

Haa Leelk'w Has Aani Saax'u: Our Grandparents' Names on the Land.
Edited by Thomas F. Thornton. Seattle: University of Washington Press
and the Sealaska Heritage Institute, 2012. 256 p. Illustrations, maps.

In his "Note to the Reader," Harold Martin describes why he chose to participate in the research and production of Thomas F. Thornton's book. Through discussions with the latter he came to realize that many Indigenous Alaska elders were passing, and with them so too their cultural knowledge. The publication of *Haa Leelk'w Has Aani Saax'u* is a timely response to this culture loss. Over an eighteen year period, Thornton interviewed Tlingit, Haida, and other Indigenous elders, including Tsimshian, Eyak, Chugach, and Athabascan peoples from Southern Alaska, as a means of documenting Indigenous toponomy. Through these interviews he was able to record and map over 3000 geographic names from Southern Alaska. Research was done with the consent of the elders and Indigenous communities in which he worked. The book's strength lies in its clear presentation of Indigenous place names and translations as well as the well-labelled topographic maps indicating location sites.

The book contains eleven chapters. In the author's introduction to the volume he explains why Indigenous place names are important to individuals and communities, maintaining that they are the "foundation of every culture's geographic coordinate system, of every individual's sense of place" (xi). He goes on to describe the various nuances of the Tlingit language, including how language and naming can determine the way people see the land. This is done through a brief analysis of Tlingit grammar, the way in which Tlingit place names denote geographic processes rather than the presence or absence of an object, and the fact that place names in Tlingit contain multiple descriptive nouns allowing for a more evocative form of naming. Thornton also discusses the importance of naming choice, why some features are named and others are not. He goes on to discuss the reason that semantic patterns, the meanings of words, are significant. As he sees it, they are ways of "evaluating place names as sources of traditional knowledge ... because they tell us why sites were significant and how they fit together" (xvi). The most compelling argument he makes for the importance of recording and learning Indigenous place names comes from his discussion of place and culture and how these two are absolutely interconnected. Thornton provides examples of the way in which place names carry cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. He uses specific examples of Tlingit subsistence practices (i.e., foraging), social organization (i.e., matrilineal clan names), and ceremonial life (i.e., crests), to emphasize how Indigenous topographic names are intrinsically connected to people's cultural knowledge. One

example that stands out is that of Tlingit junior elders who were originally apologetic because, “having given up on their language” (xviii), they did not know any Indigenous place names. When senior elders began remembering place names, the junior elders immediately pointed to their location on the maps laid before them because they had visited these places many times. When they went “hunting, fishing and trapping ... [they] used to refer to these places by their Tlingit names” (ibid.).

Each individual chapter discusses specific locations and Indigenous communities within Alaska, broadly including Yakutat, Glacier Bay, Juneau, Sitka, Kake, Stikine, Klawock, Nass River and Tsimshian, and the Prince of Whales Archipelago. Chapter titles are written in the locality’s Indigenous name. Unfortunately, there is no immediate translation within the title. If someone is looking for a specific locality within the contents page, and they do not know the Indigenous name, they will have difficulty finding the chapter. As well, at the beginning of each chapter it would be prudent to include a map of Alaska with a small inset of the location being described. This would be useful for those who know little of Alaska’s geography.

Each chapter follows a formula that includes a description of the area, a very brief acknowledgement of archaeological evidence for the locality, a description of the cultural groups who live in the area, and the participants who provided place name information. Often a photo of one important cultural landmark will be included as will insets that contain Indigenous stories, poems, and photos of elders and other community members.

Undoubtedly though, the heart of each chapter is the topographic map containing numbered locations that correspond to an accompanying place names table. This fantastic reference contains thousands of place names and is simple to use. Thornton includes various spellings, and translations when they exist, and his location descriptions are succinct. It would be wonderful to see the book, or at least the maps, presented in a digital format so that younger generations might more readily tap into this resource.

Thornton has produced an important and accessible work, and there is no doubt that it will be used by current and future generations of students, community members, and researchers interested in Indigenous Alaskan cultures and histories. Through reading the book, it becomes clear that this form of research and publication must continue in other localities as a means of both preserving cultural knowledge and reclaiming places within the landscape. As Dr. Rosita Worl states in her foreword, “His work provides an insight into the Native worldview and gives further credence to Native people’s assertions of the significance of land to them” (x). I would assert that this model of place name recording and publication would be of significant

use to Indigenous people within the Yukon, and I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in place names and cultural knowledge preservation.

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***The Frontier Romance: Environment, Culture, and Alaska Identity.* By Judith Kleinfeld. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2012. 100 p, index and endnotes, 14 black and white photos.**

This book examines how some people in the Alaskan wilderness have made meaning of their lives through the American mythos of the frontier: the celebration of courage and self reliance; the love of freedom and individualism.

The author brings to this work a rich and wide-ranging personal experience as an Alaskan citizen of forty years. Judith Kleinfeld has spent those years serving with distinction as a professor at the University of Fairbanks, in public service, and as a writer about and for Alaska's peoples. For this study she conducted, over the course of ten years, an impressive total of seventy-five life histories and two additional case studies of frontier communities.

Kleinfeld was interested in the reasons why people move to Alaska, and she sought to interview those folks who had migrated and chosen to live in remote areas: building their homes from logs; living without electricity and plumbing; and hunting, fishing, and trapping in order to be self-sufficient. She interviewed, as well, people who, though living conventional city lives, had also moved to Alaska to find "the frontier." Almost all of these people stated that they had been greatly influenced by the heroic tales in popular culture about people like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, and the stories from Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, Farley Mowat's *Lost in the Barrens*, and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie*. It was clearly evident to Kleinfeld that these stories had profoundly affected them. All of the people in the study were, in some way or another, living out their lives with the images, symbols, and tales of the frontier epic: the guns and knives, the animal trophies, survival tales of battling extreme weather, and the wearing of clothing for rugged conditions—camouflage fatigues and boots, parkas, and furs. In this book, therefore, the author sets out to show how cultural stories and master narratives are integrally woven into, and essentially shape and direct, the identity construction of people's lives.