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**Qikertarmiut nunat apertaarait anirturluki: preserving
the indigenous place names of the Kodiak Archipelago**

Item Type	Master's Project
Authors	Schmidt-Chya, Dehrich A.
Download date	27/03/2023 21:26:58
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/11122/11876

QIKERTARMIUT NUNAT APERTAARAIT ANIRTURLUKI: *PRESERVING THE
INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES OF THE KODIAK ARCHIPELAGO*

By

Isuwiq

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A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Rural Development

University of Alaska Fairbanks

May 2020

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Abstract

This project explores Indigenous place names from the Kodiak Archipelago toward the goals of exhibiting Indigenous identity, increasing pride in Indigineity, and to document Indigenous knowledge. Sugpiaq/Alutiiq people have lived on Kodiak Island for at least 7500 years, while the first foreign contact didn't come until about 260 years ago, in either 1761 or 1763. Within the past 257 years, Qikertarmiut (Kodiak Alutiiq) place names have been in a continuous state of jeopardy due to the linguistic and cultural assimilation of Indigenous people into Western cultures. In order to preserve the place names of the Kodiak Archipelago, I compiled and documented place names from prior researchers, historic maps, and Elders to create an interactive place names resource that is accessible to community members available on ArcGIS. Using Indigenous names instead of the English alternatives helps to reclaim Indigenous land stewardship, document Indigenous knowledge, and exhibits local Indigenous identity. I compiled and documented 289 place names from around the Kodiak Archipelago from various sources.

Keywords: Sugpiaq, Alutiiq, Language, Place Names

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	vii
Acknowledgments.....	ix
The Author.....	xi
Introduction.....	1
Statement of Purpose.....	7
Paradigm and Framework.....	11
Literature Review.....	15
Academic Research on Kodiak Place Names.....	15
Historical Place Names Documentation by Foreign Explorers.....	19
Significance of Place Names to a Community.....	21
Research Design.....	25
Methodologies.....	25
Methods.....	29
Analysis.....	33
History of Kodiak-Alutiiq Place Names Documentation.....	33
Alutiiq Place Names on Kodiak Today.....	37

Places that have Multiple Alutiiq Names.....	40
Places that have Historically Moved.....	40
Places Named after General Geographic Markers.....	42
Places Named for the Resources they Provide	46
Places that Have -Saq, -Saaq, or -Yaq Endings.....	47
Alutiiq Names and Archaeological Sites.....	49
Analysis of Elder Interviews	50
Places Named in English by Indigenous People.....	53
Places Named for Individuals	54
Conclusion	57
Appendix	61
Bibliography.....	63

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1 Angayuqaq's Tetrahedral Framework	13
Figure 2 1849 Russian-America Company Map	34

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1 Izmailov/Bocharov Alutiiq names vs Teben'kov Alutiiq names	35
Table 2 Kodiak place names in English with Alutiiq origin	38
Table 3 Places named for geographic features	43
Table 4 Alutiiq Place Names originating from resources	46
Table 5 Place names that end in -saq, -saaq, or -yaq	48
Table 6 Newly documented place names	51
Table 7 Places named by Alutiit with English names	53
Table 8 Places named for individuals	54

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been completed without the generous support and assistance from a few major parties. First, I would like to say *Quyanaa* to the Old Harbor Native Corporation and the Alutiiq Museum for their generous support of this project. I would also like to thank the Elders and Alutiiq language speakers who worked with me to ensure the accuracy of the words. Those Elders and speakers include: Florence *Kukula* Pestrikoff, Nick *Nikoli K'siin* Alokli, Sophie *Taquka'aq* Shepherd, Kathryn Chichenoff, Sally Carlough, Susan Malutin, April *Isiik* Laktonen-Counciller, Candace *Cutmen* Branson, and many more.

Quyanaasinaq for all of your support. Additionally, I would like to thank all of the individuals who worked to document Kodiak Indigenous place names in the past. These people include Larry Matfay, Martha Matfay, John Pestrikoff, Julia Pestrikoff Sven Haakanson, Sr., Mary Haakanson, 'Papa' George Inga, Ephraim Agnot, Sr., Anakenti Zeedar, Senafont Zeedar, Clyda Christiansen, Herman Malutin, Tania Malutin, Zoya Shugak, Paul Kahutak, Walter Simeonoff, Dr. Sven Haakanson, Jr. Dr. Alisha Drabek, Dr. Jeff Leer, Dr. Linda Yarborough, and many others. Finally, I would like to thank those organizations which assisted this project financially, including the Old Harbor Scholarship Foundation, Koniag Education Foundation, Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Quyanaa.

The Author

Gui Dehrich Chya, apertaaratnga Isuwiq. Sun'ami suullrianga, ilanka Qikertarmiuwat cali. Gui Sugpiaruguanga. My name is Dehrich Chya, and my Alutiiq name is Isuwiq, which means 'seal.' I was born in Kodiak and my family is from Kodiak Island. I am Sugpiaq.

Sugpiaq is my preferred ethnonym, but the Indigenous people of the Kodiak Archipelago, Alaska Peninsula, and Prince William Sound are also commonly referred to as Alutiiq or Aleut. Aleut, a foreign term, also sometimes refers to the Indigenous people of the Aleutian Islands and parts of Bristol Bay.

Alutiiq is how to say Aleut when speaking in the Indigenous language of Kodiak Island, which itself is called Sugt'stun or Alutiit'stun. The terms Sugpiaq and Alutiiq are used interchangeably in this thesis when referring to the culture and/or people, and the terms Sugt'stun and Alutiit'stun are used interchangeably when discussing the language spoken by the people.

Introduction

The suppression of the usage of Indigenous place names across the United States—and across the world—is an issue the Indigenous community has faced since the beginning of the colonial era. European colonizers, such as Grigory Shelikhov, and other foreigners came to North America and immediately began renaming and distorting the Indigenous landmarks and re-inventing their boundaries. Many place names around Kodiak Island and the rest of Alaska are distorted versions of Indigenous names, including ‘Kodiak’ and ‘Alaska’ themselves. When these mischaracterized place names are used, the history of Indigenous occupancy of the land is not adequately attributed by speakers; few people think of the name ‘Kodiak’ as an Indigenous term.

Indigenous place names, even for fluent speakers of the respective language, are often left out of conversation by speakers today since Indigenous place names are easily replaced with their corresponding English counterparts. When talking about places in Alutiiq, it is common to substitute the English (or other colonial language) name for a place rather than use the traditional, Indigenous name for that place. For example, in Alutiiq, a person might say “Old Harbor-*men ageciqua* (I am going to go to Old Harbor,)” instead of using the Alutiiq place name in the same sentence: *Nuniamen ageciqua*. As English becomes an increasingly hegemonic language, the Indigenous place names are replaced by English names. Using the English names is perfectly acceptable for everyday conversation. Yet, using Western

names actively works against the goals of reclaiming Indigenous land, documenting Indigenous knowledge and history, and exhibiting Indigenous identity.

I explored three theories regarding Indigenous place names preservation in my research. First, assuming that the utilization of Indigenous place names is important to Indigenous land stewardship reclamation, using names from outside cultures implies that we, as Indigenous people, have relinquished the right to name those places:

[w]hen someone gives a name to a place on the land, the result is very similar to that of a baptism: the ‘place’ truly becomes part of the world...when European explorers were ‘discovering’ new lands, naming places was a powerful way of taking possession of them.”¹

Indeed, Europeans renaming places in Alaska was one method of claiming the land previously stewarded by the Native people. If the traditional place names are lost, we effectively lose the rights to call the land our own.

Second, the inherent, Indigenous meaning of a place name is likely to be forgotten when the Indigenous place name is not used. In fact, this has already begun, as Collignon writes:

¹ Collignon, “Knowing Places: The Inuinnait Landscapes, and the Environment,” 2006. 101-102.

“[t]he problematic ones are primarily ancient terms whose meaning was lost as the language went through a natural process of change. Today they no longer carry the meaning that people gave them in the past. They are now simply place names; ‘just a name’ as Inuinnait say. The places they identify may have acquired meaning through experience or stories, but the actual name does not have any significance.”²

Kodiak place names reflect this problem. There are many places in the region whose Alutiiq names no longer have a recognizable meaning, leaving researchers to consider *possible* meanings and debate on what the name *sounds like* it could mean. One example on Kodiak is the place *Itik’guaq*, a hill in Akhiok village, which cannot be translated by Elders. As the Alutiiq community continues to lose fluent speakers, the meanings of place names will continue to grow more obscure unless the names and their meanings are preserved. Undoubtedly, the original Indigenous meanings of a place are not reflected when referring to that place by a colonial name. While using Indigenous place names does not necessarily express the meanings, there is a history in the name that invokes curiosity to a speaker and/or learner. These Indigenous meanings can include mythological significance, resource use significance, historical significance, and much more.³ Many Kodiak Alutiiq place names, for example, display a connection to resources both directly, as in Ar’ursurwik, “*a place to hunt whale*,” and indirectly, as in Carwanesinaq, “*large*

² Collignon, *Ibid.*, 103.

³ Linda Yarborough. “Sugcestun Place Names, Kodiak Island,” 1977.

current,” which tells the listener about the environment and how to navigate the area. This is further discussed in Collignon: “[t]his [place names] system expresses the relationship between a people and their environment. It shows us the way they construct a human space from a natural environment.”⁴ In some cases, place names also exhibit a relationship to historic events, like the place *Awa’uq*, the location of the massacre led by Russian navigator Grigory Shelikhov against the Sugpiaq/Alutiiq people on the eastern side of Sallitaaq (*Sitkalidak Island*) in 1784. The historical record of Alutiiq deaths from this event is disputed, with numbers ranging from 150 to more than 500.⁵ In the Alutiiq language, *Awa’uq* translates to something like ‘dumbfoundedness’ or a feeling of emotional numbness. Likewise, it was given its name due to the emotional numbness the survivors of this massacre felt. Indeed, pre-contact Indigenous place names give insight into the worldview of Alutiiq people.

Finally, using Indigenous place names is a way for the Kodiak Alutiiq community – or any Indigenous community – to continue to exhibit and maintain Indigenous identity. Such demonstrations lead to increases in cultural pride within the community. Collignon states that place names reflect “how people use their culture to understand their natural environment” and how Native languages reflect a combination of “a physical environment and linguistic expression of that

⁴ Collignon, *Ibid.* 103-104.

⁵ Rick Knecht, Sven Haakanson, and Shawn Dickson. “Awa’uq: Discovery and Excavation of an 18th Century Alutiiq Refuge Rock in the Kodiak Archipelago.” In *To the Aleutians and Beyond*, edited by B. Frohlich, and R. Gilberg. Publications of the National Museum Ethnographical Series, vol. 20, 179.

understanding.”⁶ He then cites Müller-Wille, stating that place names are “...extraordinary indicators of how cultures situate themselves in space and develop their philosophical and practical explanations of the landscape and nature in general.”⁷

There are other examples of places in Alaska that have reclaimed their Indigenous toponymy. Notably, Utqiagvik (*‘a place to gather wild roots’*), formerly known as Barrow, held a vote to officially change their community’s name back to one of their locally recognized Indigenous names (the other being Ukpeagvik, *‘a place to hunt snowy owl’*). While it remains a controversial change among Natives and non-Natives, the name change unequivocally exhibits Indigenous identity and pride in Iñupiaq culture. On a larger scale, Hawai`i and Greenland are reclaiming their Indigenous names of the land. Indeed, Clark writes that Hawaiian cultural identity is “at the heart of the postcolonial condition,” and that even street names in Hawaii “have some value or cultural capital.”⁸ This idea of Indigenous street names having ‘cultural capital,’ or intrinsic value in the community, can be applied more broadly to the use of Indigenous place names in general. Considering the amount of Indigenous place names in Hawai`i and Greenland, the pride in the Indigenous cultures in these places is immediately apparent. Reclaiming place names is one of many methods of exhibiting Indigenous identity and increasing community pride in the Indigenous culture of the region.

⁶ Collignon, *Ibid.*, 104

⁷ Müller-Wille quoted in Collignon, *Ibid.*

⁸ John R. Clark. “The Aloha State: Place Names and the Anti-conquest of Hawai`i.” *Annals of the association of American geographers* 89, no. 1 (1999): 77.

Statement of Purpose

Over the past 260 years, knowledge of Kodiak Island's Indigenous place names has significantly declined. Today, there are just five Alutiiq Elders who express knowledge of Indigenous place names. Moreover, the community of Kodiak had not yet had a comprehensive database, map, or other documentation of Indigenous place names that is easily accessible to the public. As part of my research, I developed a digital map that accurately displays information associated with Kodiak's Indigenous place names to educate community members about those place names, which is available on ArcGIS. Documenting Indigenous place names benefits cultural and linguistic development and revitalization, which is evident for multiple reasons: (1) it assists with the reclamation of Indigenous land stewardship; (2) it prevents the loss of Indigenous language and Indigenous knowledge attached to place names; and (3) it contributes to the expression of Indigenous identity. In sum, the use of accurate Indigenous place names emphasizes the Indigenous history of a place and its connection to a community. Use of an English (or other colonial language) toponym does not necessarily wipe out that connection, but it alters the emphasis and depreciates the relationship with Indigenous people. Consequently, use of colonial names is part of a larger process of colonization and assimilation, and it is important to document Indigenous names and implement them wherever possible to counter that process.

There have been numerous Alutiiq oral history projects that are technically available in archives around the state, but not practically accessible for community

members. This research is intended to benefit the Kodiak Island Alutiiq community by being available to community members and to raise awareness of the loss of Indigenous place names by documenting those place names and providing an interactive map for community reference. My research on Kodiak Island place names creates an important resource for the Alutiiq community. It is necessary to document this information while there are still fluent, first-language speakers of Alutiit'stun/Sugt'stun. Ultimately, the results of this research may be a potential resource for policy development to restore Indigenous names.

Using Indigenous place names is also a step toward land reclamation. Although the legal Indigenous title of over 40 million acres of land was recognized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act,⁹ the lack of a more practical acknowledgment of Indigenous rights to land stewardship (e.g., through the lack of visible signage and general information throughout Kodiak Island) symbolically represents a relinquishment of ownership of the land and results in a failure of exercising the 'right of denomination.' The right of denomination is the right to establish land stewardship via the naming of the land. When Indigenous place names are recognized by the various levels of government, may serve as an official recognition of the long history of occupation and land use by Indigenous people through this theoretical 'right of denomination.' To work toward the ultimate goal of official place name restoration, I asked the Qik'rtarmiut Regional Language

⁹ Martha Hirschfield. "The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Tribal Sovereignty and the Corporate Form." *Yale Law Journal*, 101 (1991): 1331.

Advisory Committee (Qik Committee) to act as a regional place names committee to provide legitimacy in Kodiak's place names documentation.

Paradigm and Framework

It is important to understand the paradigm behind this research and the situation of the Alutiiq language in relation to its linguistic relatives. Alutiit'stun, or Sugt'stun, is an Esk-Aleut language that is closely related to the languages of the Yup'ik, Cup'ik, and Cup'ig. It is more distantly related to the languages of the St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Iñupiaq, Unangax̄, and various languages of Siberia, Northern Canada, and Greenland. The similarities between Alutiit'stun and Yugtun, the language of the Yup'ik, allow for a comparative analysis between the respective worldviews.

There is arguably a strong link between language and worldview. That is, the way a people's language works influences the way they think and vice versa, as argued in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.¹⁰ This is demonstrated by analyzing words or phrases in the Alutiiq language and their contextual translations (how a word translates to English in context) versus their literal translations (how a word breaks down morpheme-by-morpheme). For example, in the Alutiiq language, the word *unguwallriat* contextually means 'animals.' Deconstructing it, the root of the word is *unguwa-*, which means 'to be alive.' The word *unguwauq* means 'it is alive' (verb, present tense, third person singular). To say it *was* alive (verb, past tense, third person singular), you would say *unguwallria*. The word for animals (*unguwallriat*), then, literally translates to 'things that were alive,' (noun, plural) and contextually means 'animals.' In pre-Christian Alutiiq spirituality,

¹⁰ Paul Kay and Willett Kempton. "What is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis?." *American anthropologist* 86, no. 1 (1984): 65-79.

reincarnation was a significant aspect of the belief system, “the soul survived death, returning to the world embodied in a new person or creature.”¹¹ “Things that were alive,’ then, exhibits that significance and shows that it is represented not only in the belief system itself, but also in the language.

This relationship between language and thought may be similarly expressed in the place names used by a culture. The way a place is named—as well as which landmarks are given explicit place names—is greatly influenced by the worldview of that specific culture. For example, on Kodiak Island, there are remarkably few mountains with Alutiiq toponyms: Twin Peaks (*Nasqusaaq*), Luchek Mountain (possibly *Lliicaaq* in Alutiit’stun), Tungulara Mountain (possibly *Tungullria* in Alutiit’stun), and Itik’guaq (mountain in Akhiok with no English name or known translation). There are countless mountains on Kodiak, but the fact that most do not have a name implies they are not given the same importance as other named places, likely because there is not a significant amount of valuable resources in the mountains in the eyes of the Sugpiaq/Alutiiq. Meanwhile, nearly every bay and most other waterways are given names due to their significance for travel and resource use. The most common resources that the Sugpiaq people used—and continue to use—are generally located along the coast or in the water in some other way. These water-based resources include, but are not limited to, *iqallut* (fish), *mamaayat* (clams), *uriitat* (chitons), *arwat* (whales) and other sea mammals, *nasqulut* (bull-kelp), and sea birds like *tunngat* (puffins) or *agasuut* (cormorants).

¹¹ Aron Cowell, Amy Steffian, and Gordon Pullar. “Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People.” *University of Alaska Press*, (2001): 194.

Considering the heavy reliance on marine resources, it is not surprising that the Sugpiaq worldview focuses on the water, and even less surprising that that relationship is demonstrated through place names.

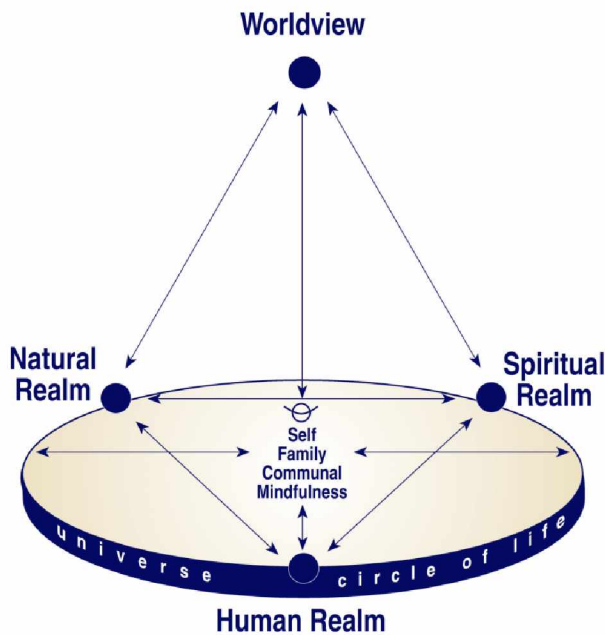


Figure 1 Angayuqaq's Tetrahedral Framework¹²

The Indigenous relationship between people and the environment and beyond is best described by Angayuqaq, also known as Dr. Oscar Kawagley, in his discussions on Alaska Native and Yupiaq worldviews. He states that Alaska Natives attempt “to live in harmony with the world around them,” and that this way of life led to a “subsistence-based worldview” due in large part to our dependence on our environment and what it has to offer.¹³ One of the ways this dependence is exhibited, at least for Sugpiaq people, is through the methods in

¹² Oscar Kawagley. “A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit.” Long Grove (2006): *Waveland Press, Inc.*, 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

which the Sugpiat named landmarks and places around them. Angayuqaq uses the harmonious nature of the Alaska Native worldview as a basis for his Yupiaq worldview, which he expresses through a ‘tetrahedral framework,’ essentially, a triangulation between the Alaska Native ‘physical realm,’ ‘spiritual realm,’ and ‘natural realm’ (Figure 1). Balancing these realms is absolutely necessary in the Yupiaq worldview to maintain a balance within oneself, and within one’s community.¹⁴ These realms are all characterized by a single Yup’ik root: *ella*, which, depending on how it is used, can refer to aspects from within any one of these realms.¹⁵ In Sug’tstun, the same concept is represented with a similar word: *lla*. To represent the physical realm, you can refer to the entire world as *lla*. To represent the spiritual realm, the phrase, “*llangellria*,” translates to “she came into consciousness.” To represent the natural realm, the word, “*lla*,” on its own refers to the weather. The similarities between Sugpiaq language and Yup’ik language show there is an incredible link between our worldviews, as expressed through the shared word *ella* or *lla*. The Yup’ik word *ella* perfectly embodies the Yupiaq worldview in the same way the Sugpiaq word *lla* captures our worldview. Understanding this relationship between all things, and the balance and reciprocity demonstrated within this Indigenous framework is vital to the understanding of Sugpiaq culture and language in general. This Sugpiaq framework inspired heavily by Angayuqaq’s representation of the Yupiaq worldview provides the foundation for this research.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵ Ibid., 14.

Literature Review

Academic Research on Kodiak Place Names

The amount of academic research on the narrow topic of Kodiak Island place names is surprisingly large, with the most significant work being done by Jeff Leer, a former professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Other significant academic research includes that of Yarborough (1977) and Gilbert, Clark, and Griffin (1984-87).

The result of Leer's place names research, which was conducted between 1981¹⁶ and 2001,¹⁷ is a large spreadsheet with over 160 Kodiak Island place names and handwritten notes on various documents and maps. These are all available to the public at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Alaska Native Language Archive. Leer met with and interviewed numerous Sugpiaq Elders, including Larry Matfay, George Inga, John Pestrikoff, Dennis Knagin, and more, in order to document Alutiiq place names. He also analyzed place names documented by archaeologist Frederick Milan, who came to Kodiak in the 1950s, to cross-check the data Leer received from his cultural consultants. While the research is publicly available, it is not readily accessible for community members. That is, it may not be easily understood by someone who simply wants to learn about Kodiak's place names. I am compiling provides is the digitization that incorporates Leer's work.

Additionally, while Leer's research contains invaluable information, it remains

¹⁶ Jeff Leer. "Kodiak Place Names." *SUK972L1981i*, archived at Alaska Native Language Archive: 1981.

¹⁷ Jeff Leer, Mary Haakanson, and Sven Haakanson. "Mary and Sven Haakanson, Place Names Around Old Harbor," *ANLC6258*, archived at Alaska Native Language Archive: 2001.

unfinished. Leer was occasionally only able to provide descriptions of places without including a more precise location, which can potentially lead to substantial misinterpretation. For example, there is a place called “*Qiuuk*,” which is apparently a group of rocky cliffs. Leer was only able provide the description “in a small bay N of Old Harbor,” which is not precise enough to deduce which group of rocks or which bay he could be referencing.¹⁸ It is likely that this inadequate description is due to a lack of information received from his consultant, and the lack of geographical information may be attributed to the fact that GPS and digital mapping technologies were not available to researchers as they are today. Putting place names on a digital map that is accessible to community members addresses the issue of uncertain location.

Yarborough (1977) conducted the earliest academic research on Kodiak Island place names. She collected place names while documenting archaeological site information for the ANCSA 14(h)(1) program, a process aimed at documenting traditional cultural places and burial sites. While in Kodiak, Yarborough conducted an in-depth analysis of not only the place names themselves, but of how and why the Sugpiaq people named the places the way they did. Yarborough provides seven specific categories to which Kodiak Alutiiq place names adhere: (1) “places where specific resources are found;” (2) “central places within exploitation areas;” (3) “places that physically remind people of something, or describe how something

¹⁸ Jeff Leer. “SU placenames.xls,” in “Sugpiaq place names.” Archived at the *Alaska Native Language Archive*, retrieved from <https://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/search/resultDetail.xml?resource=17174&sessionId=&searchId=>

looks;" (4) "places associated with yearly life-cycle activities;" (5) "places with historical or mythological significance;" (6) "places descriptive of weather or sea conditions;" and (7) "place names that provide a time frame for travelers."¹⁹ In identifying these categories, her goal was to show that Sugpiaq place names were not named after individuals, though that is not completely accurate.²⁰

When analyzing the place names collected by both Yarborough and Leer, it is evident that the categories observed by Yarborough accurately describe the ways in which the places were named. I also analyzed copies of the recordings she made during this time. Much like Leer's research, it is important that her research be made accessible. There are copies of the recordings at the Alutiiq Museum and at the Anchorage Bureau of Indian Affairs office. However, one must physically be present at one of the repositories to listen to the recordings since the tapes have not yet been digitized for online access. Furthermore, the original repositories to which she donated her maps and notes have seemingly lost or otherwise misplaced those items, leaving only the audio tapes. It is unclear if all of the tapes she recorded are available. Likewise, another limitation of her study is that there is a limited amount of metadata available. The only metadata included in the catalog are her consultants' names, location of the interview, and whether or not transcripts and release forms are provided. Other information that would be helpful for researchers includes the demographics of the consultants (i.e., whether they were Elders, fluent

¹⁹ Linda Yarborough. "Sugcestun Place Names, Kodiak Island." *Presented at 4th Annual Meeting of Alaska Anthropological Association* (1977): 1-7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

speakers, hunters, trappers, fishermen/women, etc.), and the topics discussed in the interview.

Demographic information would have been helpful because the reliability of place names data is heavily influenced by the person who is providing that information. Including information about the source could have generated some helpful and interesting data. For example, she could have cross-analyzed which demographics had more place names knowledge and in which categories. For example, hunters and trappers may have had a lot of knowledge on resource use areas while Elders might have had more information on historically and mythologically significant places. Whenever possible, I documented the demographic information for my sources in addition to their names. Lastly, Yarborough claims that Sugpiaq place names on Kodiak Island were not named after individuals. However, I have found that there are at least five places named after individuals – three in the Indigenous language (*Miitam Qutii*, *Siitam Tangaa*, and *Apaamam Nanwarnaa*), and two named by Indigenous people in English (*Walter's Creek* and *Matrona's Creek*). In all of the cases where a place is named for an individual, the person was directly associated with that place through their connection to fishing and/or hunting grounds.

Like Yarborough's data, much of the other data on Kodiak place names in this study was documented through projects funded by government resources. For example, Gilbert, et al (1984-87) also conducted research for the ANCSA 14(h)1 program. They conducted a number of interviews with community members,

namely, Anakenti Zeedar and Larry Matfay, men with knowledge of southern Kodiak Island places. The two consultants provided a number of place names, and 37 of those names appeared in the book *Chasing the Dark: Perspectives on Place, History and Alaska Native Land Claims*.²¹ I obtained copies of these interview tapes from the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository.

Historical Place Names Documentation by Foreign Explorers

The first foreign explorers came to Kodiak from Russia in the mid-late 1700s. After they traveled through the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak, the fur trade began, which brought permanent settlements and more fur traders to the area. Some of them took an interest in documenting the Indigenous place names of the area. There are individual places named throughout explorers' journals. Additionally, a few explorers decided to make lists of place names, and there are a few historic maps that incorporate Native place names as well.

Alphonse Pinart, a French linguist who visited Kodiak in the early 1870's, recorded a number of place names and a list of settlements.²² Pinart recorded ethnographic information from Kodiak Island in multiple languages, including French, Russian, and English. Pinart's notes contain a list of 23 settlement names, which were written in Cyrillic and provided to him by a Native person. The

²¹ Matthew O'Leary. "Two Koniag Place-Names." In *Chasing the Dark: Perspectives on Place, History and Alaska Native Land Claims*. Anchorage: *United States Department of Interior* (2009): 103.

²² Alphonse Pinart. "Alaska papers [ca. 1871-1877]." Originals located at Bancroft Library. Accessed via Alaska Native Language Archive.

document was translated by Lydia Black.²³ Pinart did not analyze the names of the places or the local history behind any of them, except for the settlement called “Begletsovskoe,” which tells a story of a chief being forced onto a sailing ship. The chief fled from the ship the moment he was left alone. He jumped into the water and swam to shore. “For this reason, the settlement was called Begletsovskoe,”²⁴ apparently derived from the Russian word for ‘fugitive’ or ‘runaway.’ Although the settlement name is Russian, it still provides a history in relationship to the place itself. The Sugpiaq name for the settlement is not explicitly given as it is for most of the other settlement names on the list. Another issue with the list is that it does not give precise locations for the settlements, except for the island in the archipelago they are associated with, be it Kodiak, Afognak, Sitkinak, or Sitkalidak Island. Pinart was no stranger to maps, so he would have been able to take a map and mark the locations of those settlements. Still, this list is beneficial for cross-referencing other historic place names documentations. Pinart’s diaries of his travels around Afognak Island and Shuyak Island provide 26 additional place names, 12 of which are similar to those provided by more recent sources.

Teben’kov’s 1852 atlas of Kodiak Island contains numerous place names as well. Although many are Russian place names, the map contains a significant number of Alutiiq place names simply because the Russians did not rename every

²³ Alphonse Pinart, translated by Lydia Black. “Settlement Names.” Retrieved from collection item “Sugpiaq Place Names Files,” in file labelled “SU972L1980m f2 a smaller.pdf,” Archived at the Alaska Native Language Archive: 91. Retrieved from:

<https://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/search/resultDetail.xml?resource=17167&sessionId=&searchId=>
²⁴ Ibid.

place around the islands. It seems that this map was transliterated into a Latin alphabet by George Davidson, although not perfectly. The use of old Cyrillic makes the original map difficult to read for researchers who are unfamiliar with the Cyrillic alphabet, let alone someone who is unfamiliar with the evolution of Russian Cyrillic since the 1800s. Fortunately, Leer spent some time adding the Alutiiq place names from Teben'kov's map to his spreadsheet, which is available on the ANLA website, and Davidson's transliterations provide exact locations.

Perhaps the most significant historic map of Kodiak Island Alutiiq place names comes from Izmailov. Created in 1785, this document provides 30 verifiable Alutiiq place names. It is the earliest complete map of Kodiak Island, and therefore contains Alutiiq names for places that were given Russian alternative names early in Kodiak's colonial history, (such as Nailiraq/Evrashka/Marmot Island and Nalik/Yelevoi/Spruce Island). There are numerous place names that are unrecognizable on this map as well, and a few places that currently have identified Alutiiq names where Alutiiq names are different in this map. Furthermore, there are two different versions of this map, which in some cases provides conflicting information.

Significance of Place Names to a Community

Aside from research done on Kodiak place names specifically, there is an abundance of research which establishes the need for Indigenous place names within a community. For example, Wildcat, et al (2014) explores the importance of

land-based education within decolonization, stating that “the delivery of land-based education must always be rooted in place and the histories of Indigenous peoples from those places.”²⁵ The article reviewed the research conducted by other authors and their importance they place on land-based education and decolonizing efforts. The argument at the center of their paper is that, “[l]and-based education...acts in direct contestation to settler colonialism and its drive to eliminate Indigenous life and Indigenous claims to land.”²⁶ Undoubtedly, one of the effects of colonization was the seizing of Indigenous land by the colonizing power. As argued in this paper, reclaiming ownership of that land is one step toward decolonization. Using Indigenous place names rather than colonial names is an important method of Indigenous land reclamation, through the exercise of the ‘right of denomination.’

Beyond land reclamation, there is also research that shows the relationship between place names, Indigenous knowledge and the local environment. Boillat, et al (2013) argue that “place names are concrete elements of traditional knowledge that are able to integrate biotic, non-biotic and human elements of the landscape and to order them into geographically defined, operational basic units.”²⁷

Essentially, the authors point out that place names hold invaluable traditional knowledge, which connects people with the living and non-living world around them. For example, the authors explicitly state the Comcaac have many place

²⁵ Matthew Wildcat, Mande McDonald, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, and Glen Coulthard. "Learning from the land: Indigenous land based pedagogy and decolonization." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 3 (2014): 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

²⁷ Sébastien Boillat, Elvira Serrano, Stephan Rist. And Fikret Berkes. “The Importance of Place Names in the Search for Ecosystem-Like Concepts in Indigenous Societies: An Example from the Bolivian Andes.” *Environmental Management*, (2013): 665.

names that relate to plants and animals around them, which give an insight to the relationship between the people and the environment. This relationship is explicitly shown in Kodiak Island place names as well. I will use this research on place names as the foundation for my own places names project.

Research Design

Methodologies

The three strategies I implemented throughout this research were (1) assuring the involvement of cultural experts, our Alutiiq Elders and speakers, in the place name identification process, (2) Indigenizing research methods through emic study, and (3) institutional verification and legitimization of Indigenous place names for future official name-change implementation.

I worked closely with the Qik Committee to assure the community supported legitimacy in attributing these place names. In the future, this research could be used by communities to reclaim Indigenous toponymy at an official level and would need adequate credibility to be used in such a manner. The Qik Committee was established in 2003 to act as an advisory committee for Alutiiq language programs being conducted by different organizations. The Qik Committee has also consulted on: the Alutiit'stun Niuwawik, which is the local Alutiiq language immersion nest for preschool-aged children; the Alutiiq Living Words project, which was a project that focused on creating new words for new technologies, new concepts, and reclaiming forgotten words; and the Naken-Natmen (From Where, To Where) Project, which is led by the Alutiiq Museum and focuses on archiving the Alutiiq language in auditory, visual, and textual capacities. The Qik Committee is comprised of Elders, language speakers and learners, Indigenous organizations and project leaders, and concerned community members. All of the members of the committee are in some way involved in the Alutiiq Language revitalization

movement, whether through speaking or by managing projects focused on language documentation or acquisition. The Qik Committee has the legitimacy to approve place names not only for community use, but for official State of Alaska use as well, given the range and diversity of its members, the specialized skills of each individual on the committee, and the committee's experience overseeing Alutiiq Language projects. Working with the Qik Committee also provided me with the opportunity to consult with community members. It imperative to work with the Qik Committee so that government officials and legislative entities feel comfortable in the future incorporating Indigenous place names on state signage and maps through the Alaska Historical Commission. However, officially changing geographic names was not a research goal of this project.

When an individual or entity feels it is time to apply to officially return Kodiak's Indigenous geographical terms to maps, I suggest applying first to name features that do not currently have official names. For example, there is a place on the eastern side of Afognak that John Pestrikoff recalls being named *Angaluk*. It is two coves North from King Cove and currently has no officially recognized name. Since physically renaming the place is not necessary, it would be much simpler to have the Indigenous name be recognized as the official name than if the place needed to be renamed entirely, so long as there is adequate historical documentation of the place name's use. The second priority for renaming might be to correct the spelling of places that are inaccurate representations of Alutiiq names, such as the town and locality 'Chiniak,' which is meant to be the Alutiiq

name *Cingiyaq* ('a point'). The name contextually refers to the historic and pre-historic village in today's Chiniak Bay. There are many examples of this type of name attribution throughout Kodiak Island; around 45 of the major English place names in the region are no longer accurate representations of the corresponding Indigenous place name. It is important to document the cultural context of these places and to update them to fit within the current orthography, so that the names may be legible and understood by future generations. The most difficult step in reclaiming Indigenous toponymy will be renaming well-established places that are *not* distortions of Indigenous terms and renaming places like Kodiak town. This name *is* a distortion of the Indigenous term *qikertaq*—*island*, but not a term that was traditionally applied to the town itself, which is known as Sun'aq. In order to successfully rename places with established names, it takes the support and recognition of a majority of the community. If the diverse Kodiak Island community does not support a name change, it will not likely happen. Nevertheless, I will continue to suggest to the Qik Committee that they push for such name changes in the future.

Another strategy I implemented throughout my research was to Indigenize the field research methods to reach community members. Traditional academic methods of gathering place names used by some researchers in Kodiak were not as effective as they might have been. Simply looking at places on a map to identify them (e.g., 'what is the name for this river?') is a Western method that does not capture the type of Indigenous knowledge surrounding Alutiiq place names. Indeed,

while in English, an entire river may have a single name, there are often places with an especially prominent feature *within* that river that has a separate, important Indigenous name. Leer did a great job documenting sub-locations, locations within a larger feature that are named in the language. In the Karluk River, there is a section of the river called *Ken'arpak*, which means 'The Great Tide Flat,' which may not be represented when asking for the name of the Karluk River. Assigning one name to an entire river is not an effective strategy if a researcher hopes to obtain the name for a specific spot *along* the river. I sought to document those places by using an emic approach to research by asking for stories about places in addition to looking at maps. Using an emic approach to research also allows the relationship between the researcher and the participant to continue to grow based on shared experiences. The fostering of the relationship between researcher and participant is an important aspect of Indigenous research.²⁸

The majority of this research was community-based. Specifically, the data was collected from members of the Kodiak Alutiiq community through interviews. Similarly, the secondary research I conducted on the work done by researchers before me was originally conducted with Kodiak Alutiiq community members as well. There was minimal potential for a quantitative analysis on place names. Indeed, quantitative data was not the focus of this analysis. I did, however, put some effort in analyzing the background of the Elders with whom I consulted. This allowed me to examine the relationship between a person's background and their

²⁸ Shawn Wilson. "What is an Indigenous research methodology?." Canadian journal of native education 25, no. 2 (2001): 177.

knowledge of place names. For example, how their occupation as a hunter, fisher, trapper, healer, house-spouse, or otherwise affected their knowledge on place names information. Beyond the demographic information of the cultural consultants, the focus of this research lies in the qualitative information: the place names themselves, their meanings, and stories about how people used the land.

Methods

The most effective method of gathering place names data was through the various types of secondary research I conducted, including: (1) analyzing work done by previous researchers, including audio recordings, a professional paper, and spreadsheets; (2) analyzing old maps made by foreign navigators; and (3) reading journals and notes from foreign explorers. Of the 289 place names compiled, only five were place names not previously documented by other researchers. Sadly, with less than 30 speakers of the Kodiak Alutiiq language, few people still recognize Alutiiq place names. Consequently, a close textual analysis of previously collected data proved valuable to this project.

While there were only a few place names I personally documented with Elders, interviewing speakers and conducting focus groups with them remained an integral part of data collection. Rather than ask Elders to look at maps, I asked the Elders to tell me stories about the places they remembered growing up. This method proved effective, especially since only one of the Elders I interviewed claimed to be familiar with place names. As discussed earlier, Indigenous place

names often followed different protocols than English place names. To reiterate, in English, there could be a single name for an entire river, while Indigenous people might additionally have names for specific parts of that river due to its relationship with resource use, history and mythology, or another culturally significant reason. Attempting to translate place names on a map does not guarantee that names for more specific places are accurately documented. Interviewing consultants about their experiences at places helped address this issue.

Focus groups took place at established Elders sessions, which are hosted jointly by the Alutiiq Museum and the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak. There are six Elders who regularly attend these sessions, all of which were invited to provide information on places they travelled to in their communities. In addition to focus groups, I conducted one-on-one interviews, which gave each Elder a private space and potentially greater comfort for telling stories. I used both of these research methods because while some may feel more comfortable in a private space, others seemed to feel better in the group setting around other fluent speakers and friends. Using the Alutiiq language helped trigger memories that were otherwise dormant. Indeed, using the language ignites different parts of the brain than when speaking in English.²⁹

I made audio recordings of all but one of my interviews. In the one case where I did not record the interaction, it was due to the fact that the interviewee lives in an Elder care facility. The hospital regulations do not allow audio recording without

²⁹ Viorica Marian and Ulric Neisser. "Language-dependent recall of autobiographical memories." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 129, no. 3 (2000): 361.

special permission. However, I did take notes during that interaction. All participants whose audio was recorded agreed to having the recordings donated to the Alutiiq Museum and to the Alaska Native Language Archive.

The Qik'rtarmiut Regional Language Advisory Committee approved many of the place names I compiled in a meeting on January 30, 2020. The Qik Committee recognized the credibility and integrity of the Alutiiq consultants that included Larry Matfay, Anakenti Zeedar, Senafont Zeedar, and others. They did not, however, feel comfortable giving the same acknowledgment to foreign individuals who created maps and noted places in their journals. These sources included Alphonse Pinart, Frederick Milan, Mikhail Tebenkov, and others. Rather than outright denying the credibility of those individuals, the Qik Committee chose to defer to my judgement and to Jeff Leer's judgement on whether to use place names from those individuals in place name compilations.

Analysis

History of Kodiak-Alutiiq Place Names Documentation

The first interaction between Kodiak Alutiiq people and Westerners occurred as early as 1761, and definitely by 1763 when Stepan Glotov and his crew wintered near Angyartaalek, or *Aiaktalik Island*.³⁰ While Glotov's winter at *Aiaktalik Island* was the first confirmed contact with Russians, the earliest map with Kodiak Island represented actually came a year prior (1762). Peter Shishkin provided a hand-sketched map of the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak Island to Glotov, which in turn provided the first documentation of an Alutiiq place name: *Kad'yak*, or *Qikertaq/Kodiak*.³¹ In 1775, Captain Shmalev provided a more detailed chart of southwestern Kodiak Island, showing the island and village of Angyartaalek, where Glotov wintered. In addition to Angyartaalek, Shmalev provides the Alutiiq names *Siaktunok'* (*Sigtunaq/Sitkinak Island*), *Kukaliak'* (*Qikertat/Geese Islands*), and, presumably, a few Russian names. In 1784, Grigorii Shelikhov voyaged to Kodiak, and overthrew the Native people at what is now called *Awa'uq*, the site of the Refuge Rock massacre on *Sallitaq/Sitkalidak Island*, which resulted in further investment into the Kodiak Island fur trade mission. In 1784 and 1785, Izmailov and Bocharov, navigators of the ship led by Shelikhov released the first detailed charts of the entire Kodiak Archipelago, including *Ag'waneq/Afognak* and *Suyaraq/Shuyak Islands*.³² These maps contain many Alutiiq place names; some,

³⁰ Lydia Black, "The Russian Conquest of Kodiak." 1992.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

not seen on any maps created after these (like Nailiraq/*Marmot Island*, and Nalik/*Spruce Island*, whose names all appear as their Russian or English counterparts in all later maps). In later years, a few more significant maps were created: Lisiansky (1805), Sarychev (1826), the Russian-America Company Map (1849, though based off of Lisiansky's 1805 map), and Teben'kov (1852).³³

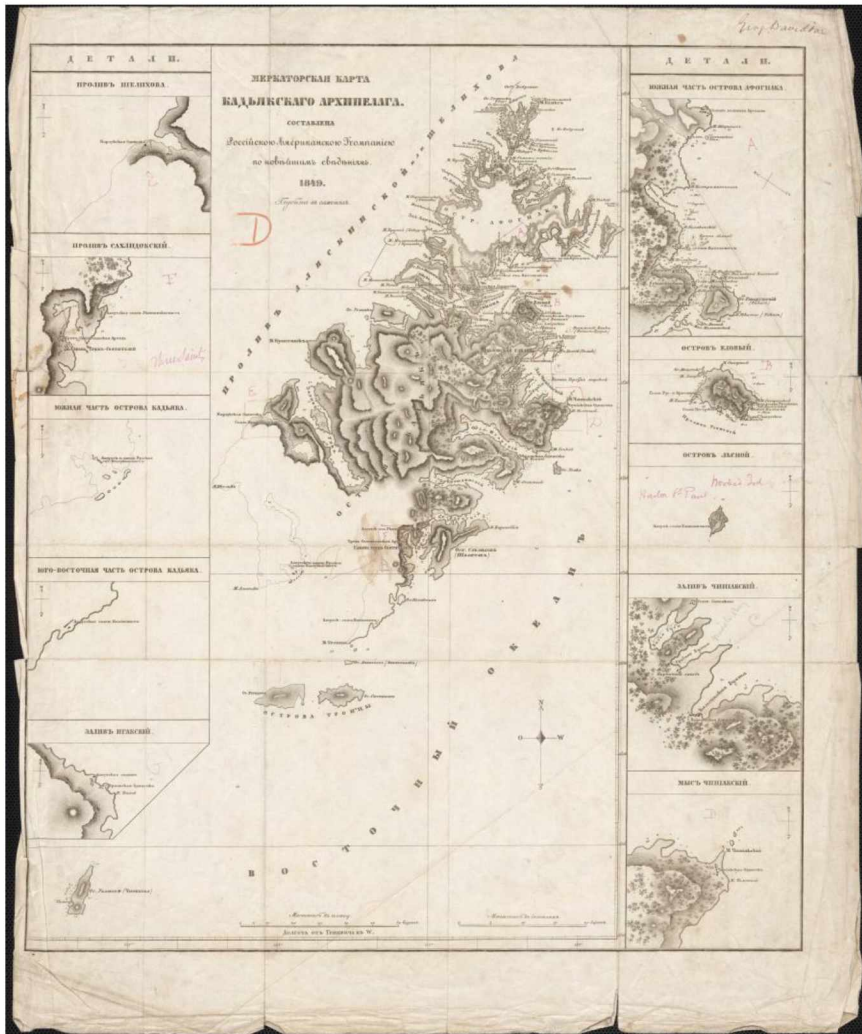


Figure 2: 1849 Russian-America Company Map³⁴

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Russian-American Company. "Merkatorskaia karta Kad'iakskago Arkhipelaga, sostavlena Rossiiskoiu-Amerikanskoiu Kompanieiu po noveishim scideniiam." Saint Petersburg. Digital copy in Rare Maps Collection at Alaska & Polar Regions Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks. 1849.

When comparing the Alutiiq place names on the earliest complete map of the Kodiak Archipelago (1784, Izmailov and Bocharov) to the more recent Teben'kov atlas (1852), one can see that the Teben'kov map has lost six Alutiiq names, some replaced with Russian names, and other simply omitted, while only documenting three new Alutiiq names not seen on the 1784 map.

Izmailov/Bocharov 1784	Teben'kov 1852	Modern Alutiiq
Shuyukh' Island	Shuyak' Island	Suya'aq ^{JL}
Nilikhak' Island	Yevrashichei Island ^R	Nailiraq ^{JL}
Afognak' Island	Afognak Island	Ag'waneq ^{JL}
Chikhnak' Strait	--	Cirnaaqiq ^{JL}
Atnak' Island	Kitoi Island ^R	Caguim Katagwillra ^{JL}
Tugagshu Strait	--	Tuuwarsaq ^{DS}
Kazhuyukh' Bay	--	--
Nalik' Island	Yelovoi Island ^R	Nalik ^{JL}
Chiak' Bay	Chiniak' Bay	Cingiyaq ^{JL}
Ugak' Island	Ugak' Island	Uguaq ^{JL}
Ugashak' Bay	Igak' Bay	Kangiyaq ^{JL} , Ugasaq ^{DS}
Ugatak' Village	--	Ungataq ^{JL}
Kilyudinsna Bay	Kilyuda Bay	Kilutaq ^{JL}
Agatshugu Island	--	--
Kikakhtanak' Island	--	Awa'uq ^{JL}
Kikhtanak' Island	Sitalidak' Island	Sallitaq ^{JL}
--	Kiyavak' Bay	Kia'iwik ^{DS}
--	Nazikak' Island	Nasikaq ^{JL}

Aiekhtalik' Island	Yaeakxtalik' Island	Angyartaalek ^{JL}
Sitkhunak' Island	Sitkhinak' Island	Sigtunaq ^{JL}
Tugidak' Island	Tugidak' Island	Tuiy'uq ^{JL}
Alitak' Village	Alitak' Village	Allitaq ^{JL}
Pai Village	Pai Village	Pai: Paimiut ^{LB}
Geokolik' Village	Ayakulik' Village	Ayaquliq ^{JL}
Karluk' Village	Karluk' Village	Kal'ut ^{JL}
Uyak' Bay	Uyak Bay	Uyaq ^{JL}
--	Kulyugmiut Village	Quluq ^{DS}
Uganu Bay	Uganik' Island	Uganuut ^{JL}

Table 1 Izmailov/Bocharov Alutiiq names vs Teben'kov Alutiiq names: R = Russian

Over the span of 68 years, there were already places with known Alutiiq names that were documented by the earliest sources being renamed with Russian counterparts. Additionally, there are examples of Russian place names on the Tebenkov atlas whose Alutiiq names were *not* documented by Izmailov and Bocharov, yet which undoubtedly *had* Alutiiq names, such as Сухой (Sukhoi Lagoon), which is called *Nanwarnaq* (lagoon).

Aside from historic place names documentation by Russian sailors, navigators, captains, and others, there has also been a fair amount of modern research on Kodiak Island place names. In addition to the work done by Leer, Yarborough, Griffin, and the others discussed in the Literature Review, Luehrmann (2008) provides the most detailed published account of villages in the Kodiak Archipelago between the late-18th and early-20th centuries. The author compiled information about historic Alutiiq villages from multiple sources into a single

resource. Among the accomplishments of the book is that it examines the villages around the Archipelago at various periods between the years 1805 and 2000. Though an important addition to the corpus of Alutiiq toponymy, it focuses solely on village names, though there is often overlap (e.g., the settlement Kilutaq (*Kiliuda*), the namesake for the bay).

Alutiiq Place Names on Kodiak Today

Though many Russians clearly renamed places, not all Russians were adamant about changing Indigenous place names. Golovnin (1979), who sailed to Kodiak Island between 1817 and 1819, for example had this to say about Russians changing the Native names:

“Having made certain that Ukamok [sic., Uqamaq] and Chirikof are one and the same island, I will from now on call it by the former name, because this is the one given to the island by the native inhabitants of this archipelago and it seems to me that no one has the right to change original names.”³⁵

While many places around the Archipelago were renamed by foreigners, clearly not all of them were, because there remain numerous official names around Kodiak that are descended from the original Alutiiq names; there are an estimated 43 place

³⁵ Vasili Golovnin and Ella Lury Wiswell. “Around the World on the Kamchatka.” 1979, 106.

names around the Kodiak Archipelago that are based on the Alutiiq names (Table 2).

Place in English	Place in Alutiiq
Kodiak	Qikertaq; Qik'rtaq ^{JL}
Nagai Rocks	Nagaayuq ^{JL}
Tugidak Island	Tuiy'uq ^{JL}
Sitkinak Island	Sigtunaq ^{JL}
Aiaktalik Island	Angyartaalek ^{JL}
Aliulik Peninsula	Uglluk ^{JL}
Cape Alitak	Allitaq ^{JL}
Akhiok	Igya'aq; Agiyaq ^{JL, LM}
Ayakulik River	Ayaqulik ^{JL}
Karluk	Kal'ut ^{JL}
Uyak Bay	Uyaq ^{JL}
Amook Island	-- maybe 'Amuwik' ^{DS}
Anguk Island	Anguq; Angurna ^{DO}
Cape Kuliuk	Quluq ^{DS}
Uganik Island	Unganuut ^{JL}
Kizhuyak Bay	--
Muskomee Bay	Masquq ^{JL}
Cape Nuniliak	Nunalleq; Nunaliaq ^{DS}
Tanaak Cape	--
Afognak Island	Ag'waneq ^{JL}
Shuyak Island	Suyaraq; Suy'aq ^{JL}

Ouzinkie	Uusenkaa ^{JL}
Chiniak	Cingiya ^{JL}
Ugak Island	Ugua ^{JL}
Pasagshak Bay	Pasarsaq ^{JL}
Kiliuda Bay	Kiluta ^{JL}
Sitkalidak Island	Sallita ^{JL}
Cape Kasiak	Qasga ^{JL}
Kaiugnak Bay	Nayungliq, from Kayunglak (Avnulu Creek) ^{JL}
Kiavak Bay	Kia'iwik ^{DS}
Kaguyak	Kangiya ^{JL}
Ilkognak Rock	--
Cape Liakik	--
Amatuli Island	--
Izhut Bay	--
Cape Ugat	Ugat ^{JL}
Taliudek Islands	Talutet ^{JL}
Luchek Mountain	-- maybe 'Lliicaq' ^{DS}
Tungulara Mountain	-- maybe 'Tungullria' ^{DS}
Ikpik Hill	--
Talnik Point	--
Yukuk Bay	--
Avnulu Creek	--

Table 2 Kodiak place names in English with Alutiiq origin

In some cases, the English place name and the original corresponding Alutiiq name were applied to the same respective place. For example, the Alutiiq name Uguaq was directly applied as *Ugak Island* in English, or Ugat being named *Cape Ugat* in

English. In many other cases, however, the English name is a perversion of an Alutiiq name of a nearby place, and then applied more generally. For example, the name Kia'iwik, which originally referred to a single village within the corresponding bay, was applied more generally to Kiavak Bay in its entirety. Similarly, the name Ugluk, which in Alutiiq refers to Cape Trinity, was applied to the entire *Aliulik Peninsula*, while Ugluk only refers to the tip of the peninsula.

Places that have Multiple Alutiiq Names

While examining Alutiiq place names, one of my findings is there are cases where a place has multiple reported names, like Sitkalidak Island, which has the Alutiiq names Sallitaq and Qukaq. Izmailov and Bocharov provide the name Qukaq, which means 'middle,' while George Inga reported to Jeff Leer that the name for the island is Sallitaq, which has no clear translation. Additionally, the name for the infamous refuge rock near MacDonald Lagoon is known today as Awa'uq, which means 'dumbfounded,' or 'shell-shocked,' yet Izmailov and Bocharov provide that the name was Qik'rtarnaq, which means 'island-like,' or 'appears to be an island [but it is not].' Other examples of places with multiple reported names include: Kiavak Bay or Herring Lagoon (Kia'iwik and Ingisaaq), Raspberry Island (Atnak and Caguim Katagwillra), and Akhiok (Kasukuak and Agiyaq).

Places that have Historically Moved

In addition to places with multiple Alutiiq names at any given point, there are also cases where a place moved around, which means the place name has therefore been attributed to separate locations. This generally applies to villages that moved around over the years. Perhaps most famously, Allitaq (or, Alitak) has changed location even since the 1920s. The original location of Alitak is now called 'Upper Station' in English. It is located within Olga Bay. However, the community of Alitak moved to what is now known as 'Cape Alitak' in English. Though, it was referred to as Allitaq in both places. As a community, Allitaq no longer exists. So, the name has changed meaning from the community to the Cape on which it once resided. Similarly, the village of Akhiok (called Kasukuak – 'surrounded' today, and Agiyaq – 'the place to go to [for hunting]' in times past) moved from one side of Alitak Bay to the other. This is an interesting case, because the village itself has apparently always been called 'Kasukuak' in Alutiiq, as seen in the 1849 Russian America Company map. The locality in which the village now resides, though, was apparently called 'Agiyaq,' because that is where Akhiok people used to go to hunt when the village was on the opposite side of Alitak Bay.³⁶ Indeed, the English name Akhiok comes from the Alutiiq word 'Agiyaq.'

There is one case where when a village moved, the name apparently did not move with it, as is the case for Kasukuak and Allitaq. In Kiavak Bay, there was a village reported by Lisiansky as 'Kia'iwik,' which means 'a place to spend the summer.' In the 1849 Russian America Company Map, there is another village

³⁶ Walter Simeonoff, audio interview by Laurie Mulcahy, "AM214:33A." Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository.

reported outside of Three Saints Bay called ‘Uksiwigkaq,’ which translates to ‘a place to spend the winter.’ This is the only known case of the language reflecting a separate village depending on the season or activity. It is reasonable to believe that the inhabitants of Kia’iwik and Uksiwigkaq were one and the same—where Kia’iwik appears on Lisiansky’s map, Uksiwigkaq is missing. Likewise, where Uksiwigkaq is reported by the 1849 Russian America Company map, Kia’iwik is missing, suggesting that the people were spending the summer at their summer place when Lisiansky created his map, and at the winter place during the time of the Russian America Company map.

Places Named after General Geographic Markers

Across the Kodiak Archipelago, places are most commonly named for a corresponding geographic marker, such as ‘lagoon,’ ‘point,’ or ‘river.’ Yarborough refers to these places as “central places within [resource] exploitation areas,” which essentially means these places are so important to an adjacent community that community members simply refer to them as their geographic name.³⁷ For example, the place name for the lagoon in Kaguyak is *Nanwarnaq*, which simply translates to lagoon. This would be akin to saying, “I am heading to the lagoon,” in English. If there is only one lagoon in your community that people frequent, then there is no sense in specifying which lagoon you are talking about. Below is a list of place names around the Kodiak Archipelago where the roots translate to their respective

³⁷ Yarborough. *Ibid.*, 3.

geographic markers, including markers with additional descriptors (e.g., big, small, kind-of, old, etc.).

Place Name (Alutiiq)	Place Name (English)	Translation	Root-meaning (English)
Qik'rtaq ^{JL}	Kodiak Island	Island	Island
Cingiyaq ^{JL}	Chiniak	Point	Point
Tangirnaq ^{JL}	Woody Island	Spit	Spit
Qukami Qik'rtat ^{AM}	Barren Islands	Islands in the middle	Island
Igya'artuliq ^{JL}	King Cove	Has an abundance of lake outlets	Lake outlet
Tangirnasinaq ^{JL}	Pivot Point	Large spit	Spit
Nagaayuk ^{JL}	Ghost Rocks	Two pinnacle rocks	Pinnacle rock
Nunaqaq ^{JL}	Barling Bay	Will be a village	Village
Qutengcuk ^{JL}	--	Small beach	Beach
Kangiyaq ^{JL}	Ugak Bay	Bay	Bay
Kangiyaq ^{JL}	Kaguyak	Bay	Bay
Apaamam Nanwarnaa ^{JL}	--	Gregory Yakanak's Lagoon	Lagoon
Kangiyasinaq ^{JL}	Deadman's Bay	Big bay	Bay
Kangiyangcuk ^{LM}	Alpine Cove	Little bay	Bay
Kangiyangcuk ^{LM}	Ivor Cove	Little bay	Bay
Carwaq ^{JL}	Moser Bay Narrow's	Tide, current	Tide, current
Nanwarnaq ^{JL, LM}	Sukhoi Lagoon	Lagoon	Lagoon

Kuica'aq ^{JL}	Dog Salmon Creek	Appealing river, waterfall	River, waterfall
Kuica'aq ^{JL}	--	Appealing river, waterfall	River, waterfall
Carwarnengcuk ^{JL}	Afognak Strait	Little tide	Tide, current
Kangiyangcuk ^{JL}	Back Bay	Little bay	Bay
Carwanesinaq ^{JL}	Whale Passage	Large current	Tide, current
Cingiyat ^{JL}	Cape Kostromitiniof	Points	Point
Qut'sinaq ^{JL}	--	Large beach	Beach
Nanwalek ^{JL}	--	One with a lake	Lake
Nunacungaq ^{JL}	--	Cute, little village	Village
Cingigurluq ^{JL}	Tonki Cape	Weathered point	Point
Miinam Qutii ^{JL}	--	Miinaq's beach	Beach
Nunaq ^{JL}	Cape Paramanof	Village	Village
Nunalleq ^{JL}	--	Old Village	Village
Nanwaq ^{JL}	Afognak Lake	Lake	Lake
Kuik ^{JL}	Afognak River	River	River
Uglluk ^{JL}	Cape Trinity	Terrible reef	Reef
Qikertat ^{JL}	Geese Islands	Islands	Island
Kangiyangcuk ^{JL}	--	Little bay	Bay
Nanwarnaq ^{DS}	Kaguyak Lagoon	Lagoon	Lagoon
Nunaliaq ^{LY}	--	'homesite' ³⁸	Village
Kangiyasinaq ^{LY}	Uyak Bay	Big bay	Bay
Nanwaq ^{LY}	Karluk Lake	Lake	Lake
Kuik ^{LY}	Karluk River	River	River

³⁸ Ibid., 4.

Nanwarnaq ^{LY}	Karluk Lagoon	Lagoon	Lagoon
Qut'sinaq ^{LY}	Sevenmile Beach	Large beach	Beach
Cingiyaq ^{LY}	Cape Ikolik	Point	Point
Cingiyat ^{LY}	Middle Cape	Points	Points
Imarpiaq ^{LY}	Shelikof Strait	Real Ocean	Ocean
Nanwarnaq ^{LY}	Alitak Lagoon	Lagoon	Lagoon
Cingiyaq ^{JL}	Shakmanov Point	Point	Point
Tangirnacungaq ^{JL}	Bert Point	Cute, little spit	Spit
Tangirnaq ^{JL}	Trap Point	Spit	Spit
Igya'aq ^{JL}	Mouth of Karluk Lake	Lake outlet	Lake outlet
Ken'arpak ^{JL}	--	Great mud flat	Mud flat
Ken'artuliq ^{JL}	Marka Bay	Has an abundance of mud flats	Mud flat
Qikertaniik ^{JL}	Dot Island and Arnkil Island	??	Island
Kangiyangcuk ^{JL}	--	Little bay	Bay
Qikertak ^{JL}	Noisy Islands	Two islands	Island
Cingiguaq ^{JL}	Head Point	Kind of point	Point
Amitatut Qutiit ^{LM}	Weasel Beach	Weasels' beaches	Beach
Kangsaak ^{JL}	--	<i>Sounds like</i> two seem like the head of a bay	Bay
Ingisaaq ^{JL}	Herring Lagoon	<i>Sounds like</i> at the mountain <i>or</i> mountainous place	Mountain

Table 3 Places named for geographic features

Clearly, describing a place by its geographic feature was a popular method of naming places. As noted by Yarborough, many of these places were named as such because they are the most important feature of that type in the area. In other cases, the use of adjectives provides enough distinction for those significant places to still be specific enough for speakers/listeners.

Places Named for the Resources they Provide

Another recurring way that places are named in Kodiak Alutiiq society is for the resources they provide, described by Yarborough as “places where specific resources are found.”³⁹ In fact, the relationship between places and the peoples’ relationship to the environment is undeniable.

Alutiiq Name	English Name	Translation
Alimarsaq ^{LY}	Port Otto	“Where the [dog] salmon run” ⁴⁰
Kum’agyalek ^{JL}	--	One that has Eagles
Ar’ursurwik ^{JL}	Whale Island	Place to hunt whale
Isuwilek ^{JL}	Kazakof Bay	One that has seals
Kum’agyak ^{JL}	--	Eagle
Urutulik ^{JL}	--	Two that have moss
Sagiyaq ^{AP/DS}	--	Has halibut
Ugnaraq ^{AP/DS}	--	Mouse
Amitatut Qutiit ^{LM}	Weasel Beach	Weasels’ Beaches

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Niklil'gaa ^{LM}	--	A place that had red salmon
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Table 4 Alutiiq Place Names originating from resources

At present, we know of a much smaller number of places named for the resources they provide than the number of places named for a corresponding geographic feature. One explanation for this is that the resources in an area are often predetermined by the geographic feature. That is to say, it is predetermined to find salmon in a river, therefore naming it after the salmon found there would be redundant. Additionally, the viability of resource use changes over time; a place that is plentiful in seals one year may not be ten years later. Another characteristic of note concerning places named for resources is that six of the ten places listed are on or near Ag'waneq (*Afognak Island*), suggesting that naming places for resources could be an Afognak-area pattern, although the sample size is small. Of the other four, two are near Kasukuak (*Akhiok*) and two are near Nuniaq (*Old Harbor*).

Places that Have -Saq, -Saaq, or -Yaq Endings

While documenting Kodiak Archipelago's Indigenous place names, I observed there are quite a few examples of place names that end in -saq, -saaq, or -yaq. In an unfinished postbase database, Leer (2011) shows that those three endings all have the same translation from Alutiit'stun/Sugt'stun: to have ~it, or to have specific characteristics of something.⁴¹ However, it appears Leer's translation of these

⁴¹ Jeff Leer, "SU972L2011: Alutiiq Dictionary Lexical Database Files, postbases." Alaska Native Language Archive.

endings falls short. The endings might also mean ‘to be located at [noun],’ or ‘to be in the vicinity of [noun].’ Such a translation is demonstrated by the places ‘Uyaqsaq’ (*Larsen Bay*) and Quluryaq (*Terror Bay*).

Alutiiq Name	English Name	Translation
Cingiyaq	<i>Various, including Chiniak, Cape Kostromitinof, others</i>	‘Point;’ <i>lit.</i> ‘has phallic characteristics’
Uyaqsaq ^{JL}	Larsen Bay	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘At Uyaq (Uyak Bay)’
Pasersaq ^{JL}	Pasagshak	‘Has characteristics of being smashed’
Alimarsaq ^{LY}	Port Otto	‘Where the dog salmon run;’ ‘has dog salmon’
Ingisaaq ^{JL}	Herring Lagoon	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘at the mountain’ <i>or</i> ‘mountainous place’
Kangiyaq	<i>Various, including Kaguyak, Ugak Bay, others</i>	‘Bay;’ <i>lit.</i> ‘has a source’ <i>or</i> ‘has a head (of bay, cave, etc.)’
Tuuwarsaq ^{JL}	Shuyak Strait	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘place that will take you away’
Angusaaq ^{LM}	Little Narrows	‘Catching the tide;’ <i>or</i> ‘has the characteristics of overtaking’
Nasqusaaq ^{LM}	Twin Peaks	‘Has characteristics of a head’
Qungyaqsaq ^{LM}	Diamond Lake	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘has a jealous one’
Sagiyaq ^{AP/DS}	--	‘Has halibut’

Agasaak ^{JL}	East Point	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘two that have characteristics of a handle’
Kangsaak ^{JL}	--	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘two that seem like a head of a bay’
Quluryaq ^{JL}	Terror Bay	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘at/near Quluq (Cape Kuliuk)’

Table 5 Place names that end in -saq, -saaq, or -yaq

Describing places by what the place has or what landmarks are close by is yet another common way that Alutiiq people named places. Among all of these methods of naming places, there is clearly overlap. Indeed, naming places was a multifaceted process involving multiple variables: geographic type, physical characteristics, and historical significance to name a few. In fact, taking some of those variables into consideration, this method of naming places has been used to bring back Alutiiq names to places around the Archipelago in a semi-official respect: through the naming of archaeological sites.

Alutiiq Names and Archaeological Sites

While there are no efforts to officially change the names of places around the Kodiak Archipelago to their original Indigenous names, my colleague and I have taken steps to attribute Alutiiq names to archaeological sites. Patrick Saltonstall, the Curator of Archaeology at the Alutiiq Museum, like any archaeologist, provides names and descriptions of sites located on archaeological surveys to the Alaska Historic Resources Survey (AHRS). Even before my involvement, Saltonstall

described the archaeological sites he discovered using the Alutiiq language. More recently, Saltonstall also worked with myself and our Alutiiq-speaking Elders to create even more accurate Alutiiq descriptions of sites in a manner mirroring how places might have been named by ancestral Alutiiq people. Additionally, wherever possible and accurate, we provide the same name to an archaeological site that Alutiiq people attribute(d) to that place. Types of descriptions provided to sites include: physical characteristics (e.g., Penartuliq—*Has an Abundance of Cliffs*), proximity to other distinguishing features (e.g., Caugaa Qikertaq—*Faces Kodiak Island*), how the site was used (e.g., Puyurwik—*Smokehouse*), and the resources it provides (e.g., Wiinarsurwik—*Place to Hunt Sea Lion*). While it does not necessarily contribute to the community-wide education of Alutiiq place names, this approach does contribute to the academic dialogue among archaeologists and researchers who are curious about archaeological sites in Kodiak. This furthers Indigenous place name recognition. Moreover, the attribution of Indigenous names to archaeological sites may provide a model for other archaeologists to implement similar practices in other communities.

Analysis of Elder Interviews

It is imperative to document all of this information while there are first-language fluent speakers who may share their knowledge. There are six Alutiiq Elders I work with on a weekly to bi-weekly basis; five of them are fluent Alutiiq speakers. I interviewed those five speakers about Alutiiq place names. Two are from

Karluk, two from Akhiok, and one from Kaguyak. I am fortunate to have been able to work with these people given that there are only 30 fluent speakers spread across Kodiak Island’s seven communities, Anchorage, and Washington state. I documented five additional place names (Table 6) as a result of these interviews.

Alutiiq Name	English Name	Translation	Source
Nanwarnaq	Kaguyak Lagoon	Lagoon	Sally Carlough
Agisaq	--	Lookout place	Sally Carlough
Qaguyaq	Old Kaguyak	??	Sally Carlough
Itik’guaq	--	??	Florence Pestrikoff, Nick Alokli
Egkuq	--	??	Nick Alokli

Table 6 Newly documented place names

In addition to documenting new place names, interviewing Elders was an opportunity to show that place names previously documented are still recognized by these Elders. The Elders identified 48 place names in addition to the five which were newly documented. On top of providing new place names and affirming those previously documented, the Elders provided invaluable information about how places were used.

Knowledge around Indigenous land stewardship extends far beyond how people named places; it also includes the practical ways they use the land. For example, Sophie Shepherd from Karluk and Larsen Bay shared that the island Sisaq was used as a place to make dry fish, while the head of *Karluk Lagoon* was

used for salmon fishing. Additionally, Sally Carlough from *Kaguyak* provides that at *Kaguyak Lagoon*, the people would hunt for ducks on one side of the lagoon and pick crowberries on the opposite side, while they would gather clams at the eastern side of the *Kaguyak Bay*. Nick Alokli from Akhiok talked about his dad's camp at the head of *Sulua Bay*, where they would trap for fox. There are other stories about places that are important as well, like stories about events that happened at a place. For instance, in an interview conducted by Jeff Leer, John Pestrikoff from Afognak tells a story about a man who drowned at Ek'arsuumarwik at the southern end of Suyaraq (*Shuyak Island*):

The tide runs strong; you have to wait until the tide slacking, and it takes a short while. You have to catch it when slack (sic.) to go through it...the weather came. I guess it was sea otter time, or hunting time, and he bragged; some people brag what they can do, heroes, you know...he went out there on that baidarka – skin boat – that's all they had. And all through the--to that narrows. And there, the tide ran so strong that it formed a whirlpool. He got caught in that and got sucked, and never come out. So, he got lost.⁴²

Ek'arsuumarwik translates to 'a place to fall into.' While Pestrikoff does not explicitly state this in the recording, it is likely that the place is called that way because of the legend of the man who fell into the whirlpool and drowned. This

⁴² John Pestrikoff, "ANLC 6233: [Gordon Pullar Interviews, the Legend of Tutga'urluq and the Cannibals], Side B. Alaska Native Language Archive

place was also reported by Alphonse Pinart, though he writes it as ‘*Kakhshumaut*,’ and is reported at the north end of Suyaraq instead of the southern side.⁴³ Despite the inconsistencies with location reporting, this exhibits consistent usage of place names in the Ag’waneq (*Afognak Island*) area.

Places Named in English by Indigenous People

Much of the focus of my research has been Alutiiq place names by Alutiiq people. However, there are a few cases around the Archipelago whose English names also come from Indigenous people.

Alutiiq Name	English Name	Translation
Sumnalek ^{PG/DG/FC}	Walter’s Creek	‘Has a <i>sumnaq</i> ’
Saglaq ^{LM}	Matrona’s Creek	??
Ingisaaq ^{JL}	Herring Lagoon	<i>Sounds like</i> ‘at the mountain’ <i>or</i> ‘mountainous place’
Qalltulaq ^{PG/DG/FC}	Seven Rivers	<i>Sounds like</i> repeatedly boiling

Table 7 Places named by Alutiit with English names

⁴³ Alphonse Pinart, translated by Lydia Black. “Trip Around Afognak and Shouiak, from March 24th, [1872] to April 10th [1872].” 20

In each case, I saw no record of the English names being used as ‘official’ names for places. Seven Rivers, though, is used as a designation for a salmon management section on Kodiak Island by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Still, the name Seven Rivers does not officially refer to a specific river as it does locally. The English names do seem to be widely known among Alutiiq people who live in the general vicinity of these places but are not universally known. Walter’s Creek and Matrona’s Creek are also two of only five places that are named after Alutiiq individuals around the Kodiak Archipelago.

Places Named for Individuals

Yarborough found there are no places in the Archipelago named for individual people, a stark contrast to how places are named in English across the United States (e.g., Mt. McKinley, Shelikof Strait, Jamestown, etc.).⁴⁴ However, I found that there are at least five examples of places that are named after people. In each case, they are named for the person who used the area for hunting and/or fishing purposes. In the table below, the personal names are in boldface.

Alutiiq Name	English Name	Translation
Apaamam Nanwarnaa ^{JL}	Portage Lagoon	Gregory Yakanak’s Lagoon
Miinaam Qutii ^{JL}	--	Miinaq’s Beach

⁴⁴ Yarborough, *ibid.*, 5.

Siilam Tangaa ^{JL}	--	Siilaq's Water
Sumnalek ^{PG/DG/FC}	Walter's Creek	Has a <i>sumnaq</i>
Saglaq ^{LM}	Matrona's Creek	??

Table 8 Places named for individuals

While this naming practice does seem to exist, it is possible that it was not a common practice until after Western contact in the region. There are few cases of places named for individuals, and even fewer where those places are named *in* Alutiit'stun. Overall, I concur with Yarborough that using personal names in toponymy is an infrequent method among the Alutiit.

Conclusion

Conducting research on Kodiak Alutiiq place names involved many steps. One of the most significant of these steps was analyzing the work of recent academic researchers and historic explorers, including the research conducted by Leer between the 1970s and early 2000s, Yarborough in the 1970s, Pinart in 1871 and 1872, Lisiansky in 1805, and other historic maps and accounts. Leer compiled a fair amount of the historic information in spreadsheets made available on the Alaska Native Language Archive's website. I also worked with five Alutiit'stun fluent speakers, and plan to continue to meet with more as I have the opportunity to communicate with them. I compiled all of the information I gathered and documented it on a digital map using ArcGIS software. Overall, in conjunction with previous researchers, I compiled 289 place names from around the Kodiak Archipelago. The Qik'rtarmiut Regional Language Advisory Committee approved these names that came from Alutiiq Elders and our recent Ancestors. Furthermore, they deferred to my judgement on whether or not to include place names from foreign explorers on the map. I decided to include the place names documented by foreign explorers, with the source information attached noting that it did not come directly from an Indigenous source.

The digital map containing the information I gathered is currently in draft form. The goal for the map is to include a place's Alutiiq name, English name, location, translation, and source as part of the metadata, and also include attached audio files to assist users with pronunciation and allow users to listen to stories

about the place. The text data is there (i.e., Alutiiq name, English name, location, translation, source, etc.), but I have not implemented the audio portion yet. This is in large part due to the fact that the version of ArcGIS that I have access to does not allow for audio integration. However, it is also partially because of the fact that a map with the ambitious goals I set requires much more work than I had time for. I have, however, begun the necessary steps to reach those goals in the near future.

Through the Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak's regional cultural center and repository, I will work on grants to continue developing the map after my Master's program is completed. This work fall squarely within the Alutiiq Museum's mission of preserving the Alutiiq culture in every facet. I am honored to be able to continue working with the Museum to make this information available to the Alutiiq community and beyond. Additionally, I started the work of compiling recordings that contain Elders saying Alutiiq place names and telling stories about them for future integration into the digital map. Finally, I have been communicating with Dr. Gary Holton, who leads the Alaska Native Place Names project, and he agreed to assist me in transferring my map from ArcGIS to the Nunaliit software, which allows audio integration and more accurate border representation.

The research I conducted was well-received by the community members that I worked with. I am glad I was able to meet with fluent Sugt'stun speakers, although I would have liked to meet with all of our fluent speakers to document their experiences with the land and their knowledge about places. There will, of course, be opportunities in the future to work with them and to add their knowledge

to the place names map; Indigenous knowledge and language documentation is work that is never complete. Indeed, I plan to continue developing this map. To increase engagement with Kodiak's Indigenous place names, I plan to share place names information with our community through social media posts via the Alutiiq Museum's social media pages. I will also seek out a forum to host a presentation on my research, likely through the Alutiiq Museum's fall lecture series.

Overall, preserving Indigenous place names is extremely vital to the Alaska Native community. Place names exhibit our cultural identity. Place names showcase an aspect of our worldview through our relationship with our environment—with our 'natural realm.' Using our place names also helps reestablish stewardship of Indigenous land and shows that the colonizing power does not have explicit rights to nomenclature. These places had a name well before any Western power attempted to rename them. Using our own names for them reclaims them as ours, which is incredibly important to reawakening the community's Indigenous identity. This information must be documented and shared while there are still first-language speakers of the language. As of this writing, there are roughly 30 speakers of Alutiit'stun. These are the goals I had in conducting this research: to preserve the Indigenous knowledge behind places before the holders of said knowledge pass on, to maintain and increase our Indigenous identity, and to reclaim the land as Indigenous inhabited.

Appendix

Place Names Researchers

In each of the tables, the researcher or ethnographer who gathered the data is credited in superscript. The key below shows who each of the respective researchers are:

JL = Jeff Leer

LY = Linda Yarborough

LM = Laurie Mulcahy

FM = Frederick Milan

AP = Alphonse Pinart

DO = Donald Orth

LB = Lydia Black

PG = Phyllis Gilbert

DG = Dennis Griffin

FC = Fred Clark

AM = Alutiiq Museum

DS = Dehrich Schmidt-Chya

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