

Quite possible, I will say; but this cannot take away from me the conviction that if that tribe be Déné, it is not Atna, even though it may frequent a stream dubbed Atna or Copper river.

In this connection, I might be allowed to ask: Who calls that river by the former name? It cannot be the Dénés, for while Déné tribes often derive their names from streams, they never call them after a tribal designation. Moreover, river names in Déné have always the desinence in *khoh*, *khah*, *khwah*; *des*, *desse*, *die*; *niline*, *nillen*, or *ondjig*, according to the dialect, unless some of those roots (such as *des*, for instance) be incorporated therein or prefixed thereto, which is exceedingly rare. On the other hand, heterogeneous tribes could not well give it that name, if Dall and Powell be right in asserting that there are none but Dénés all along the Copper river even to its very mouth. Again would it not be passing marvelous for a non-Déné tribe to use that identical term in exactly the same sense as the Déné?

The whites, traders and others, are no doubt responsible for that name, if it be used at all in connection with that stream. The following personal reminiscences will perhaps help ethnologists to accurately gauge the degree of importance one ought to grant such uncritical authorities.

Some twenty years ago, I lived for some time in close contact with natives from the north of British Columbia, whom everybody called Stickines, the language of whom I could see even then was as unlike any Déné dialect as one could imagine. Three or four years later, I met in a Quesnel (B. C.) store representatives of a northern tribe who were called Stickines by the pack-train men who had brought them down. What was my surprise at recognizing in their idiom the majority of the roots of the Tsi'khoh'tin, the Déné dialect I was then the most familiar with! To my questions they answered without hesitation that they were Stickines.

How to clear up the mystery? Nothing more easy. The latter band was simply made up of Nah'ane coming from the upper Stickine river, and they called themselves before me by the name they knew the whites applied to them, while the Stickines I had consorted with in former years were Tlingets, whose habitat was on the lower part of the same river.