

Might there not be some analogy between this case and that of the would-be Atnas? It is true that Dall informs us that he was present in 1874 at their "annual trade" at Port Etches. But the very fact that the trading occurred only once a year would seem to indicate that the Indians he saw had come from quite a distance. When it is a question of getting some beaver skins worth more abroad than at home, a few hundred miles are not much in the way of our northern wanderers. A band of Nahanaïs meets me pretty regularly after having come all the way from Thaïthan, a place three degrees of latitude to the north of the village where they rendez-vous. A sept of the Carriers annually trade on Gardner's Inlet, after having traversed important lakes, ascended swift rivers and crossed the Coast Range of mountains.

Dall spells the tribal name under discussion Ahtena, while he calls Atna the river on which he places the habitat of those people. The difference between the two spellings is, I think, more artificial than real. To the ear the two words remain pretty nearly the same.

Might he not mean Ah'tena, the apostrophe denoting the all-important click generally present in the desinential syllables of Déné tribal or subtribal names*? He would then have a genuine Déné word which, with an initial hiatus, would mean "Fern-people" in Carrier. Yet I hardly think this to be the proper etymology of the term. According to Petitot, fern is said *tsi-tei* (stone-plant or, more literally, stone-stick) in Loucheux or Dindjié, and if the would-be Ahtenas be Déné, they must belong to that most northwestern of all the Déné tribes or be closely allied thereto†.

But I must be allowed to record again my conviction that if they are Déné, they are neither Atna, nor Atnah or Ahtena, taking the last word as it is spelled by Dall.

* As in the Tsiikhoh'tin-T'poe-khoh-t'inni, the Carrier "Naz-khoh-tenne", the Sekanaïs "Na'kraztli-t'qinne", etc.

† It is by no means improbable that further investigation will ultimately prove the kernel of the whole question to be a simple point of orthography, though not on the lines suggested by Mr. Wardle.