved the plant to Anchorage.⁶³ One of Jones' partners continued running the operation until the early 1950s when winter ice took out the breakwater and pilings holding up the buildings.⁶⁴

Jones' cannery and several others at Kustatan attracted setnet commercial fishermen to the area. On the north side of the West Forelands several locally well-known fishermen began fishing in the 1940s. One was Lorence Snodgrass, who in the late 1930s moved to Alaska from Washington. He had a commercial sealing operation at Port Heiden and trapped



↑ Lorence Snodgrass, Don Nelson, Nina (Stephan) Snodgrass, Will Nelson, Ahab, and Penny (from left to right) at Kustatan in the late 1980s. Tania Bismark Collection.



↑ Sea lion hunting at Kustatan in 1963. Pictured are Nina Snodgrass and her half sister Alexandra Allowan from Tyonek. Donita Peter Collection.

furbearers on the Alaska Peninsula. In the 1940s, Snodgrass began commercial fishing and trapping on the west side of Cook Inlet, setting up a place on the north side of the Kustatan Peninsula. In his early years of trapping at Kustatan, Snodgrass had a partner named George "Slim" Welsh who, after a couple trapping seasons, set off one spring to sell their catch of furs. Welsh did not return with the money and left Lorence without a dog team. Lorence had to walk to Tyonek because his supplies had run out. While there he met Nina (locally pronounced "Nayna") Stephan who was born in Susitna Station and had moved to Tyonek. Lorence finally walked to Anchorage and caught up with Welsh in a bar. They settled the score over the fur sale money, and both continued trapping separately in area. In 1942, Lorence and



↑ The Trading Bay Packers building owned since 1948 by George Hayden who fished the area until 2003. The building was located northwest of the West Foreland near the mouth of McArthur River.
NPS Collection H-767.



↑ A 1930 photograph taken by Anton Balluta at Qeghnilen Village on the Stony River of Gustingon Constantine, Katherine Constantine, and Anisha Constantine. The Gustingon Constantine Family founded Line Village in the 1930s.
NPS Collection H-451.

Nina were married and eventually set up a home on the north side of Kustatan. Snodgrass had a small canning operation for the fish he caught at his setnet sites, and he was a hunting guide and continued to trap the area into the early 1980s. Tyonek family and friends often visited Lorence and Nina while they traveled to hunting and clamming locations in Redoubt Bay and at Harriet Point.

Before Nina and Lorence Snodgrass passed away in 1999 and 2003 respectively, they had moved to Soldotna and built a home next to their friends Herman and Sarah Lindgren.⁸⁵ During their time in Soldotna they befriended Mace Manier, a nurse at the Kenai hospital. Mace bought the West Foreland property and restored it to much of its original character to preserve the legacy of its former owners.⁸⁶

Another noted Kustatan fisherman was George Hayden who purchased a cannery site northwest of Kustatan in the 1940s. This was the former site of Harvey Smith who built his plant in 1929 as a result of the resurgence of the salmon canning industry in the inlet. The Dena'ina name of this site was *Niggwa Z'un* ("little steambath is there").⁸⁷ Hayden, and his wife fished the area during the summer and fall months, and then over-wintered in Nebraska. Like the Snodgrasses, Hayden processed some of the fish he caught and sold the rest to east side processors.

In 1951, Fred Elvsaas of Seldovia purchased the Jones' fishing sites and acquired an upland tract of 160 acres of state patented land at the Old Kustatan village site. Elvsaas fished the area beaches, and ran the tender *Gladys E.* hauling salmon to the Kenai River canneries for over 50 years. He sold most of the uplands to the Forest Oil Company that built a tank farm to receive oil from the *Osprey* offshore drilling platform. He retains his fishing rights, a small parcel of land and cabins, and annually goes to the area for subsistence hunting and fishing. A number of Tyonek residents were associated with the smaller canneries and fishing operations at Kustatan.

Among these fishermen was Fred Bismark, Sr. who dug clams at Polly Creek in the 1920s, and worked on fish tenders while

he and his family had their own commercial fishing operations around Kustatan and Beshta Bay. Bismark's wife's Aunt Nina was married to Lorence Snodgrass, so when Tyonek subsistence fishermen and hunters traveled to Redoubt Bay for hunting up the Kustatan River, or clamming at Harriet Point or Crescent River, they often made overnight stops at the Snodgrass residence in order to catch the tide change and pay a social visit.

TRADING BAY

The Trading Bay area was named for the trade interactions that took place there in the 1770s between the Dena'ina and Captain James Cook's expedition.⁸⁸ The area extends from the northern base of the Kustatan Peninsula to the southern base of Granite Point. The area includes many rivers that drain the southern slopes of Mt. Spurr, the Chakachamna Lake drainage, and glaciers at the northern slopes of the Neacola Mountains including Blockade and McArthur Glaciers.



↑ Art Standifer, Connie Burnett, Robert Standifer, Sr., and Harriet Burnett (Kaufman) at Robert's Creek in 1983. Photo by Ron Stavek.

Several of these rivers have their sources inside Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. River systems in the area form extensive flats with braided streams, and include McArthur River, Chakachatna River, Middle River, and Nicolai Creek. The entire area has always been a core wild resource harvest area for Tyonek residents. Age old trails traverse the area and provided routes for the Dena'ina going from Tyonek and Kustatan into the Alaska Range to interior village sites. Both Tyonek and Stony River Dena'ina traveled over these trails in the 1800s and early 1900s for trade and social relations.⁸⁹

Nadudiltnu "current-flows-down-river" ~ McArthur River

McArthur River was the "return" route for precontact and postcontact Dena'ina traveling between Tyonek and Kustatan on the coast and Telaquana Lake and the Stony River country in the interior. The Telaquana Trail runs from Lake Telaquana through Telaquana Pass to Chakachamna Lake, down the Chakachatna River to McArthur River and finally to Cook Inlet. Stony River people carried their *bidarkas* (kayaks) over the land portions of this route and used them to float the waterways to their destinations on either the Cook Inlet or Stony River side.⁹⁰

Chickalusion/Constantine/Bobby/Standifer Genealogy



Old Tyonek 1900 U.S. Census Mielke (2003)

Stephan	28	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Stephan, Eugenia	31	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Stephan, Humah	6	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Pete	35	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Pete, Pavel	10	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Pete, Negintine	2	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Pete, Anna	25	widow (cousin)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Pete, Pete	20	(cousin)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Karup	31	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Karup, Eugenia	20	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Karup, Affanance	2	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Karup, Oakalena	41	widow (mother-in-law)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Karup, Pete	10	(brother-in-law)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Hoomah	50	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Hoomah, Katrina	41	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Hoomah, Alavan	11	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Hoomah, Anna	10	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Hoomah, Butakonia	10	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Hoomah, Danyia	5	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Hoomah, Oonga	2	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	



↑ Tommy Allowan, Herman Standifer, Theodore "Chad" Chickalusion, and Maxim Chickalusion, Sr. at fish camp in 1957 harvesting a beluga whale. *Pauline Allowan Collection*

1900 Census for (Second) Tyonek Mielke (2003)

(Note: There are two occupations listed here. The first is what the resident did "back home" and the second is their occupation in Alaska.)

Finch, Durek	38		b. Illinois	To Alaska 1896	Farmer / Miner
McKeon, William	34		b. Pennsylvania	To Alaska 1898	Railroad / Miner
Harvey, Daniel	41		b. Pennsylvania	To Alaska 1896	Farmer / Miner
Lambert, Charles	35		b. California	To Alaska 1896	Teamster / Miner
Melbourne, Ivan	23		b. Connecticut	To Alaska 1898	Silversmith / Miner
Madison, John	49		b. Sweden	(left Sweden 1870) (To AK 1890)	Stone mason / Miner
Madison, Anne	34		b. France	(left France 1870) (To AK 1898)	Teacher / Homemaker
Madison, Minnie	2	(daughter)	b. Alaska		
Lambert, M_____	46		b. New York	To Alaska 1899	Farmer / U.S. Government Expedition
Callahan, William	23		b. New York	To Alaska 1898	Medical Student / Miner
Meenan, William	35		b. Pennsylvania	To Alaska 1898	Laborer / Miner
Dinneen, Michael	35		b. France	(left France 1892) (To AK 1898)	Laborer / Miner
Monteith, William	46		b. Michigan	To Alaska 1898	Paper maker / Miner
Clyde, George	27		b. Minnesota	To Alaska 1898	Farmer / Miner
Peter	49	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Peter, Po_____	35	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Peter, Ivan	22	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Peter, Vasil	12	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Peter, Inga	5	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Peter, Theodore	2	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Peter, Ivan	22	(adopted son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Peter, Stepenita	20	(daughter-in-law)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Alexandria	70	(mother-in-law)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Tesandlex	70	Head of House	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Tesandlex, Agrifina	60	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Tesandlex, Nicholi	23	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Tesandlex, Savah	16	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Tesandlex, Stephan	25	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Tesandlex, Olga	20	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Tesandlex, Binah	21	(adopted son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Chaska	40	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Chaska, Marpha	31	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Chaska, Bulcka	6	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Chaska, Groful	4	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Chaska, Eugenia	1	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Nicholi	31	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Nicholi, Stepaneta	31	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Nicholi, Eli	12	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Nicholi, Stephan	10	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Chemashka	26	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Chemashka, As_____	22	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker

Chernashka, Vasil	3	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Eukom	31	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Eukom, Stepaneta	21	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Eukom, Alexandria	10	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Eukom, Stephan	3	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Eukom, Inga	1	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Stephan	43	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Stephan, Katrina	31	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Stephan, Discon	17	(nephew)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Humah	50	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Humah, Bariskoiga	32	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Humah, Nichofal	20	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Humah, Belia	16	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Humah, Marpha	12	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Humah, Ugenia	5 months	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Nestesia	25	Female			
		head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Nestesia, Nadalia	5	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Pete	31	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Pete, Terindian	15	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Pete, Dalhea	4	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Maria	50	Independent			
		Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Maria, S _____	16	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Feagle	65	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Feagle, Nicholi	8	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Feagle, Nickoli	25	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Feagle, Katyna	20	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Feagle, Nikah	2	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Karup	34	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Karup, Nastashia	20	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Alexa	32	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Alexa, Usha	20	(wife)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Alexa, Nukila	2	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	
Christina	85	Independent			
		widow	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Polekea	35	Independant			
		widow	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Olga	40	Independant			
		widow	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Home maker
Deacon	50	Head of house	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Deacon, Sikar	15	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Deacon, Nickoli	14	(son)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Deacon, Katrina	10	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Deacon, Polakea	15	(adopted daughter)	b. Alaska	Tyonek Tribe	Fishing-Hunting
Lundquist, Chas	41		b. Sweden	(left Sweden 1892) To AK 1898 Miner	
Hicks, Harry	34		b. Illinois	To Alaska 1895	Miner
Hicks, Al _____	27	(wife)	b. Alaska	Matanuska Tribe	Home maker
Hicks, Minnie	1	(daughter)	b. Alaska	Matanuska Tribe mixed	
Perry, Frederick	28		b. England	(left England 1884) To AK 1895	Miner
Churchill, Frank	35		b. Nova Scotia	(left Nova Scotia 1884) (To AK 1898)	Miner

Vonga Bobby⁹³ describes the use of Merrill Pass by Stony River people and his grandmother Vegh K'ich'ayitna, Katarina, (Katherine Chickalusion Constantine) who came from the Cook Inlet side and married Vegh Nuch'edyux Tukda, Gustingin Constantine. Andrew Balluta⁹² in an interview with Jim Kari commented on the 1930s photo taken by his father:

- AB: Yes, my dad took that picture of the two old people, and Paul Bobby they called him, but their original name is Constantine.
- JK: Paul Constantine, Vonga's father, is your grandfather?
- AB: My mother's uncle. And the old people that had this thing in Constantine, Katherine Constantine was my mother's real grandparents.
- JK: What are their names?
- AB: Gustingin, Gustingin Constantine, and the old grandma was Katherine. That one is called *Vegh'ich'atytina* in Dena'ina.
- AB: All children take their mother's side of the clan, like *Nuhzhi*. That Katherine had four sisters. They were from Tyonek or Kustatan. They were supposed to have been sisters, four of them, and she was one: they were *Nuhzhi*, and that's what we are, due to my mother.

The marriage described in this story exemplifies the clan connection between Dena'ina living on Cook Inlet and those living on Lake Clark.

McArthur River is probably the most significant drainage for Tyonek people today. They frequently use the area for hunting moose, bears, fishing for salmon, gathering wild berries and plants, and waterfowl hunting and egg gathering. The river mouth and nearby inlet waters are traditional and current Dena'ina hunting grounds for beluga whale and harbor seal. Camps and a cabin are maintained along the lower reaches of the river. The cabin has been moved several times as the river continuously erodes its banks threatening the cabin's safety.

***Ch'elehtnu* "spawning stream" – Old Tyonek Creek, Roberts Creek & *Tubughnenq* "beach land" – Old Tyonek**
Ch'elehtnu, or Robert's Creek, was the original location of the village of Tyonek. This was the major settlement for the *Tubughna*, Beach People; on west Cook Inlet and their village was called *Tubughnenq*. This was the location of the major trading post run by the Alaska Commercial Company as discussed in the previous chapter. In about 1900, the

Tyonek 1920 Census: Orphaned Children of the Influenza Epidemic Mielke (2003)

Dunagan, David F.	28	b. Washington / Teacher
Dunagan, Lora M.	27	b. Michigan / Teacher
Dunagan, Alberta M.	1	b. Alaska
Hancich, Edward L.	25	b. Washington / School
Hancich, Helen E.	22	b. Minnesota School
Petroff, Billy	32	b. Orphanage Superintendent
Alexan, Nayiha	14	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Longcarp, Orfina	13	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Trenton, Leo	13	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Shedel, Oxina	13	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Evan, Freona	7	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Longcarp, Mary	8	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Evans, Mike	8	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil
Petroff, Veronica	7	b. Alaska Native Athabaskan / orphanage pupil



← Pictured are the Chuitt family at Tyonek. Alexandra is the mother with Doris (Bartell) center and Paul Chuitt on the right. This photo said to have been taken in 1915, but may be later. Nora McCord Collection.



→ Katherine Chickaluxon, William Standifer, Sr., Annie (Stephan) Chickaluxon, and Simeon Chickaluxon. Outside Chief Chickaluxon's house in Tyonek, early 1920s. Chickaluxon Collection.



↑ The orphanage at "Second" Tyonek in 1897 taken by Dall DeWeese of Canon City, Colorado. Native Village of Tyonek Collection.

village was moved to Tyonek Creek due to tidal erosion.³³ It takes its name Robert's Creek for the late Robert Standifer who moved with his two brothers to the area from Kenai in the 1920s. In his teens, Robert lived with Charley Kroto and his family. Robert, being the oldest child in the household, learned to trap with Kroto in the Trading Bay flats and Chakachatna River area.

Tank'itnu "fish dock river" ~ Tyonek Creek, and "Second Tyonek"

Tank'itnu is named for the dip netting platform that the Dena'ina used in the inlet prior to 1880.³⁴ In contemporary times this second of three locations for the village at Tyonek Creek became known as "Second Tyonek."

In the 1890s, Tyonek was a stopping and departure point for miners traveling to the gold fields at Hope and Sunrise, to fields in the Susitna drainage, further into the Alaskan interior. Sailing sloops left Tyonek ferrying cargo and passengers



↑ USGS photo of Tyonek taken during the 1898 Mendonhall expedition to West Cook Inlet.
Anchorage Museum of History and Art Photo Archives.



↑ A photo taken in 2004 from approximately the same position south of the former village site.
Photo by Dawn L. Helen



↑ A 1940s aerial photo of the Tyonek village center. *Neva McCord Collection.*



← Old Tyonek Store in the late 1950s. Workers are waiting to unload a supply barge. *Pauline Allowan Collection.*



↑ Martha Mishakoff-Chase, Max Chickalusion, Sr., William Mishakoff, and Stanley Mishakoff. Martha is holding Chad Chickalusion. Photo taken while fishing near Tyonek in 1951. Chickalusion Collection.



← Alexandra and Robert Allowan with their children Fiona, Sophie, and Tania in Tyonek about 1944. Tania was born in 1939 in Tyonek.

Alexandra (Stephan) and Robert were from Susitna Station. Peter and Tommy (Stephan) (step-sons of Robert) born at Susitna Station, are not present.

Nora McCord Collection.



← Annie and Simeon Chickalusion (couple on left), young Isaac Stephan, and Seva Stephan (right) at fish camp just below the timber camp in the 1950s.

Pauline Allowan Collection.

farther up the inlet to sites along the coast as well as up the Susitna River to Susitna Station. Tyonek's population numbered 117 people in 1880, with 2 whites, 6 creoles, and 109 Athabascans. In 1890 there were 115 people with 50 "foreigners" and 65 "Natives."⁹⁵ It was the main west side trans-shipping point where cargo was transferred from ocean-going steamers such as the *Olga* and the *Tyonek*. In the 1920s, gas engines became available and shallow draft gas boats like the *Alert* piloted by Billy Austin and the *Sea Otter* piloted by "Red" Bartels served the communities of Knik, Susitna Station, and Hope.⁹⁶ Several early American explorers, including Walter C. Mendenhall, Geologist Josiah E. Spurr, Captain E. F. Glenn, and Stephen R. Capps with the U.S. Geological Survey, used Tyonek as a base camp for expeditions throughout the Cook Inlet Basin.



← An unidentified man, Henry George, Alec Nikoli, and Sava Stephan from left to right at Kroto Village in the 1920s. Nora McCord Collection.

In 1915, an executive order created the Moquawkie Indian Reserve of 26,918 acres surrounding the village.⁹⁷ Further investigation into the possible origin of the name indicates that at the same time the Bureau of Indian Affairs agents were also addressing issues concerning land settlement, ownership, and resettlement of the Mesquakie (Fox) Indians of central Wisconsin. Perhaps confusion occurred with reference to the name Mesquakie.⁹⁸

After the influenza epidemic of 1918, many Dena'ina from upper Cook Inlet moved to Tyonek. This epidemic reduced the Dena'ina population substantially. In 1805, there were perhaps 3,000 Dena'ina. By 1899, the population had dropped to 1,170. There was a further drop by 1910 to 672 people. There are no reliable estimates of the population just prior to the influenza epidemic, yet by 1932, the population was down to 650.⁹⁹

Many children were orphaned by the influenza epidemic and they lived at an orphanage at "Second Tyonek." A partial list of names appearing in the 1920 U.S. Census appears in the sidebar Tyonek 1920 Census.¹⁰⁰

In the 1930s, Frank Standifer, Sr., who had moved from Kenai to Tyonek with his two brothers, set up a fish camp at this location. Since that time, his children and grandchildren also have built cabins and conducted their subsistence and commercial fishing here. The following chapter will discuss this original village site in more detail, as it is still an important location for subsistence and commercial fishing.

***Qaggeyshlat* "little-place-between-the-toes" ~ New Tyonek**

When erosion began to wash away the site of the second Tyonek, residents moved to its present location under the leadership of Chief Simeon Chickalusion.¹⁰¹ According to de Laguna,¹⁰² this was an old Dena'ina village site. This was also the site where in 1934, most of the remaining Dena'ina residents of Susitna Station moved. Thus the present day community of

Tyonek consists of Native inhabitants or their descendants from several communities including Susitna Station, Kroto Village, Polly Creek, Kustatan, Kenai, and Old Tyonek. It was here that the Dena'ina became fully engaged in the commercial salmon fishery. However, according to Braund and Behnke¹⁰³ most Tyonek residents describe the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s as a period of poverty caused by poor commercial fishing, low fur prices, and generally scarce subsistence resources.

Ch'u'itnu Hdakaq undefined "river mouth" ~ Chuitna River mouth

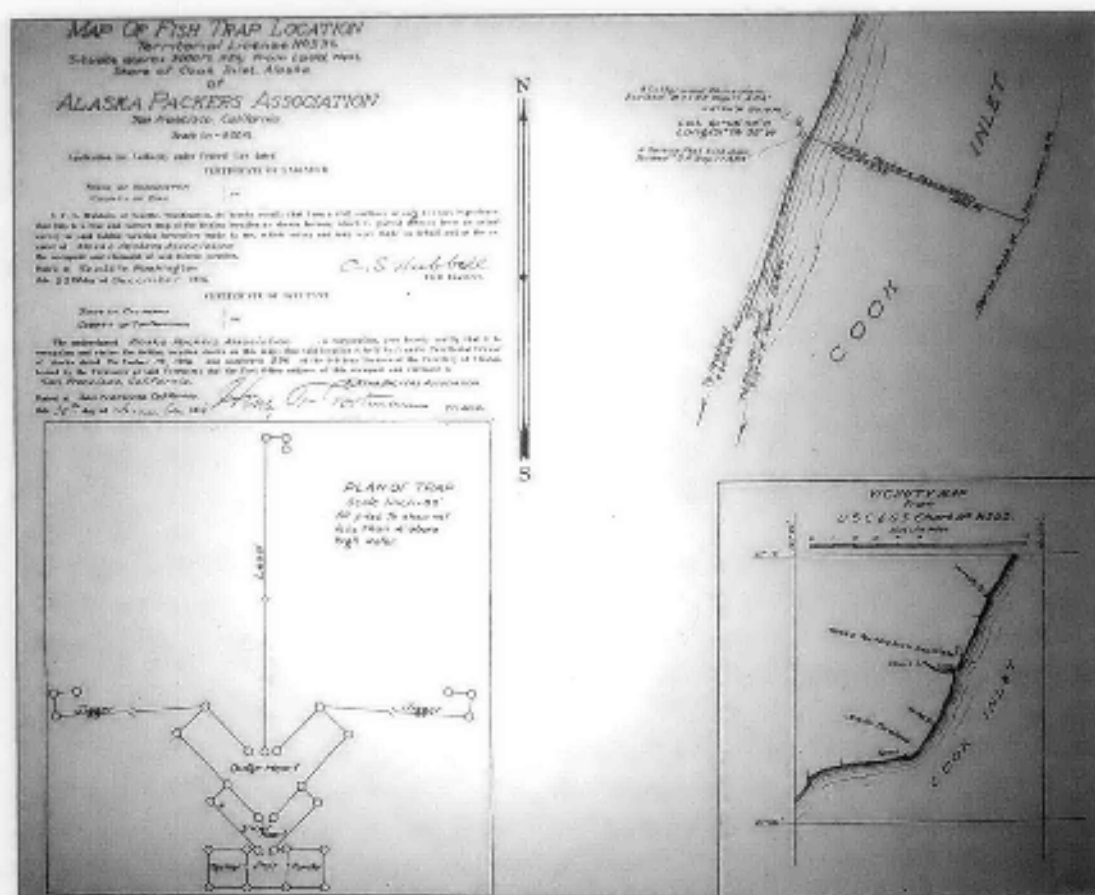
The orthodox priests' journals contain information about west side villages in the 1800s. While on a trip to visit west side chapels at Kustatan and Tyonek, on August 19, 1898, traveling with several other *bidarkas*, Father Ionan Bortnovsky reported:¹⁰⁴

We left Kenai about noon, but could not use a favorable current to reach Tyonek. Instead we had to struggle against the head current. My paddlers became exhausted, and we had to come by a small settlement, *Chilikhma* (also Chubutna or Chuvitna), which is located seven miles from Tyonek. Only the next day at 3 o'clock in the morning did we reach Tyonek.

On July 7th, 1900, Father Bortnovsky reports again on Chuitna:¹⁰⁵

At 9 o'clock in the morning using low tide, I continued my trip and reached Tyonek about 6 o'clock in the evening. This was the busiest time for the local Kenaitze. I found them occupied with drying fish for themselves for their winter supply and to sell. Now there is high demand for dried fish. It is delivered to Yukon and other gold-mining

- ↓ Map of Pile Fish Trap Location No. 17 recorded in 1916. The fish trap was owned by the Alaska Packers Association and was placed near Ladd, north of the mouth of the Chuitna River.
Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Archives.





↑ A group photo in Susitna Station in 1910. The two buildings pictured are the Alaska Commercial Company and adjacent warehouse. Chief Ephim, Shem Pete's stepbrother, was chief of Susitna from 1911 to 1915. He is the tall man in the back. The Alaska Commercial Company store can be seen today in Talkeetna where it has become Hagley's Store. Nora McCord Collection.



← From left to right: Robert "Bobby" Stephan, Steven Stephan, Anderson Stephan, Stephan (his Dena'ina name means Little Uncle), and Jim Esai outside of Nikolai's house in Susitna Station in the 1920s. Steven and Jim were married to Little Uncle's daughters. Stephan was the grandfather of Nora McCord. Fedora Constantine Collection.



← A family from Susitna Station in Anchorage visiting. Pictured from left to right are Jacko, Nora McCord as a child, Alexandra, and Nora's grandmother Annie Ephim. The rest of the group are a family that lived in Anchorage. Photo taken in 1925-26. Nora McCord Collection.



↑ Brooks Expedition pack train on beach north of Ladd's Station, 1902, by A. H. Brooks.
 Courtesy USGS Photo Library, bun00023.

Ladd's Station 1900

Mielke (2003)

Litchfield, _____	30	b. Minnesota	To Alaska 1898 / Miner
Litchfield, William	26 (brother)	b. Minnesota	To Alaska 1898 / Miner
Schulstad, Olaf	32	b. Norway	(left Norway 1897) To Alaska 1899 / Miner
Larvy, James	42	b. Canada	(left Canada 1880) To Alaska 1898 / Miner
Marston, William	24	b. England	(left England 1888) to Alaska 1899 / Miner
Stephan	35 Head of house	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Stepenita	35 (wife)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Buckskin	12 (son)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Esback	10 (son)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Wellalah	20 (sister-in-law)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Nicki	7 (brother)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Nickoli	22 (brother)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Stephan, Olga	60 (mother)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Pitski	55 Head of house	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Pitski, Lutchitakunda	50 (wife)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Pitski, Baval	17 (son)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Pitski, Nickoli	10 (son)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Kartini	30 Head of house	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Kartini, Katrina	30 (wife)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Kartini, Inga	7 (daughter)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Kartini, Karop	28 (brother)	b. Alaska	Susitna Tribe
Ladd, Chas D.	57	b. _____	To Alaska 1896 / Merchant

areas as a feed for sled dogs. God blessed Tyonek natives with a large catch, even more than they could store. This summer, in a settlement called Chubutnu, which is not far from Tyonek, a new cannery factory was built. The factory operates four fish tanks and has sixty fishermen along the shoreline to the Tyonek area.

Father Bortnovsky on the steamer *Dora*, stopped at Chuitna and recorded the following:¹⁰⁶

At Chubutnu only one Indian family lives permanently; the others come here to work for the Lad Company. Mr. Ladd, whom I had the pleasure of meeting before, is a very kind man. He cordially welcomed us. Besides a saltery, he maintains stores in various places and buys furs. He tries to support the Indians in every way; for the best hunters he even builds new houses free. Recently he cleared a large piece of land and in time we may see a native settlement growing on it. He breeds cattle, hogs, sheep and horses. His storekeeper, Mr. White, is a married man and has a family...

Kari and Fall¹⁰⁷ describe the use of the Chuitna River and its mouth for fall subsistence fishing. The river mouth and flats continue to be important for spring and fall waterfowl hunting. In the late fall and winter months, Pacific tomcod run into the lower reaches of the river for spawning. The late Nellie Chickalusion fished through the ice for tomcods during the 1950s and 1960s. There is also a fall smelt run that enters the river mouth and these too were caught by Tyonek residents.¹⁰⁸ The lower reaches of the river are used by sport fishermen and are used by clients from the Tyonek Lodge.

Tsat'u kegh "beneath-the-big-boulder" – Susitna Station

Although *Tsat'u kegh*, or Susitna Station is not within the study area, a brief description is necessary as many Tyonek families trace their origin to this village. Susitna Station was on the Iditarod Trail. The community stores supplied miners traveling to Cache Creek or Iditarod.¹⁰⁹ The Russian Orthodox Church established a chapel at Susitna Station in 1890.¹¹⁰ When E.F. Glenn came through the community in 1899 he found 183 Dena'ina living there.¹¹¹ By the 1910 census there



↑ Ladd's Station on north side of Chuitna mouth with Mendenhall Expedition camp tents, 1898, by W.C. Mendenhall.
USGS Photo Library: mwc00017

were only 74 Dena'ina left in Susitna Station. The 1918 influenza epidemic severely reduced the population further. Most of the Dena'ina residents moved to Tyonek in 1934 and the last of those that remained died in 1960.¹¹² Shem Pete¹¹³ related the prophecy of the disappearance of Susitna Station.

A little more I'll tell you. Shem Pete I am. My father had an older brother. He really was a shaman. Thus he would say, "Susitna will disappear. It will disappear. The grass only will grow. The village it will extend it will be as tall that grass. The Tanainas of Susitna will disappear." Thus he said.

SUMMARY: KEY TRENDS AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS 1900 –1960S

Key economic and demographic trends along west Cook Inlet that began in the late 19th century accelerated during the early and middle 20th century. To a large degree, changes took place due to broader, regional economic development. Particularly important was the expansion of commercial fish processing facilities to west Cook Inlet locations, which facilitated the growth of commercial fishing and the settlement of Dena'ina territory by non-native families. For the first time, a small non-native population was established. A result was increasing intermarriage between non-native men and Dena'ina women. But the decline of the Dena'ina population continued as a consequence of epidemic disease. The Dena'ina consolidated into a few year-round communities but continued to use most of their traditional territory seasonally. By the 1950s, oil and gas exploration and production brought further economic and demographic change accompanied by enhanced transportation systems and a growing recreational fishing and hunting industry. Changes in land tenure also took place as a result of natural resource development, homesteading, and the Native allotment program.

The cultural associations between present-day Lake Clark National Park and Preserve lands and the west Cook Inlet shoreline, established in precontact times, continued into the early and mid 20th century. For example, until the late 1800s, Iliamna and Lake Clark Dena'ina traveled to Cook Inlet to hunt sea otters and sell furs, interacting with Cook Inlet Dena'ina and Euro-American newcomers. During the early 1900s, inland Dena'ina traveled to Tuxedni Bay and Polly Creek to work in the canneries. Ancestors of present day Nondalton and Tyonek families were born at Polly Creek, now within the park. Both inland and coastal Dena'ina used west Cook Inlet river drainages, many of which have their sources within the boundaries of the park or preserve, as travel routes, linking Kijik Village and Lake Clark with settlements along Cook Inlet. Family histories feature this travel; for example, Harry Bartels' mother, Tuxenna, was born at the head of the trail to Lake Clark.

The events in "Kustatan Bear Story," which took place in the early 20th century, are set in the area from Lake Clark Pass to Kustatan. The story centers around interactions between the Lake Clark and Kustatan residents. This story, still told to the present day, is one of the best known Dena'ina oral traditions and serves as a direct link between west Cook Inlet Dena'ina communities and the inland Dena'ina communities associated with Lake Clark National Park.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTEMPORARY LIFE ON THE WEST SIDE OF COOK INLET

For the last two centuries, a number of issues relevant to the people on the west side of Cook Inlet have continued to be pertinent in the present. A dynamic economic system now includes participation in a global economy, which allows Tyonek residents to continue living on the west side of Cook Inlet instead of migrating to Anchorage or the Kenai Peninsula. Tyonek has fought to keep access to traditional lands and resources, as shown in the case examples of the king salmon subsistence fishery and spring waterfowl hunt. Other issues relate to maintaining a sense of identity as Dena'ina in the face of Euro-American domination of lands, cultural attitudes, and worldviews.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the people of Tyonek maintain a subsistence way of life that reflects their culture as indigenous Dena'ina people. More specifically this identity includes a continued dependence on king salmon, moose, beluga, migratory waterfowl, and other wild resources that cannot be separated from their traditions of extended kinship and the expressive culture of dance, singing, and language. They also maintain connections to the lands on the west side of Cook Inlet and Lake Clark National Park through the lives and stories of their ancestors, and through contemporary travel and use.

THE CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY OF TYONEK

In 2000, the community of Tyonek had 184 residents. Of these, 95 percent were Alaska Native. There were 134 total housing units, of which 68 were vacant. Fifty-six of these vacant housing units are used seasonally by members of the Tyonek community who live and work in Anchorage or elsewhere during the winter and return during the summer for fishing and other activities. In 2000, the median age in Tyonek was 28, which demonstrates a young population. The unemployment rate in 2000 was 27 percent, although 55 percent of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was \$26,667, per capita income was \$11,261, and 14 percent of residents were living below the poverty level.¹

The main center of the community consists of the Nellie Chickalusion Community Hall that houses the Native Village of Tyonek Council offices. Residents can come for coffee, the Anchorage paper and morning conversation, and the kitchen where lunch for elders is prepared. In the community hall, events are held such as the potlatch dances and potlucks.



↑ The Nellie Chickalusion Council building in the summer of 2003.
Photo by David L. Nelson, July 2003



← *St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church at Tyonek.*

Photo by Dawn L. Holm, July 2003.



← *The center of Tyonek in the summer of 2003. Pictured are the Justin Time store on the right, the boys and girls club building on the left and the Russian Orthodox Church in the background.*

Photo by Dawn L. Holm, July 2003.

The hall has a panoramic view of Cook Inlet, through two story windows, and above it perched on a hill is the St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, where on Sundays the local reader holds a service. Nearby are the post office and the community store, the "Justin Time" that sells basic foodstuffs and soda, and now has a pool table. Between the store and the council hall lies a building housing the Boys and Girls Club named after the late Chief Simeon Chickalusion. Here, on weekends, children and a few elders mix for an evening of games, events, and conversation. Across the street is Brittany's Snack Shop that specializes in carryout lunches of hamburgers, pizzas, and ice cream.

Tyonek residents in 2005 are attempting to diversify and stabilize their economy and maintain cultural identity. In recent years the commercial fishery has declined in productivity and value, and this has affected many families with long histories in the fishery. Because of a generally declining economy in the community, many extended family members now live either full or part time in Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, or the Kenai Peninsula. The Native Village of Tyonek Council and the Tyonek Native Corporation are attempting to bring more job opportunities to village residents, and maintain interest in family and cultural history among village youth.

Since the 1960s, connections between the inland Dena'ina communities of Nondalton, Lime Village and Tyonek that were established over previous generations have remained strong. Today these ties are the basis for family members' travel back and forth between communities to engage in subsistence and cultural activities. For example, the Standifer family of Tyonek travels to Nondalton in the spring to harvest freshwater fish through the ice from Six-Mile Lake and to visit with relatives. Tyonek residents also travel between Nondalton and Iliamna, and across Cook Inlet to Kenai to maintain community relations and for employment. It is also common for people from Lake Clark and Iliamna Lake communities to travel to the western shores of Cook Inlet, such as Spring Point in Chinitna Bay, to harvest resources such as clams, and to harvest king salmon with friends and family on Tyonek beaches.

INDUSTRY AND JOBS FOR RESIDENTS OF TYONEK

As discussed in Chapter Four, assessment of the potential development of west Cook Inlet's natural resources began in the 1850s when Peter Doroshin explored Cook Inlet for potential gold and coal deposits for the Russian Government. Gold was never found and coal deposits proved to be of poor quality. However, the development of natural gas reserves in Cook Inlet resulted in the use of lands for processing facilities and extraction points. Timber has also been a major resource. Additionally, for many residents of the west side of Cook Inlet, commercial fishing has been a key economic activity for over a century.

Oil and Gas Exploration and Development

In the early 1960s, natural gas was discovered in abundant quantities and developed at several west Cook Inlet locations. For example, in 1962, natural gas reserves were found at the mouth of the Beluga River (see Figure 7.1).

↓ *The Standifer family fishing near Robert's Creek in June 2004. Photo by David L. Holden.*



In subsequent years, petroleum deposits were discovered at Granite Point and McArthur River. These fields were developed offshore and came online in 1967 from platform drilling rigs in Trading Bay.²

Tyonek benefited from gas exploration and development when, in 1964, the village received \$12.9 million from the sale of oil and gas leases on lands within the Tyonek ("Moquawkie") Reserve, which had been established by Congress in 1915. Tyonek won the right to receive and administer these funds after several years of legal actions involving the Department of the Interior. At issue was whether Tyonek itself would receive the money for exploration and development of the subsurface oil and gas on reserve land and, if so, whether the people of Tyonek would be allowed to decide for themselves how to manage these funds. The Native Village of Tyonek Council invested the money in 60 new homes; infrastructure

Milestones: Cook Inlet Oil and Gas Development Alaska Oil and Gas Quarterly (February 2003)

- 1853: Russians find oil seeps on inlet's west side.
- 1882-89: Prospectors attempt to drill for oil on inlet's west side. One well briefly produces 50 barrels per day.
- 1903-06: Oil development at Oil Bay.
- 1911: Union Oil of California (now Unocal) begins selling petroleum products on Kenai Peninsula.
- 1950: Havenstrite Oil Co. drills test wells on Cook Inlet's west side. Wells are dry.
- 1957: Richfield Oil Co. discovers commercial oil field at Swanson River, on Kenai.
- 1958-60: Unocal and Marathon Oil Co. discover gas on Kenai Peninsula including Kenai gas field.
- 1961: Swanson River field begins production.
- 1962: Beluga River gas field on inlet's west side is discovered.
- 1964-66: Middle Ground Shoal, Granite Point, McArthur River offshore fields in inlet are discovered.
- 1967: Offshore production begins in Cook Inlet.
- 1969: Major plans at Nikiski, near Kenai. Open: Tesoro refinery, Unocal ammonia/fertilizer plant, Phillips-Marathon liquefied natural gas plant.
- 1978: Unocal doubles size of ammonia/fertilizer plant.
- 1985: Marathon installs Steelhead platform.
- 2002: Forest Oil Co. begins production of Redoubt Shoal oil field. New field doubles inlet's remaining reserves.

including roads, a store and coffee shop, a guest house, water treatment facilities, and a village maintenance shop; and Anchorage real estate. As part of the economic growth package of gas leasing, a mile-long lighted runway was constructed at Tyonek with state funding.

Further exploration for gas and oil on Tyonek lands located reserves that could not be developed due to the inadequate technology, and the few gas wells developed on reserve lands sanded up. Several investments failed. Also, within a few years' time, tragedies hit the village when several key community leaders died. After these events, community members expressed ambivalent feelings about the changes that the money had brought to their traditional way of life.³ The hour-long film *Tubughna: The Beach People* by Brink and Brink⁴ was produced at the request of the Tyonek village council and it chronicles some of the changes at Tyonek that followed the lease sales.

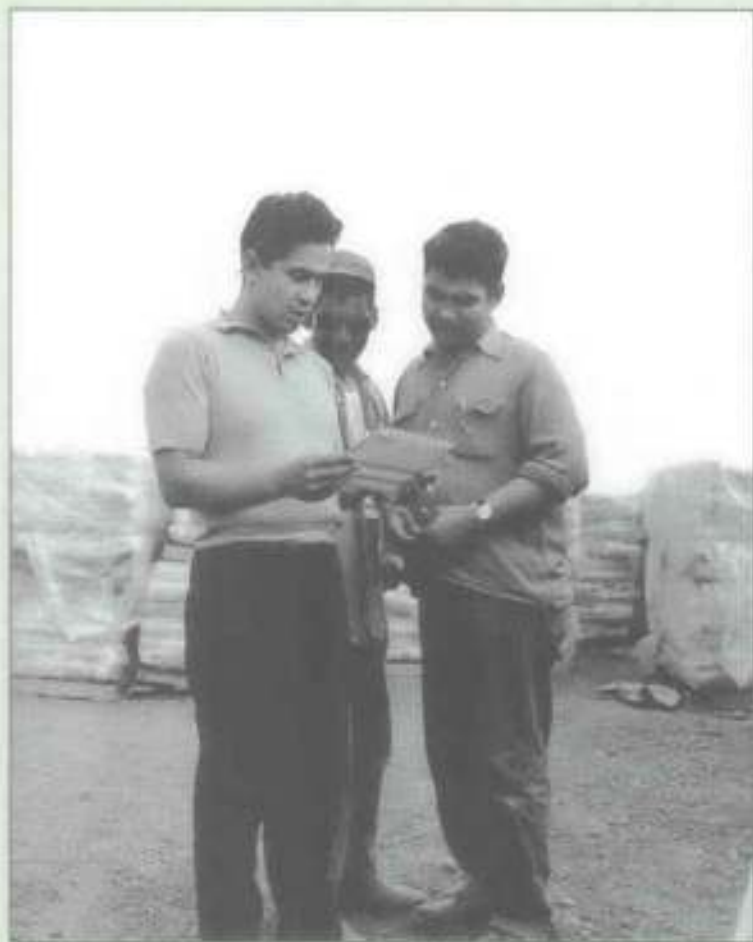


← Tjonek Village Council members discuss plans for new construction with BIA representatives in the early 1960s. Clockwise from far left is Francis Stevens (BIA) not pictured, Albert Kulas, Jr., Edward Kinto, Robert Bennett (BIA Commissioner), Seraphim Stephan Sr., Fred Bismark, Sr., and Emil McCord, Sr.

The old village council office is now the location of the Boys and Girls Club. Pictured above on the wall is a portrait of Simeon Chickalason given to Tjonek by George Spennak.

Native Village of Tjonek Collection.

→ Seraphim ("Slim") Stephan, Bert Longcarp, and Emil McCord, Sr. review shipping manifests for building materials for the new house construction in 1964. Native Village of Tjonek Collection.



→ Eddie Kudo mends nets with Mrs. Martha Alexan in the 1960s. Native Village of Tyonek Collection.



Today, modern technology has allowed development oil reserves on Tyonek lands. A few jobs at the nearby Beluga power plant, where electricity is produced from Cook Inlet gas, provide income for some Tyonek residents.

There are also natural gas pumping stations now located on neighboring Cook Inlet Region Incorporated (CIRI) lands and Tyonek residents work in maintenance and construction of these small facilities. The single Tyonek-based construction contractor (Tyonek Contractors LLC) installed a gas pipeline from wells at North Foreland to the main line running to Beluga and Anchorage. The company also installed and maintained drill-pads and feeder lines for gas removal and transport.

Commercial Fishing

As was discussed in the previous two chapters, commercial fishing had a major impact on the economy in west Cook Inlet by providing jobs for Dena'ina residents and newcomers to the area. Tyonek, and other west side fishermen, continue to fish off the beach at setnet sites and to sell their fish to Kenai and Anchorage processors. Commercial fishing had provided a major source of income in Tyonek, a community with few other jobs, until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since that time, this fishery's productivity has gradually declined due largely to inlet-wide management practices that focus on the intercept drift fishery south of Tyonek in the Central District of Cook Inlet. Whereas in the 1980s there were over 25 commercial setnet permits in the village there were fewer than ten in 2005. With declining numbers of fish reaching the area around Tyonek, reduced numbers of fishing days, and declining fish prices, the fishery was no longer economically viable for Tyonek fishermen. However, because of their love of the fishing way of life and the life values being taught to their children at fish camps, some fishermen have invested heavily in new boats, nets, and other equipment with money they have earned in cash jobs elsewhere.³ In 2005, the Native Village of Tyonek and fish buyers in Anchorage developed a new plan for harvesting and marketing their commercially-harvested salmon. Under this plan, fishermen learned improved methods of handling and caring for the salmon by bleeding the freshly caught fish and keeping them on ice until delivered to Anchorage. Incentives for the fishermen included higher fish prices and pickup and delivery services. Although Tyonek fishermen were hopeful for a productive 2005 season, a record low return to the upper inlet cut short the hopes of many.⁴ Nevertheless, Tyonek fishermen plan to be back on the beaches to carry on a long established tradition.



← At the new store in Tyonek, Robert Strandifer, Sr. helps Isabel Stephan and Peter Constantine in 1963.

The new store provided a wide variety of goods including fresh, frozen, and packaged goods and firearms, ammunition, and gasoline. The store was owned by the Native Village of Tyonek and leased by Lawrence and Ray McGord for over 20 years.

Native Village of Tyonek Collection



← Construction of new homes in Tyonek in the 1960s. Every family received a new house complete with furniture.

Native Village of Tyonek Collection

Beluga Coal Field

In the late 1970s to the mid 1980s, studies evaluated the potential production of coal from the Beluga deposits west of Tyonek. Because of the coal's high sulfur content, it was undesirable for markets in the United States. Construction of a mine and transport to tidewater at Granite Point added costs making it too expensive for shipment to Asian markets. Consequently, the developer, Diamond Shamrock Corporation, put the project on hold. Recently, the prospect of mining Beluga coal has again surfaced as current prices, markets, and extraction technology might make it economical to bring a mine to full production.

TYONEK LAND STATUS AND ANCSA LAND CLAIMS

Figure 6.1 depicts the major landholders on the west side of Cook Inlet. These landholders include the Tyonek Native Corporation, CIRI, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service. Residents of the east side of Cook Inlet also hold lands including the Seldovia Native Corporation (SNA). According to Elvsaas,⁷ during the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) entitlement process the Seldovia Native Association had to choose from deficiency areas because of state selections in the vicinity of Seldovia. As of 2005, land selection and transfer were still incomplete for the village corporations of Tyonek, Knik, Salamatof, and Seldovia.



↑ Max Chickalusion, Jr. and Max Chickalusion, Sr. commercial fishing in 1968. They are pictured loading fish at the scow in Cook Inlet.
Chickalusion Collection



↑ Siblings, Brandy and Randy Standrier commercial fishing near Tyonek Creek in July 2005.
Photo by Devin L. Heien

Until the passage of ANCSA, Tyonek lands were under a reserve status. With the passage of ANCSA Tyonek elected to participate and the former reserve lands became the property of the Tyonek Native Corporation (TNC), with 303 people enrolled in 1974.⁶ Today TNC has holdings in a broad range of industries including defense manufacturing, aircraft maintenance, information technology services, environmental remediation, oilfield support services, and tourism. TNC manages 190,000 acres of land, to which it has rights for the extraction of resources. Besides the search for gas on Tyonek lands, the corporation has also logged a portion of the land and sent pulp to Asia.

In 2005, a multitude of resource development and extraction projects were under way on TNC lands.³ These included the development of a resource management plan for wildlife, timber, and fisheries. A sport fishing and hunting lodge run by the private company (MUM Alaska LLC) operates a lodge with guided fishing and hunting trips on TNC lands at Conabuna Lake; locally known as Blood Lake. The lodge employs Tyonek residents as guides and lodge workers.

Timber Extraction

Since the 1970s, state lands around Tyonek have yielded harvests of beetle-killed spruce. Kodiak Lumber Mills Inc. conducted the harvest and ran a chipping facility and loading dock on TNC land near Tyonek Creek. Chips were produced at the mill and loaded onto ocean-going cargo vessels. As a result of this timber harvest project, the formerly-timbered land grew up in grass cover that was undesirable for moose and other native wildlife.

In 2003, more beetle-killed timber on TNC lands resulted in the extraction of logs for an overseas market. No chips were produced, but the dock was used for loading log ships. Tyonek Contractors LLC built access roads and the loading service area. In conjunction with this timber removal program, management plans were implemented to manipulate the forest habitat to be conducive for mouse browse and other wildlife habitat.

Timber extraction on Tyonek Native Corporation (TNC) lands has garnered the village income to continue its work in providing health care and economic development.

CONTEMPORARY SUBSISTENCE

As described in previous chapters, for centuries west Cook Inlet residents have participated in an annual cycle of resource harvest and use for food and raw materials to sustain their communities. Today this cycle plays a very important role in maintaining connections between the lands and people of the region. The cycle begins each spring as increasing hours of sunlight bring a new growth of plant life, accompanied by migrations of birds, marine mammals, and fish, and the birth of young moose, bears, caribou, and many other animals.

In April and May, west side fishermen set their nets in inlet waters to harvest runs of hooligan and salmon, while Tyonek bird hunters travel to the sloughs and wetlands where migrating geese and ducks are harvested. West Cook Inlet residents travel in their dories and walk to the beaches for the clam beds of Redoubt Bay and Tuxedni Bay on the edge of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



← The Tyonek Lodge on Congabuna, "Blood Lake," run by MUM Alaska LLC under lease from the Tyonek Native Corporation.
Courtesy of MUM Alaska

In the summer, the king salmon return to the streams of west Cook Inlet. King salmon have been the mainstay of the diet of the Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet since they reached these shores from the interior. Today, Tyonek residents catch king salmon in subsistence gill nets with the help of family who return to the village specifically for this reason during the summer. Fish camps are found at old village sites and other locations that were used by village ancestors.

In the fall, moose are hunted on the flats near McArthur River and silver salmon are taken in rivers and on inlet beaches. Winter months find ice fishermen catching trout and hunters harvesting moose, ptarmigan, and grouse closer to Tyonek. Winter is a time reserved for religious and other community activities, and for sharing and eating the rich bounty of foods. West Cook Inlet residents travel to Anchorage or the Kenai Peninsula to spend time with family members who have moved to urban locations in search of jobs and more educational opportunities for their children. In exchange, these urban family members occasionally return to the village during the winter to participate in potlatches and other celebrations, dances, and family visits.

Although the days of snowshoeing and dog sledding through Lake Clark Pass or Merrill Pass have passed, some west Cook Inlet residents still travel to the interior communities to fish for pike and whitefish with their interior relatives at Nondalton, Iliamna, and Lime Village. Likewise, their interior community relatives travel to Tyonek to participate in subsistence activities. Even though travel within the region is largely by air taxi services, there is a revitalized interest in ground travel by snowmachine over the age-old Dena'ina trails that traverse Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. Port Alsworth, Tyonek, and Nondalton residents have made several of these snowmachine trips in recent years.¹⁰ These trips strengthen ties among families and to the ancestral lands of the interior where these now coastal people once lived.

In summary, although modern society has reached the people of west Cook Inlet, bringing aircraft, guns, and motorized boats, the traditional rhythms of life remain linked to the seasons, and the lands and waters that support their way of life. The following discussion of several key wild resources demonstrates their importance to contemporary west side residents. These case examples also illustrate the complexities of contemporary natural resource management now faced by subsistence fishers and hunters from Tyonek.



← Tyonek Residents watch as a beluga whale is butchered in summer of 2001.
Chickalasion Collection.

Taking Back the King Salmon – Maintaining Subsistence Rights¹³

As noted in Chapter Two, the Dena'ina of west Cook Inlet have relied on the return of king salmon runs in early spring to end the late-winter scarcity of resources. This return of the large, rich king salmon is like the breaking of a fast. By the early twentieth century, Euro-American introduced gill nets had replaced the earlier technology of spears, traps, and dip nets. However, the timing and social activity surrounding the harvest of the spring runs of king salmon has not changed since pre-contact.

In 1964, a decline of king salmon stocks occurred in Cook Inlet due to commercial over-harvests, and all fishing on these stocks was prohibited. In 1978, the Alaska Legislature established a priority for subsistence fishing and hunting if the use of the resource was deemed 'customary and traditional.' Under the provisions of this legislation, the Dena'ina of Tyonek submitted a regulatory proposal to the Alaska Board of Fisheries to reopen the subsistence king salmon fishery.



↑ Max Chickalasion Sr., Daniel Stamifer, Jr., and Daniel Stamifer, Sr. at Polly Creek on a trip to harvest clams around 1974. Chickalasion Collection.



↑ McCord family at their fishcamp in 2004.
Beverly McCord Collection.

→ Harry Bartels and Randy Standifer moose hunting on the McArthur River.
Frank Standifer III Collection.



Tyonek's justification was that "by opening the general sub-district of the Northern district to subsistence fishing of king salmon, Tyonek residents will be able to put away this preferred fish. Historically, Indians of this area have sought and put away the king salmon in preference over the chum, pink and coho salmon."¹² The village was not asking for a new fishery to be opened but a traditional fishery to be reopened, a distinction that the Dena'ina reiterated during the proceedings.

Sport fishermen opposed the reopening of the traditional fishery. Their representatives remarked during the board proceedings that the Tyonek people were looking for a 'gourmet' food and that the subsistence fishery should be directed to the more abundant sockeye salmon. Following the staff report, public hearing, and a short final discussion, the board rejected Tyonek's proposal for several reasons.¹³ The board found that there was no 'need' for subsistence foods in Tyonek because, in the board's view, new oil exploration and gas leases would lead to a new economy for the community, and seasonal commercial fishing provided employment. In this action, the board did not recognize the cultural and social values which the Dena'ina of Tyonek associate with the use of kings. Most board members did not acknowledge that king salmon were any different than other species for meeting 'subsistence needs.'

During this meeting, the board found no evidence that an early king salmon fishery would affect the return and growth of king salmon stocks or would interfere with a sustainable run of king salmon stocks.¹⁴ The board authorized sport fisheries for king salmon in fresh waters near Tyonek.

Following the decision, four Tyonek elders filed suit in Alaska Superior Court on behalf of the village. The court quickly ruled in Tyonek's favor. It found no evidence to suggest that the subsistence harvest would harm the king salmon stocks and ordered an emergency opening of the fishery, May 24th, 1981. The court also found that the Tyonek king salmon fishery did indeed support a customary and traditional use and that the board could not, under the state subsistence law, direct this traditional use towards a different stock of fish.

In the 1980s, the re-established subsistence king salmon fishery continued to be based on kinship lines and to be conducted from traditional fish camps. Use of the Dena'ina language persisted in the fishery with phrases such as *A'yitin* (smoked backbones), *baba* (dried fillets), and *balik* (smoked strips).

This case example of the Tyonek king salmon fishery illustrates two important points that often come up in contemporary debates about subsistence fishing and hunting. First, the Board of Fisheries confused 'need' with 'tradition' by viewing any salmon species as adequate for Tyonek subsistence practices. Second, the board categorized king salmon as 'sport fish' because of their 'gourmet' preference in western culture largely because of the lobbying effort of sport fishing representatives. Only through successful application of the state subsistence law were the Tyonek people able to regain a customary and traditional fishery for king salmon in the face of misunderstandings about the meaning of traditions and opposition by other, powerful user groups.



↑ *Members of the Tyonek Dance Group in 1987.*
Chickalasson Collection.



↑ *Tyonek residents and visitors dance with a visiting Yup'ik drum and dance group at the Nellie Chickalasson Council Building in November of 2004.*
Photo by Devin L. Hines.

Robert's Creek Fish Camp

Each summer many Tyonek residents move to their cabins and fish camps south of the village. It is possible to walk from one end of the encampment to the other, which stretches along the coast from the village to near Granite Point (see Figure 1.1), but everyone travels along the beach or back roads by pickup truck or four-wheel ATV. These vehicles provide a means to haul supplies and fish, and encounters with brown and black bears are common. The encampment is a group of cabins shared by extended families. One, at Robert's Creek, belongs to the family of the late Robert Standifer, Sr.

Robert's Creek is the second farthest fish camp south of Tyonek. Families reach Robert's Creek by driving on the roads built to extract timber and manage the gas lines. On the beach to Robert's Creek, is the site of the second old village that is prominently pictured in the Mendenhall photo of 1898. This is the site of another fish camp founded by Frank Standifer, Sr. Today, his son Frank, Jr., his children and grandchildren conduct their commercial and subsistence fishing there.

The Robert's Creek fish camp was begun by Robert Standifer, Sr. who traveled from Kenai to start a new life in Tyonek. His two brothers, Bill and Frank, joined him later and established their own fish camps along Beshta Bay and Tyonek Creek, respectively. Today there are numerous families from Tyonek who have cabins in Beshta Bay. Among these families are the McCords, the Bismarks, and the extended family of the late Bill Standifer, Sr. Some cabins are new and

some were hauled from the village in the 1960s. Many of the fish are processed at the camps and each cabin has a companion smokehouse.

Some of the people processing fish at the Robert's Creek camp are relatives who come from nearby Anchorage or Chugiak. They help catch and process fish for seven families, most of whom live in Tyonek. The fish are processed in several ways: jarring, smoking and then jarring or kippered, smoking in strips, cut smoked fillets, and other types of smoked fish. While at camp, people also eat fresh fish, especially the sockeye that are caught in the nets. Sockeye are generally not processed for later use.

Since the early 1980s, when the Tyonek subsistence fishery was re-established, it has been monitored by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Tyonek village council has worked closely with the department to help document the importance of the fishery and obtain accurate harvest information. Researchers have always been welcomed into the homes and camps of village residents, although sometimes with a degree of uncertainty.

In the spring of 2004, Division of Subsistence staff visited fish camps to observe, document, and participate in fishing activities. Researchers assisted in pulling nets and taking out fish, and then watched and photographed the cutting process as demonstrated by the matriarch of the camp, Harriet Kaufman. Harriet, her daughter, Connie Burnell, and sister-in-law Jane Standifer cut the fish and apportioned amounts for distribution to each household. While Connie and Jane did the basic gutting and removal of the heads, Harriet did the final cuts to prepare the fish for the smoke house.

For two days everything people talked about had to do with fish. Researchers visited several camps, watching nets being set in the mud, learned how the nets were adjusted to stay just on the edge of the water, and how they were adjusted to catch fish in both the incoming and outgoing tides. Researchers were allowed to photograph and take notes documenting the harvest and use of the fish. Most of the processing and preservation methods go back generations. Women usually pass on this knowledge by teaching their children how to perform all the steps in the process. The series of photographs on the following page illustrate subsistence salmon processing in contemporary Tyonek.



↑ *Don Foster and Connie Burnell in 1980 at Robert's Creek Fish Camp. Don Foster, along with Ron Stanek, were early Division of Subsistence researchers who began working in Tyonek in the early 1980s.*
Photo by Ron Stanek.

Subsistence Moose and Traditional Harvest

Since the mid 1990s, the area around Tyonek, State Game Management Unit 16B (GMU-16B), has been classified as a Subsistence Tier II moose hunting area.¹⁵ As such, Tyonek hunters must apply to qualify to receive a special permit to hunt moose between mid-November and the end of February. Traditionally, Dena'ina hunters took moose whenever they needed the meat, but fall and winter hunting were the norm. Moose do not typically move out of the higher elevations to the west of Tyonek until deep snow drives them down onto the Trading Bay flats and forested areas around Tyonek. This winter season allows hunters to harvest moose as they become available. Although the physical condition of moose may not be optimal, the meat usually comes at a time of year when supplies of fish and cash reserves run low.¹⁶

Spring Waterfowl Hunting

In 2003, the first legal spring/summer migratory bird season took effect in Game Management Unit 16B for the village of Tyonek. Under the 1997 Protocol Amendment of the 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty Act, eligible Alaskan communities and indigenous inhabitants of those communities may take select species of migratory birds in each community's traditional use area. Tyonek residents take ducks and geese beginning late April and early May, and gather bird eggs (primarily gull eggs) in May and June. Traditional bird hunting and egg gathering areas include the Susitna River flats west of the river, Chuitna River flats, Trading Bay flats, and Redoubt Bay flats.

Prior to the new ruling on spring land summer hunting and egg gathering, Tyonek hunters had lost the northern part of their use area around the Beluga and Susitna rivers. They were displaced in the 1940s, by Anchorage hunters who built permanent cabins, landing strips for airplanes, and having outwardly stopped Tyonek hunters from using the area.



↑ Connie Burnell and her son Zackary gut fish while Connie's mother, Harriet Kaufman, performs final cuts.

Photos by Devin L. Helen, June 2004.



↑ The salmon moves counter-clockwise around the table from gutting to preparation and then final cuts.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, June 2004.



↑ Harriet Kaufman performs the final cuts while Jane Standifer gets the gutted fish ready for Harriet.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, June 2004.



← The final cut of a salmon fillet.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, June 2004.

SAN LIQ'A IDAYELGHAN PREPARING FISH IN THE SUMMER



M. Chickalusion, Stauder Family, & L. McCord in 1982.



Stauder Family in 1983.

Tabogh tsendesu ts'u tohbit tanlkits
I went down to the beach and I set out a net.



Anna Chickalusion in the 1960's.

Tunyelyu.
I carried them back.



Jefferson Truett & Wilbur McCord in 1983.

Liq'a sik' t'i'adat'.
I caught some fish.



Alexander Allison & Katherine Stauder in 1983.

Ghes'uts'.
I cut them.



Constantine Family in 1984.

Neq' ts'aymlu.
I took them out of the net.



Max and Nellie Chickalusion in 1983.

Balik ngesghun.
I made balik (salmon strips).



Harriet Kauffman & Jane Stauder in 2004.

Bilni'at nuti tughehtl'it ts'u yi'at tugheldat'.
I put them in brine and soaked them.



Nellie Chickalusion in 1981.

K'eghun tsesikhugh ba tuyaghelu.
I soaked them for half an hour.



Harriet Kauffman & Jane Stauder in 2004.

Yethi ba daymldat'.
Then I took them out.

Yudeh duyelu.
I hung them up.



Yethi be'ugh idelq'un.
Then I built a fire under them.

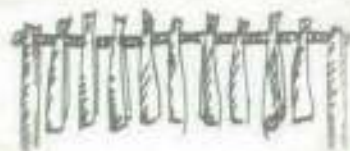


Nugheiggenqets' be'ugh idoolq'en.
I kept a fire under them until they were dry.



T. Chappell, T. Cullen, & S. Stauder in 2008.

Yethi nalggen hnuq'u tsutngheltuk'.
Then when they were dry, I ate them all up.





↑↔ Balik (strips) and split salmon backbones hanging in the smokehouse at the Standifer fish camp at Robert's Creek.
Photos by Gavin L. Hoyer, June 2004.

Tyonek hunters continued using the areas to the south of the village on Trading Bay flats but were confronted by non-local sport hunters who chased them out of cabins and camps that Tyonek people had established along Nikolai Creek, Middle River, and McArthur River. The presence of cabins and airstrips and planes flying low around their hunting areas are reasons Tyonek hunters give for leaving the area and moving elsewhere. The creation of wildlife refuges has been beneficial to the wildlife but in some ways detrimental to Tyonek residents because the refuge draws other hunters to Tyonek's traditional hunting areas and increases competition between the two groups.¹⁷

DENA'INA LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND CULTURE

Modern Education and Dena'ina Culture

Formalized education in Tyonek today takes two forms; that which is taught at the Bartlett School run by the Kenai Borough School District (KPSD), and that which is taught through culture camps. Village administrator Connie Burnell¹⁸ described her experience in the Tyonek school system. She attended the Bartlett school from 1978 to 1991, where grades kindergarten through 12 are currently taught. The school itself was built in the late 1960s at the same time as the construction of new homes in Tyonek. A senior wing was added in the early 1970s to accommodate a growing number of students who were housed with their families at a timber camp near Tyonek Creek. According to Connie, there were enough students in the school to graduate 12-13 per year during this busy time.

The timber camp closed around 1982 and the student population dropped. In addition, because of the loss of jobs from the timber mill closure, some Tyonek families left as well. By the time Connie graduated in 1991, there were only three students in her graduating class. Today, there are usually around 50 students in the school for all grade levels. Many high school students, however, leave to attend high school in Anchorage, or travel to Mount Edgecombe, the boarding school for rural Alaska residents, or more commonly to Native American schools in Oregon, such as Chemawa High School.

The education that Connie received at the Bartlett school is similar in terms of curriculum to that which is taught at other KPSD schools. However, during her first couple of years (late 1970s-early 1980s), there were Dena'ina language classes taught by Max and Nellie Chickalusion. These stopped by the early 1980s when there were too few students to support the language program.

The school was a gathering place for cultural activities that were held in the evening and provided an important opportunity for young people. After the school population decreased and budget cuts took place, all school-sponsored Dena'ina cultural activities ceased. In the evenings, the elders continued to provide some Dena'ina activities including traditional dancing and singing. However in 1983 or 1984, this stopped after Sergei Californsky, an elder who was a key participant, passed away.

Today, the parents of Tyonek organize three cultural events associated with the school. Since September 2003, there is an annual culture camp at the Chakachatna River, where students spend four days. Holding this camp in early September allows it to coincide with the traditional time that families moved to McArthur River for the fall moose hunt. Connie estimates that 10-15 percent of the families in the community continue going to their McArthur River camps every year. The goal of the camp is to get most of the rest of the youth out of the village to participate in a traditional subsistence activity. In the fall of 2005, the new principal at the school told the community that he would not penalize students for missing class to attend the culture camp. In fact, the camp was held during the school week and two of the four teachers accompanied the students, even though it is not an official school activity.

Another culture camp is held at the Nikolai River and local lakes in late winter where freshwater ice fishing is the main activity. In 2004, about 75 percent of the youth in the village attended this camp.

A third cultural camp is held in the summer on Viapan Lake near Beluga at a cabin site owned by the village council. The site was sold to the council by a former schoolteacher who saw the importance of teaching youth in an appropriate setting that put the topics more in the context of everyday life. The first year of the camp saw a few cultural activities held, but the main emphasis was to get the youth away from the village: their video games and televisions, and out into



← Jefferson Trenton, Israel Trenton, and Cornell Constantine at Israel's graduation from Chemawa High School in Salem, Oregon in 1997.
Trenton Collection



← Janelle Baker works with students and the culture camp to diagram their family trees.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, July 2005.



↑ Harriet Kaufman works with her grandchildren to diagram their family tree.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, July 2005.



↑ Donita Peter conducts a language lesson in the main cabin at the culture camp.

Photo by Devin L. Helen, July 2005.

the woods. In subsequent years, subsistence salmon fishing and berry picking will become regular camp activities. This camp is also needed because many youth no longer accompany their parents to fish camps, or their parents have stopped fishing due to work conflicts and poor production in the commercial fishery.

The camps also provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences with guest speakers and participants. In July 2005, a Division of Subsistence researcher was invited to give a presentation on the West Cook Inlet Project and discuss matrilineal descent systems, a key feature of traditional Dena'ina social organization. The emphasis of the lesson was to introduce the youth to how matrilineal kinship and the clan system functioned, and how this relates to their own cultural heritage. Using information gathered during the West Cook Inlet Project, the youth received instructions in how to diagram a family tree. Working together as a family with their brothers, sisters, and many parents who were also present, the youth diagramed their family tree. They traced their lineage back three generations and then were asked what their last name would be if they traced their heritage through their mother's line. In addition, during the introductory presentation, the researcher brought up the topic of clans and some adults present said they knew to which clan they belonged. How matrilineal descent functioned in raising boys was also discussed and one adult said his uncle (his mother's brother) helped to teach him how to hunt.

Also participating in the kinship system presentation and family tree activity was Donita Peter, who taught a Dena'ina language lesson in which she continued the theme of kinship. These types of activities exemplify how the community is trying to teach the youth about their cultural heritage and its continuing application to contemporary life in the village. Below Donita Peter discusses the cultural knowledge she gained from her Aunt Nellie Chickalusion.¹³ Another long-standing cultural activity in Tyonek is Dena'ina dance and singing, described in the following section.

Identity, Dance, and Song

The contemporary self-identification of the people of Tyonek as Dena'ina has been infused with a new awareness of their cultural identity through expressive culture such as song and dance. Dancing and drumming have incorporated influences from other Alaska Native cultures and especially from the healing drumming circles and dancing of the Plains Indians. On November 16, 2005, Division of Subsistence researchers attended a potlatch/potluck given in honor of Tyonek elders. In attendance were four drum groups (from Tyonek, Kenai, and two from Anchorage), and a Yup'ik drum and dance group from Wasilla called the Miracle Drummers. Much of the drumming was of the Plains Indian type, in which each person beats a large central drum in unison with their fellow drummers. The beats ascend in volume and tempo with chanting by participants, and each drummer takes a turn chanting. The music typically has an intensifying effect on the performers as they become engrossed in the rhythmic chanting of the music. A large audience of guests



↑ Donita Peter's grandmother Agaphina Chickalusion Avakumoff Churt and mother Louise Churt Slawson Standford in Tyonek 1939-40. Chickalusion Collection.



↑ Feona Allowan's marriage to Jerry Peter in 1951. Jerry was 38 and Feona 15 at the time. Chickalusion Collection.

Dena'ina Voices: Donita Peter

Donita Peter is the great granddaughter of Tyonek's Chief Theodore Chickalusion. Her matrilineal grandmother was Agraphina Chickalusion who was Max Chickalusion, Sr.'s older sister. This great grandmother, as well as Donita's Aunt Nellie Chickalusion, taught Donita traditional Dena'ina lifeways and spiritual beliefs. Nellie Chickalusion was a strong woman with a determination to pass on Dena'ina language and culture. She taught the Dena'ina language to children, and developed many language materials for students to use. These materials are still used in Dena'ina language lessons today. Donita Peter is following in her Aunt Nellie's footsteps in developing materials for Dena'ina language lessons, and in passing on oral and spiritual traditions. The following texts are derived directly from some of Donita Peter's written work called "Tebughna: Tyonek Peoples' History: Before Our Time: Nanuset" which is closely informed by Nellie Chickalusion's teaching.

"During Dena'ina early history traditions were passed on from generation to generation in order to follow their designated destinies. Grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles motivated the youth, instructed adults, and led these large communal societies since time immemorial."

"Nellie and other Dene' elders often spoke of how extensively our Dene' people traveled . . . hunting, trapping, sharing stories, trading and fishing . . . While they traveled they took care not to disrespect the land by leaving litter along the trails. Dene' Elders stated that many of the trails the Dene' followed were first traveled by animals and many of the ones we follow today are thousands of years old. When Dene' people traveled they would sing their tribal songs to let others know that they were arriving with good intentions."

"In traditional Dene society the care for Elders, the disabled, and the children is of utmost importance as these were ones who may not be able to care for themselves. These are the ones who we can teach and learn from. Elders spend hours telling children and adults stories about Dene' history. . . Children were treated good so that when it was their turn to take care of their family, they would do it willingly and without dread."

"Kinship ties were strong within the clans. Each member did what they could to ensure the health and well-being of each other member. Each member was taught by the elders how to encourage other[s] to reach their highest and best potential."

"Marriage was highly regarded in early Dene' society. When two people decided to marry each other the courtship began with the husband-to-be bringing gifts to his future wife's family and asking the mother of the daughter if he could marry her daughter. If the mother and father agreed the husband would live with the family for a year. During the year the two slept in separate compartments but proved to each other daily that they were worthy of each other. If their love and respect for each other grew within that year the man and his new wife would build a home to live in. A marriage potlatch would take place and the two would move into their new home."

"Children were very much wanted in a family. They were lovingly cared for by all members of a clan. During the long winter nights the elders would spend hours telling children clan history, singing them songs, teaching them to dance, and reminding them how to best behave."

"During the day older sisters and brothers would take the children with them as they fished, snared, trapped, and played. If there were no older brothers and sisters, young aunts and uncles would take the children to do the same."

"When girls were older they would spend most of their time with their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers to learn skills such as cooking, sewing, tanning, quill beading, making fish traps, and snares. They were also taught how to properly take care of their bodies when they became women. They were also taught how to love and respect their husbands and children."

"When boys were older they spent more time with their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers to learn skills such as hunting, trapping, fishing, weapon making. They were also taught how to properly take care of their bodies when they became men. They were also taught how to love and respect their wives and children."

"When I asked Aunt Nellie where we would have been taught before the BIA brought the school into the village she said as she pointed all around us, 'All that you see around you is your classroom. All that you see, hear, feel and do is your education.'"

"Before Christianity when there was a death in the Dene' community the deceased would have been cremated as the Dene' believed that our bones like the bones of animals needed to be burned in order to become purified. This would be performed by the father's family of the deceased... After the funeral a Funeral Potlatch would take place. This would last for three or more days. A year after the funeral, or when the family of the deceased prepares the materials necessary for a potlatch a Memorial potlatch would take place."

"Potlatches were filled with excitement and sometimes sadness. It was a time when families reunited with each other. Some who may not have seen each other in a year would visit each other at length. Much food was hunted and cooked during these times. If the weather was not good for traveling families would sometimes stay for a month or more. They would get together each night and sing, pray, and tell stories, play games and dance together. The Medicine Men and Women would perform their healing ceremonies during this time. They would use their medicine dolls, rattles, drums, and masks to perform these important services for the people. The men loved to show off their skill at hand games during this time. Women would show their finest tanning and skinning skills. Girls would show what fine cooks they were and boys would show their prowess at hunting game. Old men and women would sing many songs and tell their best stories."



↑ The dance shawls worn by the Plains Indians are as much a part of the potlatch celebration as the traditional Dene'ina dancers. Photos by David L. Rosen, November 2004.



↑ *Drum circles at the Tyonek Potlatch in November of 2004. The Tyonek drum group was one of several in attendance.*

Photos by David L. Hales, November 2004.



← *A visiting drum group from the Kenaitze Tribe in Kenai.*

Photos by David L. Hales, November 2004.

also participated in the dance and song while moving together in a large circle around the center pole of the community center. Some participants wore shawls typically worn by Plains Indian dancers, while most people wore everyday jeans, shirts, and blouses.

The event lasted well into the night and was highlighted by a potluck dinner and the distribution of gifts to elders and significant others to enhance the wellness program. This event brought together people from other parts of Dena'ina territory such as Kenai, who brought gifts to distribute to elders.

The Plains Indian dancing and drum circles have become symbols of one's sense of being Native and being linked to broader national and international indigenous peoples. The dancing and drumming are part of the healing process of the wellness program, which promotes group bonding in the sobriety effort by returning to the fundamentals of one's indigenous culture for guidance on maintaining a good life. Tyonek received a grant to help with this program and they used some of the money to distribute books, videos, t-shirts, and other items to each family in the community.

The Tyonek Drum and Dance Group that was observed during the potlatch has a long history in the community, and there was a time when they performed Dena'ina songs and danced in a traditional Dena'ina style. Janelle Baker²⁰ explains below the history of the group from her memories of the elders to today's youth and what it means to the community. She hopes that the traditional songs and dance can be revived.



↑ Members of the Tyonek Drum Group in Kenai for the Dena'ina Festival in summer 2005.
Photo by Janelle Baker.



↑ Alexandra Stephan teaching dance at the guest house in March 1983. Left is Robert Constantine.
Pauline Akeew Collection.

History of the Tyonek Drum and Dance Group

By Janelle Baker

When I was about 4 or 5 years old I remember going to dance and drum practice with my older sister; she was a dancer and singer. The group was big and very into learning and dancing. The teacher would teach us how to respect the drum and our elders, and what it meant to be grateful for our elders and what they had went through for us to be here today.

We used to meet at my chudda's (grandfather) house for practice and listen to the elders sing and make new songs, there used to be my chudda Sergie Califormsky, Sava Stephan, Sr., Maxim Chickalusion, Sr., and Theodore "Chad" Chickalusion. I know there were many more elders there as well but I cannot recollect their names, they have passed away and I don't know them now.

They used to have these little get-togethers at my chudda's house because back in the day when my chudda was a young boy and the Russians [sic] came here, they forbade our people to speak our language, or even dance and drum. So they used to do it in people's homes, or wherever they wouldn't be heard by the Russians [sic].

I know they enjoyed getting together. You can just feel the vibes and all the energy in the entire house as they sang and danced and made up new songs, or worked on new songs. They loved this feeling and their hearts were filled with so much love and respect for their culture. Singing and dancing for my chudda was his world and soul. I remember he barely used to talk to me in English, most of the time he would but he'd try to teach me a few words [in Dena'ina], but I didn't understand then what knowing our language meant until I turned thirteen.

The Drum group from the 80s traveled all over Alaska, to perform at different ceremonies and potlatches. They used the traditional drum that was circular with stretched skin across the hollow top, and then held in place by sinew. The drumstick was usually a piece of wood that was shaped into a circle at the end for drumming.

As I got older our generation of youth became the drum and dance group, and we traveled to places and performed. But after a few years we stopped. Now the new generation of youth wants to start. They do not sing our traditional songs that our elders had made; it is mainly intertribal songs that were given to them to sing [by others]. We are currently trying to revive our traditional songs.

CHAPTER SEVEN DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION: TIES TO LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

This study has documented numerous cultural, historical, and economic ties between the communities and people of west Cook Inlet and the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. The Park and the entire west Cook Inlet area share a common cultural heritage – that of the Dena'ina Athabascans. The Dena'ina of Cook Inlet arrived on the Pacific Coast from the interior, most likely from the area now occupied by the inland Dena'ina associated with the Park. The two Dena'ina regional bands of west Cook Inlet, the *Tubughna* ("Beach People") and the *Qezdaghdna* ("Point People") maintained cultural and economic ties with inland Dena'ina communities, as evidenced by a common language, place names, social organization, and belief system. Trade of inland furs, caribou meat, and moose meat, for marine mammal products from coastal villages was one of the most common interactions between the two areas. Inter-marriage and participation in ceremonies such as the potlatch also supported these ties.

Prior to the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Dena'ina used the river drainages of west Cook Inlet and present-day Lake Clark National Park and Preserve extensively as travel routes between interior areas and the western shore of Cook Inlet. Some of these travel routes followed the Kustatan, McArthur, Chakachatna, and Chilligan rivers leading to Merrill Pass, and the Merrill River to the Stoney River and Lime Village. A trail followed the Neacola River from Kenibuna Lake through Telaquana Pass and into the Telaquana Lake area. Another trail started at the Kustatan villages, extended along the Bachatna River and through Lake Clark Pass to reach the Tlikakila drainage and Lake Clark. On the ground, use of these routes all but ended in the 1930s and 1940s, but travel between the two areas continued primarily along the Iliamna Portage trail to Cook Inlet. There, boats were used to reach Tyonek and other communities. In the 1950s and 1960s, aircraft came into use for transporting people between the same areas. In the 2000s, aircraft travel between communities associated with Lake Clark National Park and Preserve continues and there is renewed interest in travel over the Lake Clark Pass route with snow machines.

A common history also links coastal Cook Inlet and the inland communities in and near the Park, beginning with the establishment of the fur trade by the Russians. The fur trade built upon established Dena'ina subsistence patterns, traditional knowledge, and social relationships. Indeed, relationships between Dena'ina communities were likely enhanced as traditional routes through passes and along the coast facilitated travel to trading posts, the exchange of goods and ideas, inter-marriage, and the transactional activities of the Dena'ina political leaders and middlemen called *qeshqa*. Trade in subsistence products continued, and added to these were items of western manufacture such as rifles and ammunition.

These economic and social interactions resulted in inter-marriage between Dena'ina communities of the interior and the coast, establishing and maintaining kinship connections through the matrilineal clan organization. Dena'ina living in Iliamna, Nondalton and Lime Village today are related through these inter-marriages to former residents of Polly Creek and Kustatan, and current residents of Tyonek. The ancestry of several families and their clan associations demonstrate these ties. For example, in the late 1800s, women of the Chickalusion family from Kustatan of the *Nuhzhi* clan walked through the mountains to the Telaquana Lake area where they met and married men from that area. In a more contemporary example, in the 1970s, a member of the Standifer family from Tyonek married a member of the Agony family from Nondalton. Relations between this and other extended families in the two communities support a continuing cycle of visiting for celebrations, funerals, marriages, subsistence activities, and resource sharing.

The arrival of Russians, other Europeans, and later, the Americans also brought demographic change to the entire region through inter-marriage with the Dena'ina and especially through the introduction of epidemic disease. Similar processes occurred throughout the entire Dena'ina homeland as villages consolidated as the population dropped. By the early 1930s, the remaining Dena'ina of Polly Creek and Kustatan had moved to Tyonek, along with most Dena'ina

from the Susitna River villages. All Dena'ina communities of the Cook Inlet coast and the interior also experienced the missionizing efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church, and today share a syncretism of western and traditional Athabascan spiritual beliefs.

Links between communities now within the Park and Preserve and Dena'ina communities on the coast were strengthened as commercial fishing and processing developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dena'ina from Cook Inlet and inland villages participated in commercial fishing and processing at places such as Polly Creek and Kustatan. During the mid 20th century, development of natural gas and petroleum became significant along west Cook Inlet. These regional economic developments enhanced means of transportation between west Cook Inlet, the interior, and population centers on the Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage. Another result was stress to the natural resources upon which Dena'ina communities depend. New people arrived, mostly non-native, some of whom homesteaded within Dena'ina lands and settled in Dena'ina communities. Their stories enriched the history of west Cook Inlet places. Some of these newcomers married Dena'ina women and founded many of the families of Tyonek, Nondalton, and other Dena'ina communities today.

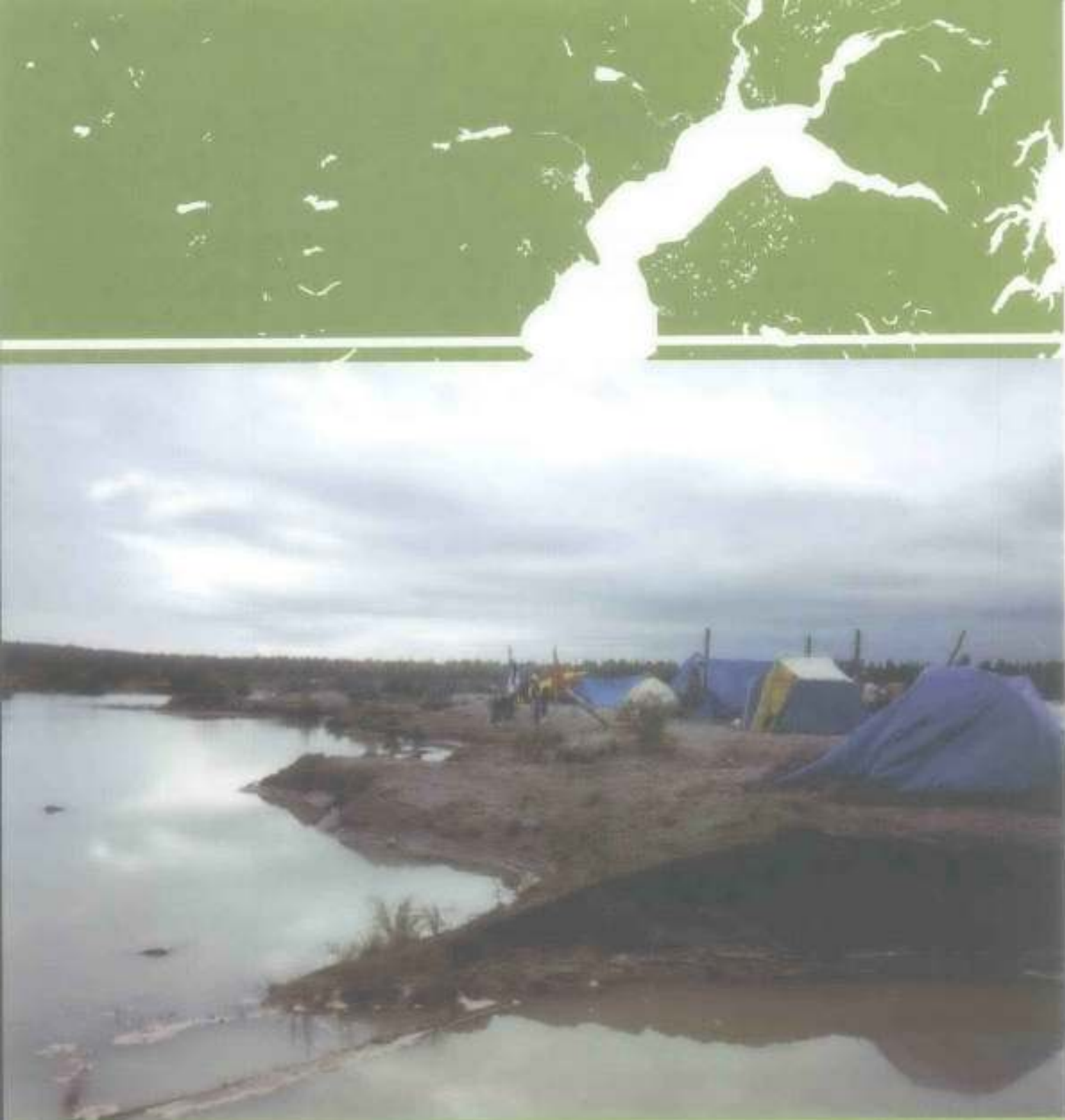
Inland and west Cook Inlet communities share the named landscape of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve and nearby lands and waters. The meanings embedded in the original Dena'ina names of places, as well as more recent English place names, reflect the shared culture and history summarized in this study. Some names, such as *Tuk'ezitnu* ("Fish-Stranded-in-Tide River"; Tuxedni Bay and River), *Tafin Ch'ittant* ("Where We Found a Whale"; Polly Creek), *Dghezha Betnu* ("Needlefish River"; Drift River), and *Tank'itnu* ("Fish Dock River"; Tyonek Creek) offer clues about subsistence activities. Others commemorate navigational skills and geographical knowledge – examples include *Tsanitnu* ("Rocks-Are-There River"; Chinitna Bay) and *Qezdaghnem* ("Point Land"; Kustatan). With newcomers (English explorers, Russian traders, American fishers and homesteaders) came new names. Some of these mark historical events – Trading Bay is an example. Others, such as Robert's Creek (also *Ch'elehtnu*, "Spawning Stream" or "Old Tyonek Creek") honor families or individuals. Additionally, names of other key geographic features acknowledge their central role in the lives and experiences of the people of west Cook Inlet through their direct and simple descriptions. Examples include *Nadudiltnu* ("Current-Flows-Down-River"; McArthur river), *Tubughnenq'* ("Beach Land"; Tyonek), and *Tikahtnu* ("Ocean River"; Cook Inlet).

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, too, Dena'ina communities in and adjacent to the Park share experiences and face similar issues. These include the further development of natural resources, such as recreational hunting and fishing, and mineral exploration and extraction. Such development brings more newcomers to lands traditionally used for subsistence activities and potentially creates competition over resources. Improvements in transportation and communications have encouraged the exchange of information and ideas between Dena'ina communities that may facilitate the recognition of common issues and solutions. Examples include participation in language programs, exchange of traditional songs and stories, and sharing of subsistence resources. The resultant rediscovery of the genealogical ties, common oral traditions, and a shared history between Dena'ina communities could support efforts to reinvigorate Dena'ina identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Recommendations for further study include the following:

- Further collection and documentation of family histories for west Cook Inlet homesteaders and commercial fishers. These histories can be tied to the changing use patterns for particular places along west Cook Inlet. They are the raw material for additional analysis of historical processes and trends. This should be encouraged and enabled among students in schools within the study area.
- More investigation of homesteading and Native allotment records would provide background on land management policies and assist with understanding demographic trends.
- For all the Dena'ina communities associated with the Park, additional investigation of genealogies through oral histories, and census and church records is needed to further demonstrate ties between communities and as a tool for demographic and historical research.
- Linked to research into family histories is the collection, organization, and publication of collections of photographs now held by individuals and families. The Dena'ina Audio Collection in particular needs to be thoroughly researched for information in this regard. This is especially needed for Tyonek, other communities associated with the Park would benefit by such research.
- For Tyonek, additional research on the history of involvement in the commercial salmon fishery is needed. This should include oral histories with former and current participants in the fishery as well as archival research.
- Also for Tyonek, more research into evolving political and economic institutions in the 20th century would be instructive. Tyonek has survived as a Dena'ina community despite decades of demographic, economic, and political change. Understanding the role of the tribal council and the native corporation in developing policies to support the community's well being and maintain its heritage as a Dena'ina community is an important aspect of the history of the west Cook Inlet area.
- A further study to document the traditional associations of the Iliamna area Dena'ina to Lake Clark National Park and Preserve would be a timely supplement to the present report. The research should include the communities of Pedro Bay, Iliamna, and Newhalen.
- No culturally sensitive sites, such as cemeteries, former villages, cabins, or pictographs associated with the Cook Inlet Dena'ina and within the boundaries of LACL, that were previously unknown to the National Park Service, were identified by this study. However, future research may identify such sites, and new locations should be accurately documented and the information maintained within confidential files for future land use and management decisions.



Back view of tents of the Frank Standifer camp at McArthur River. Chickadee Colman

END NOTES

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

1. Cook, James 1967:364.
2. Cook, James 1967; Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003.
3. Carlson, Phyllis D. 1972.
The story "*Unhsah Tahna'ina: The First Underwater People*" by Fedosia Sacaloff (1975) relates several of these incidents as well the shooting of the dog at Point Possession. Although "*tahna*" later referred to Russians (and the first published version of this story was called "The First Russians" in English) it is more likely that the story refers to Cook's voyage up the inlet and combines incidents that occurred at Trading Bay and Point Possession (Kari and Fall 2003:356).
4. Brelsford, G. 1975.
5. National Park Service 2005.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. de Laguna, Frederica 1934; Workman, William B., John E. Lobbell, and Karen Wood Workman 1980.
2. Boraas, Alan 2004; — 2002; Reger, Richard D. and DeAnne S. Pinney 1996. According to Reger and Pinney (1996) by 15,000 years ago the glaciers in Cook Inlet had receded to the point where human occupation was possible. Besides Kachemak sites there are also sites indicating occupation by Ocean Bay Tradition peoples dating from 7,600 to 4,000 years ago. In addition, there is one site in Cook Inlet relating to the Paleoafrican Tradition. See Klein and Zollars (2004) for Radiocarbon Dates from the Early Holocene Component of a Stratified Site (SEL-009) at Aurora Lagoon, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska.
3. Boraas, Alan 2004; de Laguna, Frederica 1934; Workman, William B., John E. Lobbell, and Karen Wood Workman 1980; Workman, William B. 1996.
4. Kari, James 1996.
5. Kari, James 1996; Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:10-14.
6. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991.
7. Boraas, Alan 2004; Kalifornsky, Peter 1991.
8. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003.
9. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:64-65.
10. Fall, James A. 1981a; — 1985; — 1987; Osgood, Cornelius 1933; — 1937.
11. Townsend, Joan B. 1981.
12. Fall, James A. 1987:5.
13. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:10-14.
14. Ellanna, Linda J. and Andrew Balluta 1992; Ellanna, Linda J. 1986; Kari, James and James A. Fall 1987; — 2003; Kari, James M. and Priscilla Russell Kari 1982.
15. This summary draws primarily from Fall et al. (1984:20-23), which itself is based on Fall (1981a:182-195).
16. Upper Inlet dialect spelling is used when discussing Tyonek.
17. For more detailed summaries, see Fall (1987:33-34); Fall et al. (1984:20-23); Kari and Fall (2003:22-27); Osgood (1937); Kari and Russell Kari (1982); and Alexan (1981:26-32).
18. Pete, Shem 2003; Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:75-77.
19. Like the *yuygul*, the *tanik'edi* is an example of the Dena'ina's adaptation of an interior/riverine technology (the dip net platform, used by the Ahtna Athabascans on the Copper River, for example) to the Cook Inlet marine environment. For details about *tanik'edi*, see Alexan (1981), which is reprinted in Kari and Fall (2003:64).
20. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:119-120.
21. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:122-123.
22. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:123; Fall, James A. 1987:54-56.
23. Alexan, Nickator 1981:37-38; Fall, James A. 1987:60-61; — 1990.

24. Pete, Shem 1989.
25. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:195-196.
26. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:213.
27. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:277.
28. Fall, James A. 1981a:409-427; — 1987:39-40; Osgood, Cornelius 1937; Townsend, Joan B. 1981.
29. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:128; Fall, James A. 1987:39.
30. Fall, James 2004.
31. Kalifornsky (1991:20-21) also discusses the origins of Dena'ina clans.
32. "Qeshqa" is also sometimes translated as "chief," but older Dena'ina who were knowledgeable about the traditional social organization used the term "dayuq" (derived from "tayan") to refer to chiefs, individuals who held a formal leadership office following Euro-American contact (Fall 1987).
33. Fall, James A. 1985:7.
34. Fall, James A. 1987.
35. Fall, James A. 1987:40.
36. Fall, James A. 1987:63; Osgood, Cornelius 1937:164.
37. Alexan, Nickafor 1957.
38. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:143.
39. Fall, James A. 1987:53.
40. Fall, James A. 1987:56; Osgood, Cornelius 1937:169.
41. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:13.
42. McClellan, Catharine 1975:65-70; VanStone, James W. 1974:59-73.
43. VanStone, James W. 1974:60.
44. McClellan, Catharine 1975:65.
45. This section is a review of Boraas and Peter's (2005) thoughtful analysis of Dena'ina spiritual beliefs based upon the writings of Peter Kalifornsky (1991:9), a Dena'ina person who strove to be a *k'ech'eltanen*, a "true believer."
46. Kalifornsky 1991:203.
47. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005.
48. Kari, James n.d.:789; — 1994:246 *in* Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter (2005).
49. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005.
50. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005:5.
51. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005:5.
52. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:41.
53. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005:5.
54. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:30 & 327.
55. Fall, James A. 1987:56.
56. Boraas, Alan and Donita Peter 2005:5-6.
57. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:174.
58. Alexan, Nickafor 1981; — 1965; — 1957.
59. VanStone, James W. 1974:59.
60. VanStone, James W. 1974:63.
61. Alexan, Nickafor 1981:27.
62. Alexan, Nickafor 1981:26-27.
63. See also Shem Pete's story about "*Bel Dink'udlaghen*" (The-One-Who-Swam-Back-Inside-with-the-Salmon), *in* Kari and Fall (2003:184-190).
64. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:19.
65. Osgood, Cornelius 1937.
66. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:181.
67. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:177.

68. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:37.
69. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:27.
70. Another important account of Dena'ina prophecy appears in Shem Pete's "*Susitna Htukda'a*" (The Susitna Story) in Kari and Fall (2003:96-97).
71. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:241.
72. Townsend, Joan B. 1979.
73. Fall, James A. 1987:46-47.
74. Osgood, Cornelius 1937:73.
75. Fall, James A. 1981.
76. Osgood, Cornelius 1937.
77. Osgood, Cornelius 1937.
78. Ellanna, Linda J. and Andrew Balluta 1992.
79. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:53.
80. Townsend, Joan B. 1981.
81. Alexan, Nickator 1957.
82. Moose became increasingly important with diminishing caribou herds in upper Cook Inlet.
83. Fall, James A. 1987.
84. Fall, James A. 1987:63-64.
85. Fall, James A. 1987:61-62.
86. Fall, James A. 1987:61-62.
87. Townsend, Joan B. 1979.
88. Townsend, Joan B. 1979:166.
89. Townsend, Joan B. 1979:167.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

1. See the prophecy related by Peter Kalifornsky (1991) in Chapter Two of the arrival of foreigners on Dena'ina shores and Chapter One for a summary of Cook's encounters with Dena'ina.
2. DeArmond, Robert 1969b:24.
3. See the discussion in Fall (1987:1-15).
4. Fall, James A. 1985.
5. Lt. Whidbey, part of the English Captain George Vancouver's exploratory party, observed this post in 1794 during a visit to Tyonek, which is described in Vancouver's journal. See Alexan (1981) and Fall (1987:17).
6. See also Alexan's (1981:20-25) story, "Russian Settlement: Where Knik People Made Their Mistake."
7. Osgood, Cornelius 1937.
8. For a more extensive overview of the limited presence of Russians in the upper inlet area, including the Tyonek area, see Kari and Fall (2003:17-21) and Fall (1987:14-19).
9. DeArmond, Robert 1969b.
10. Stateev, Vladimir n.d.
11. Michael, Henry 1967.
12. Fall, James A. 1981.
13. Pete, Shem 1977.
14. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:4-7.
15. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:7-20.
16. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:7-61.
17. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:7-45.
18. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:7-39.
19. Russell Kari et al. (1986), *In Ellanna* (1986:4-7).
20. Ellanna, Linda J. and Andrew Balluta 1992:114.
21. Tikhmenev, P.A. 1978 (original 1861-1863):205-207.

22. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003.
23. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:6.
24. Fall, James A. 1987:19; Tikhmenev, P.A. 1978:383; Townsend, Joan B. 1965:58.
25. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003.
26. Tikhmenev, P.A. 1978:383.
27. Fall, James A. 1987; Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003.
28. Townsend, Joan B. 1981:637.
29. Osgood, Cornelius 1937.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

1. Townsend, Joan B. 1981:636.
2. DeArmond, Robert 1969b:24; Fall, James A. 1987:19-20; Townsend, Joan B. 1981:636.
3. Alexan, Nickafor 1981:16.
4. Fall, James A. 1981a.
5. DeArmond, Robert 1969b:4.
6. Orth, Donald J. 1971.
7. For a biography of Big Chilligan Phillip, see Alexan (1957).
8. This could refer to Chief Theodore Chickalusion or Chief Simeon Chickalusion of Kustatan or their father, Peter Chickalusion of Kustatan.
9. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003.
10. Elianna, Linda J. and Andrew Balluta 1992; Branson, John B. 1999.
11. Brelsford, G. 1975:126.
12. This route also headed west and connected the Mulchatna River drainage with Twin Lakes creating a trail between the Mulchatna and Cook Inlet.
13. Brelsford, G. 1975:126.
14. Brelsford, G. 1975:126.
15. Unrau, Harlan D. 1994:94.
16. Unrau, Harlan D. 1994:82.
17. Schanz, A.C. 1897. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.
18. ACC 1894-1895; — 1884-1886; — 1881-1882.
19. ACC 1884-1886.
20. Note that Stafeev was not a native speaker of English.
21. It is unclear what Stafeev meant by "succeed" in this context. It is likely that the Ahtna tried to negotiate with the agent over what the Ahtna perceived to be low prices. In reference to an unpublished Dena'ina language version of "The Killing of George Holt at Knik," Dena'ina historian Shem Pete (1985) said, "The Copper Center People come down to Knik. They were mad and cussing about the prices. Fur prices were cheap. The storekeeper [Holt] grabbed [the Ahtna man who later shot him] from the back and threw him out and he kicked him in the behind. He threw him out of the store. That white man made him mad." See also Fall (1987:50).
22. According to Pete (1985), the Ahtna return several years later. The Ahtna man who killed Holt is hanged.
23. Townsend, Joan B. 1981:636; —1974:5.
24. Fall, James A. 1987:52.
25. Barry, Mary J. 1973; DeArmond, Robert 1969c.
26. DeArmond, Robert 1969c.
27. DeArmond, Robert 1969b:41; Fall, James A. 1987:21.
28. DeArmond, Robert 1969c:30.
29. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:1.
30. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:10.

31. Quoted in Fall (1987:21).
32. Fall, James A. 1987:28; Elliot, Charles P. 1900:738-741; Moser, Jefferson 1899.
33. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:21.
34. Johnson Ringsmuth, Katherine 2005.
35. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003; — 1998.
36. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:17.
37. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:15.
38. cf. Townsend, Joan 1981:634-635.
39. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003.
40. ACC 1881-1882.
41. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:31.
42. Townsend, Joan B. 1981:634.
43. Chickalusion, Maxim 1982.
44. Kalifornsky 1991: 289-301.
45. Fall, James A. 1987; Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003.
46. The ACC (1884-1886) official at Tyonek on March 16, 1886 records the arrival of people from Kustatan. He says "All Shushitna is very sickness, vomiting, and looseness."
47. Alexan, Nickafor 1981; Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:91.
48. DeArmond, Robert 1969a; Johnson Ringsmuth, Katherine 2005.
49. Johnson Ringsmuth, Katherine 2005.

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1. Kari, James M. and Priscilla Russell Kari 1982.
2. Jacobs, Jane 1995.
3. Hensel, Chase 1996:97.
4. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
5. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
6. de Laguna, Frederica 1934; Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
7. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
8. Stanek, Ronald T. 1987.
9. Bureau of Land Management 1937-1953.
10. Bureau of Indian Affairs 1915.
11. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:29 & 59.
12. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:61.
13. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:34.
14. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:41.
15. Davis, Jeff 2003; Johnson Ringsmuth, Katherine 2005.
16. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:40.
17. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:49.
18. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:49.
19. DeArmond, Robert 1969a:30.
20. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984:6.
21. Alaska Oil and Gas Quarterly 2003:10.
22. DeArmond, Robert 1969c.
23. Bagoy, John P. 2001:15-17.
24. Bartels, Harry 2005.
25. Bartels, Harry 2005.
26. Spornak, Mike 2005.

27. Hudson, Oren and Ruth Hudson 2003.
28. Delkittie, Buck *in* 2005 Lake Clark National Park Project Jukebox. University of Alaska Fairbanks. <http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/jukebox/lakeclark/html/menu.html>; Kari, James M. and Priscilla Russell Kari 1982.
29. Branson, John B. 1999; Unrau, Harlan D. 1994.
30. Jacobs, Jane 1995.
31. Alaska Road Commission 1894-1958a; — 1894-1958b.
32. Delkittie, Buck *in* 2005 Lake Clark National Park Project Jukebox. University of Alaska Fairbanks. <http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/jukebox/lakeclark/html/menu.html>.
33. For an account of Dena'ina use of this pass see Unrau (1994).
34. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
35. Alaska Journal of Commerce 2004.
36. Unrau, Harlan D. 1994:78.
37. Bagoy, John P. 2001.
38. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003; John Swiss *in* 2005 Lake Clark National Park Project Jukebox. University of Alaska Fairbanks. <http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/jukebox/lakeclark/html/menu.html>; Unrau, Harlan D. 1994:305.
39. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
40. Swerer, Bob 2001.
41. Kenai Peninsula Borough 1987; Alaska Department of Natural Resources 2004.
42. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
43. See Johnson Ringsmuth (2005: 72-84) for discussion of Wilderness Act impacts on Chisik Island fishermen.
44. Johnson Ringsmuth 2005:94.
45. Mielke, Colleen 2003.
46. DeArmond, Robert 1969a.
47. Johnson Ringsmuth, Katherine 2005.
48. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003; Unrau, Harlan D. 1994:306.
49. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:312.
50. Orth, Donald J. 1971.
51. Branson, John B. 2004; Hobson, Pauline 2004.
52. Chickalusion, Max, Jr. 2005.
53. Alexan, Nickafor 1957:6-7.
54. Alexan, Nickafor 1957:6-7.
55. Alexan, Nickafor 1957:6-7.
56. de Laguna, Frederica 1934:137; — 1930.
57. A detailed discussion of the Tiede's and subsequent cannery operators at Polly Creek can be found in Johnson Ringsmuth (2005:32-38).
58. Brelsford, G. 1975.
59. Hobson, Pauline 2004.
60. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984.
61. Oskolkoff, Bruce 2002.
62. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:288.
63. Brelsford, G. 1975.
64. National Park Service 2002.
65. Johnson Ringsmuth (2005:35) has a discussion of Polly Creek cannery operation history.
66. "Harriet Point" was named by Captain George Vancouver (1801) of the Royal Navy in 1794.
67. Brelsford 1975.
68. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984.
69. Alaska Volcano Observatory 1990.
70. "West Foreland" was named by Captain George Vancouver (1801) of the Royal Navy in 1794.

71. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:83, 92, 112 & 160.
72. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:31.
73. Rollins, Alden M. 1978:28.
74. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991:291.
75. Chickalusion, Max, Jr. 2005.
76. Kari, James 1994:159.
77. Townsend, Joan B. 1974:17.
78. de Laguna, Frederica 1934.
79. de Laguna, Frederica 1934:138.
80. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991.
In 1975 the Cook Inlet Native Association conducted an historic sites inventory of the Kustatan area. The study located and, with the assistance of a number of Native Tyonek residents, documented significant information about the history of village sites and uses of the area Brelsford (1975).
81. Kalifornsky, Peter 1991.
82. In Kalifornsky 1991:227.
83. Bagoy, John P. 2001:238-239.
84. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
85. Kenai Peninsula Clarion 2003.
86. Manier, Mace 2004.
87. Kari, James 2005:7.
88. Cook, James 1967.
89. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:4-7 & 7-20.
90. Pete Koktelash comments on the Lake Telequana Pass Trail /n Brelsford (1975:126).
91. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:A-136.
92. Ellanna, Linda J. 1986:141-142.
93. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:66.
94. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:66.
95. Rollins, Alden M. 1978:48.
96. Bartels, Harry 2004.
97. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984:29.
98. See Loew (2001:12-14); cf. Kari and Fall (2003).
99. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984; Fall, James A. 1981b; Krauss, Michael E. 1982.
100. Mielke, Colleen 2003.
101. Alexan, Nickator 1957.
102. de Laguna, Frederica 1934:139.
103. Braund, Stephen R. and Steven R. Behnke 1980:181.
104. Townsend, Joan B. 1974:19.
105. Townsend, Joan B. 1974:19.
106. Townsend, Joan B. 1974:19.
107. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:68.
108. Chickalusion, Nellie 1985.
109. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:89.
110. Znamenski, Andrei A. 2003:40.
111. Glenn, Capt. E.F. 1900.
112. Kari, James and James A. Fall 2003:91. See Kari and Fall (2003) for a thorough discussion on the history of Susitna Station.
113. Pete, Shem 1970:1.

CHAPTER SIX NOTES

1. Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development 2005.
2. Alaska Oil and Gas Quarterly 2003.
3. Knox, Robert G. 1968; Rapoport, Roger 1971.
4. Brink, Frank and Jo Brink 1988.
5. Standifer, E. and A. Standifer 2004.
6. Burnell, Connie 2005.
7. Elvsaas, Frederick 2003.
8. Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek 1984:32.
9. Stephan, Bobby 2005.
10. Standifer, Robert 2004.
11. This section is based on Fall (1989) and Hoen (2002). See also Stanek et al. (1982).
12. Fall, James A. 1989:5.
13. Alaska Board of Fisheries (1980) cf. Stickney (1980) *in* Fall (1989).
14. cf. Gissberg (1980) *in* Fall (1989:10).
15. Under the state subsistence law, a "Tier II" situation exists when the harvestable surplus for a wildlife population or fish stock is below the amount necessary for providing for subsistence uses. Participation in the hunt or fishery is limited to those individuals who score highest on a permit application. Scores are based on the individual's "customary and direct dependence" on the resource and on "the ability of the subsistence user to obtain food if subsistence use is restricted or eliminated."
16. See Fall, J.A., D. Foster, and R.T. Stanek (1984).
17. See Fall et al. (1984) for further discussion of waterfowl harvest areas and hunting patterns.
18. Burnell, Connie 2005.
19. Peter, Donita 2004.
20. Baker, Janelle 2005.

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APPENDIX I

STUDY METHODS

The Division of Subsistence has a long history of working with the community of Tyonek. In the early 1980s, division researchers collected background information that supported Tyonek's successful attempt to re-establish the village's subsistence king salmon fishery. For several subsequent years, the division was responsible for monitoring this fishery in-season, systematically visiting *fish camps* to record harvest information. Ethnographic and household survey research resulted in studies of subsistence clamming and moose hunting; maps of contemporary hunting and fishing areas; and a comprehensive, baseline description of all subsistence activities by Tyonek residents as they occurred in the mid 1980s.¹ Since that time, division personnel have continued to work with Tyonek on numerous natural resource topics including marine mammal hunting, moose hunting, migratory bird hunting, and salmon fishing.

Personnel

Ron Stanek has been working with the people of Tyonek for over 20 years. Ron acted as the project manager to coordinate meetings, fieldwork, and other activities with the village council.

Davin Holen, a cultural anthropologist who has worked in Dena'ina and Ahtna communities, acted as support staff for this project. His main tasks were to compile the annotated bibliography, scan photographs and digitally clean and archive images, create posters and presentations, compile the Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA), and design maps using GIS software for the West Cook Inlet EOA. Davin produced the GIS-generated maps and the figures in this report. The data are stored at the ADF&G Division of Subsistence.

James Fall, a student of Dena'ina culture for over 25 years, provided guidance for the project. He wrote portions of the first several chapters of the West Cook Inlet EOA and edited the entire document.

Study Materials

Compilation of information for this project began with a literature review of materials related to the people of west Cook Inlet. This review concentrated on the contemporary Dena'ina community of Tyonek and the former Dena'ina communities of Kustatan and Polly Creek. Archival materials were also used. The second part of this project involved interviewing local residents and locating additional primary sources.

ARCHIVES

Following the literature review in the spring of 2004, researchers visited archives to look for primary documents and photographs. Photo collections at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art and University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Library Archives were the main sources. Private collections are discussed below. Logbooks from the Alaska Commercial Company were copied from the UAF Library Archives. NPS archives at the Lake Clark National Park headquarters in Anchorage were also visited in July 2004. The NPS photo archives are invaluable in documenting events and people of historic significance in the region. The personal interview collections of Laurel Bennett were also of great benefit, providing first-hand information about many west Cook Inlet people.

Particularly important sources are the papers of Nikafor Alexan, housed at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Library Archives. Nikafor Alexan (1900 to c.1970) of Tyonek wrote a series of stories in English while convalescing in a hospital in the late 1950s. He was perhaps the first Dena'ina individual to write about the culture and history of his people. Two of these stories were published in *The Alaska Sportsman* (predecessor to *Alaska Magazine*) in 1965;² these and several others were also printed for the Kenai Peninsula School District in 1981.³ However, the full set of Alexan's writings has not been published. This invaluable record includes biographies, histories, traditional stories (*tsukdu*), and descriptive ethnographic materials.

In a separate project associated with Lake Clark National Park and Preserve cultural studies, Dr. James Kari prepared an inventory and assessment of Dena'ina recordings located at the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Cultural Studies Unit office in Anchorage, the Alaska Native Language Center, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, and private collections.⁴ In his report, Kari provides an overview of recent work with Dena'ina oral and written materials, including indices of tape recordings in the Dena'ina Audio Collection (DAC) and his personal field notes, a typological assessment of source materials, a discussion of Dena'ina educational materials, an overview of recent research, an assessment of the Dena'ina topical dictionary, and reviews of recent reports, recordings, and collections. Due to the extent and depth of the materials in this collection, researchers on this project did not have adequate time to fully review its contents. Further research that utilizes the collection is highly recommended.

FIELDWORK

Because Tyonek is the only remaining Dena'ina settlement located within the study area (see Figure 1.1), the ethnographic fieldwork focused on this community. A short twenty-minute flight from Anchorage, Tyonek is easily accessible by plane in good weather. However, when the weather turns inclement, as is often the case in late winter, few flights go in and out and a one-day trip can turn into a long stay. Therefore much of the fieldwork was completed during the summer to early winter.

The fieldwork for this project was conducted in several phases, each with a different emphasis. In the beginning, meetings with the community were scheduled to introduce the project in a variety of venues. The preliminary research phase included visits to residents' homes to conduct oral interviews and scan photographs, and time spent in the community center visiting with whoever came by. This sometimes became the most effective means of outreach for this project. A secondary research phase involved engaging in community activities. This included potlucks/potlatches and trips to fish camps in the summers of 2004 and 2005.

The final phase of this project is "bringing it all back." This involved presentations to the community about what had been learned, and discussions with community leaders and residents about what they would like to see as a final product of the research. The following is a discussion of each step of the fieldwork for this project. These steps have been broken down by phase of the project.

MEETINGS

Initially, a number of meetings took place between the project personnel Ron Stanek and Davin Holen with NPS Cultural Anthropologist Karen Gaul. The community of Tyonek wanted to know why the National Park Service was interested in their community and their lands. There is a sense of distrust within the community of outside land managers due to Tyonek's history, as discussed in this report. On three separate day trips, July 9, August 13, and October 27, 2003, the project personnel met with the village council, a local school class, and people in the community center to begin to introduce the project. In meetings, the most important aspect was to garner not only the support of the community, but also to get ideas on what the community would like to see in terms of research, and a final product. From this, objectives and methods were revised as the project progressed and more community members became interested. For example, contracts with local and former residents including Donita Peter and Katherine Chickalusion supported research and organization of community contacts. Additional funds were added to assist with travel to Tyonek to attend community events and interview residents.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with people in their homes in Tyonek. Interviews were open-ended and the main focus was the copying of photograph collections. The history of each photograph was discussed. Photographs recorded in one household, with the owner's permission, were shown to others to garner additional information about the image. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to record stories and fill in details for the report. Interviews were conducted with as many residents of Tyonek as possible, including residents who no longer resided in Tyonek. In addition, interviews were conducted with individuals of Euro-American heritage who have long-term relationships with the land and people of west Cook Inlet.

PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTIONS

The photo collections, and the narratives or accounts people provided along with them, represent some of the major contributions to this project. These have been included as a digital archive in Appendix B. The collections include scanned images from nine current Tyonek residents; two previous residents who now live in Anchorage and Soldotna; the Native Village of Tyonek; four institutions, including the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, the Cook Inlet Region Incorporated (CIRI), Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Cultural Studies Unit, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence; and photographs taken by four ADF&G researchers.

To capture many of the images not previously scanned into digital format, the researcher used a portable scanner and a laptop computer. This set-up was easily used in people's homes, taking up little space, for example, on a kitchen table. The laptop has a large screen that enabled the interviewee to see their photograph in a larger format after it was scanned. Using Adobe Photoshop CS software, an initial quick cleanup could be done on a faded photograph so the image could again regain its vibrant colors. In addition to cleaning the photograph digitally, the researcher also used the software browser program to create metadata for each individual image that will be permanently stored with the image.

The major advantage of capturing the images digitally in people's homes was that the photograph did not have to leave the home. Once back in the office, the researcher finished cleaning the images digitally, repairing scratches, fingerprints, and dust speckles. Then, they were printed on photo paper with a high quality Epson 2200 photo printer. The images were then inserted into a photo album, with information about the project, and the newly cleaned images were sent back to the interviewees as a thank you.

Presentations and Posters

Project researchers created two posters; one of which can be seen on page 92. The goal of the first poster was to introduce the project in a way that related the long history of the Division of Subsistence work with Tyonek, and described what the researchers hoped to gain from this project. It also emphasized what the community could expect in return for collaborating with the researchers.

The second poster was a collaboration between Davin Hollen of the Division of Subsistence and former Tyonek resident Donita Peter. The poster used a previously published short story about processing Chinook salmon in Dena'ina by the late Tyonek elder, Nellie Chickalusion (1975). The narrative was broken down by sentence, both in English and Dena'ina, and each sentence was accompanied by a photo depicting the steps involved in catching and processing king salmon. This poster is meant to be a learning tool for the Dena'ina language.

Project personnel from the Division of Subsistence and NPS attended the Dena'ina Festival held in Kenai in June 2004. The festival was being held in conjunction with a week-long Dena'ina language workshop at Kenai Peninsula College. At both the festival and language workshop presentations were given relating the project to interested participants.

Over the weekend of November 5-7, 2004, Division of Subsistence researchers gave a presentation to the community of Tyonek during an elders' potlatch and wellness potluck. Members of other communities were also present. Drum circles and dancing took place following the meal along with the giving of presents to the families and elders. In the afternoon, just prior to the main events, the researchers set up a powerpoint presentation in the school gymnasium. The presentation was projected on a big screen for everyone in the community. A brief introduction to the project was given and then the slides were started. The early slides captured the original communities of Old Tyonek, Susitna Station, Polly Creek, Kustatan, and Kroto Creek that make up the present day Tyonek population. The researchers ran through slides in chronological order until the present ending with a slide from the summer of 2004. The audience provided their own commentary on images dating as far back as the 1930s. Near the end of the presentation the researchers reiterated the invitation to submit additional photos from family collections that would complement the project.

On the afternoon of July 22, 2005, a division researcher attended a culture camp that was organized by the village to provide activities for the youth of Tyonek. At the camp, he gave a presentation on the project including photographs that were collected from the community, offered an introduction of the draft final of the West Cook Inlet EOA, and then conducted a lesson on traditional matrilineal kinship and how the clan system worked. The emphasis of the presentation was to introduce the youth to how matrilineal kinship systems function. The youth then did an activity working together with their brothers and sisters, tracing their family heritage back three generations. They were then asked what their last name would be if they traced their heritage through their mother's line, instead of taking their father's name. This activity is discussed in Chapter Six.

A Division of Subsistence researcher attended a Tyonek village council meeting on August 9, 2005, to present the draft of the West Cook Inlet EOA to the community of Tyonek. The researcher discussed some options for products with the council such as a photo collection on a CD or a possible book made from the report. The council members were pleased with the progress of the project.

Collaboration

In the fall of 2003, ADF&G Division of Subsistence researchers and the NPS anthropologist Karen Gaul visited the Bartlett School in Tyonek. They gave a brief description of the project and introduced books and other resources that the students could use to study Dena'ina culture. A presentation on the history of Lake Clark Park and Preserve followed. The students were asked if they were aware that a national park was located nearby; most said they were not. Next, the project personnel gave a presentation on Dena'ina culture to familiarize the students with some aspects of their own culture that they could study. Overall, the two hours spent with the students were productive. Although the students never undertook any projects related to the West Cook Inlet EOA, they helped to familiarize their parents with what was taking place in the community.

Other collaborations and community participation also included working with the village council. Jackie Eckan, a health aide for the community, was instrumental in helping to contact elders to see if they would like to share photographs and stories with the researchers. Peter Merryman, the village council president, helped to familiarize the community with the project and shared the village council's photograph collection with researchers. Connie Burnell, the tribal administrator, also helped to familiarize the community with the project and kept researchers abreast of community events in which they could participate. Brandy Standifer initiated steps to document current activities of the *Tebughna* Youth Drum Group. Janelle Baker coordinated the collection of information and photos of the group's activities. A subcontract was developed with Katherine Chickalusion for assistance in coordinating visits and identifying photo collections. Donita Peter was subcontracted for consultation and written information about Dena'ina history, social systems, and spiritual beliefs, and an educational poster design. Donita was also a liaison with people who held photo and tape collections and collaborated on family genealogies. In all, researchers could not have carried out this project without assistance and collaboration from the village government, the residents of Tyonek, and others who provided support and interest in the project.

APPENDIX I NOTES

1. Fall et al. 1984; Stanek et al. 1982.
2. Alexan 1965.
3. Alexan 1981.
4. Kari 2004.



*Katherine Ephim Stephan (Katherine Chickalusion's grandmother).
Taken at Susitna Station. Date Unknown. Chickalusion Collection.*



Inga Stephan, Sava Stephan, Anderson Stephan, Bobby Stephan, and Nellie Chickalusion on a late fall moose hunt on the Yentna River, circa 1925. *Nova McGill Collection*



Katherine Ephim Stephan (Katherine Chickalusion's grandmother). Taken at Susitna Station. Date Unknown. Chickalusion Collection.



Inga Stephan, Sava Stephan, Anderson Stephan, Bobby Stephan, and Nellie Chickalusion on a late fall moose hunt on the Yentna River, circa 1925. *Nava McGard Collection.*