

SUMMARY

EARLY HISTORY PORTLAND CANAL

Called by the Nisgaha

"KAHL-LAN"

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TSETSAUT HISTORY

The Forgotten Tribes of Southern Southeast Alaska

Portland Canal Early History
(Misty Fjord National Monument)

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Adawaks by Portland Tsetsauts who became Nishgas at Kincolith, B.C.

Chief Quia - Levi Dangeli the last Chief of this once powerful tribe.
Atloo - Jane Dangeli
Naxhadyii - Mathias Dangeli
Kaa'klo'o - Timothy Dangeli
Khoukl Quih - Eve Dangeli the eldest person to join Kincolith Church.
Shikaze - Noah Dangeli

Some of these Tsetsaut stories were documented by Franz Boas 1894 at Kincolith. Others were handed down through oral history.

Nishga adawaks:

Chief Mountain - Alfred Mountain
Chief Axhlawals - Charles Barton

These Nisgha stories were also documented by Marius Barbeau, 1927.

These "adawaks" or stories were passed on down orally to the Nisghas and Portland Canal Tsetsaut decedents. Hopefully to better understand our ancient histories and to better understand who we are.

These stories were taken down during Marius Barbeaus visit to the Nass in 1927. Chief Barton, a superb interpreter, translated the Nisgha language as Chief Mountain told of this great adawak of his ancestors, and grand uncles, journey from the far north (Alaska), looking for Lisims (Nass River) and of their strong encounter with the Portland Canal Tsetsauts. And lived in Portland Canal before discovering Lisims.

These stories truly are owned by the descendent of the Portland Canal Tsetsauts and Nisghas.

To better understand the meaning of the Tsetsaut tribes, "Tsetsaut" means Interior People. The Nisgha Gitsans and the Coast Tsimshians called these people "Tsetsaut".

They were not one tribe of Peoples, but several, who had different languages. Some different cultures. They were nomadic Indians. The same as the Sekanies. They were not the Babines and Carriers. These Interior Tribes made war on one another also the Gitsans and Nishgas in ancient times.

The most aggressive tribe was called the Lak-wi-yip (on the Prairie People). These people were from the Iskoot River area. Extinct Now?

Another tribe of Stickeen, now called Taltans, these people were from the Telegraph Creek area. In ancient times these people attempted to reach the Pacific Coast and lower parts of the major larger rivers. But were stopped by tribes already living on the coast and rivers. Rivers such as the Nass, Skeena, and Stickeen.

Only one tribe made it to the salt water tidal waters. When they came out at the head of what is now called Portland Canal at the present towns of Hyder, Alaska and Stewart, B.C. Their adawaks or oral history of this era was before the Great Deluge or the Flood of the World.

They did not drift away during the Flood after the World returned to normal. They established villages all the way down to present day Tongass Island. This area provided well for their needs, subsistence, economy, thus they became Beach Dwellers like the other tribes on the coast, but retained their ancient habits as nomadic hunters far inland, but always coming back to the salt tidal waters such as Tombstone Bay and River Point, also Salmon River.

Later they will discover East Behm Canal. Just a few miles south of the present day Ketchikan, Alaska. This was Tlingit country, but will co-exist with the Tlingits. Establishing villages in Foggy Bay, Boca DeQuadra, Chickamin, and Unuk Rivers. According to Chief Levi Dangeli's oral history, his people spent more time in East Behm Canal in ancient times among the Tlingits. Later they will make Portland Canal at Tombstone their headquarters.

While the Portland Tsetsauts were living at "Gunaknat" at the mouth of Salmon River (Hyder, Alaska now). Several large canoes full of people came. These people were friendly. They became fast friends and allies. These new People were of the Eagle Clan, their Chief was Saga-waen, Mountain. The Eagle Clan was looking for the Great River "Lisims", the Nass River. Before finding this great river they lived along-side the Portland Canal Tsetsauts helping one another. This lasted a generation. Later this Eagle Clan will discover Lisims.

These ancestors of Saga-waen will establish their first village up the Nass River which they will call Lahk-Luuks meaning "Salmon Bundles" which they received from the People already living on the Nass. Generations later these people will completely adopt the ways of the Nisghas. They used to be Tlingits.

These Nisghas will establish subsistence camps at Hidden Inlet, Sandfly Bay, Halibut Bay, present day Alaska. They also utilized the east side present day Canada. The main one at present day Hyder, Alaska and Stewart B.C. Also, Oodzie (Fords Cove?), Lahk-as-sae (Hattie Island), Sqooma-get (Bell Bay).

The Portland Canal Tsetsauts use to utilized as far down as Tongass Island in Ancient times. Until some Tlingit Clans from Southeast Alaska area had to find new subsistence settlements due to over population, and misunderstanding among the Clans. They settled on Duke and Tongass Islands and Nokat Inlet. Due to these new numerous people at Tongass, the Portland Canal Tsetsaut returned to Tombstone Bay, River Point, Soule River, and Salmon River. Generations later, these Portland Canal Tsetsauts will almost be wiped out by the white fur trader sickness, mainly small-pox which killed hundreds of them. Not only them but other coast Tribes. Later the warfare with the Tlingits of the Ketchikan area really reduced their numbers at East Behm Canal. These Tlingits will not pursue them up Portland Canal due to their strong alliance with the Nisghas. The "Tsetsaut Lahk-wi-yip" attempted to wipe them out and take over their territory at upper Portland Canal. They will not be driven out, as they held on to their territory. This final battle was at present day Stewart, B.C. There were heavy losses on both sides. These Lahk-wi-yip will attempt to conquer Chief Mountain and his People out of Bear River area. This final battle with the Lahk-wi-yip will be at present day Bear Glacier. The Nisghas will completely conquer the the Lahk-wi-yip, driving them out of Bear Valley and Medziadin Lake area. After this battle this area, especially the Medziadin Lake will be owned by the Nisghas.

Later, in Oral History, the Portland Canal Tsetsauts reduced in numbers to about thirty, due to sickness, warfare with the (Behm Canal Tlingits), the (Lahk-wi-yip Tsetsauts), will join the Kincolith Mission and be absorbed into the Nisgha culture and become Nisghas. Later, Chief Mountain, Chief Gitakawn; Arthur E. Nelson, Chief Ak-had-hawk; Peter-

Stewart, and Chief Herbert J. Burton; these four men are Chiefs of the "Lahk Luuks" of the Eagle Clan of the Nisgha tribe. Filed a petition for the Alaska Land Settlement Act for some reason were not included in this settlement. I am including the documents from the U.S. Forest Service with this summary on these documents, they never mentioned the Portland Canal Tsetsauts, they called them "Stick Indians" which was an oversight, yet they were truly the original occupants of Portland Canal. These documents are self explanatory of what happened.

From the oral history "adawaks" by the Portland Canal Tsetsauts, Nisghas, Tlingits I have gathered. The Tombstone Tsetsauts, Nisghas are truly the aboriginal and land users of Portland Canal. This whole area used by these people is now called "Misty Fjord National Monuments" controlled by the U.S. Government. No new mining or other industries allowed. You can hunt, fish, trap or use it for subsistence. There is one mine which was claimed before it was made a monument called Borax Mine. Similar to Amax, I know the Nisghas understand the meaning of this mine.

I hope the Nisghas will look into the matter why they were excluded from the Land Settlement or whoever has the right to do so.

I have included also the documents given to Chief Mountain, stating that his people not to be disturbed on the West Bank of Portland Canal. Meaning Alaska side. These documents are in the Archives in the U.S. Capital, Washington D.C. where they keep treaties.

I have read stories or have heard that the Nisghas claim Portland Canal, as compensation for battles and killings of Nisghas by the Tsetsauts. This is true in the Bear Valley and Medziadin area. Because of their conquering of the Lahk-wi-yip Tsetsauts and other tribes.

I, myself, think strongly after hearing and reading about the adawaks, of Chief Mountain and the Tombstone Bay Tsetsauts of their early history and do not claim Portland Canal as compensation. They were the aboriginal settlers in Portland Canal since times unknown and by this aboriginal land use are entitled to Portland Canal. The following is law:

That on May 17, 1884 Congress of the United States passed a law stating that the lands which the Native of Alaska then used, occupied, or claimed should forever be reserved for their use, and promising that these lands would be surveyed and that at some future date Congress would provide a way for the Natives to receive paper title to their land. They have never given up their rights in these lands that they never ceded, abandoned or sold the lands. That no survey has been made to the lands, nor any action been taken to protect the rights of the Natives in their lands except the Act of May 1, 1936 giving the Secretary of the Interior the power to create a reservation of use "et cetera" etc..