

VOZNESENSKII 1842 WESTERN HALF OF THE KENAI PENINSULA

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To Professor Andrei Kibrik whose work on the Upper Kuskokwim Dene language and on Alaskan Russian is very much appreciated.

This paper was inspired by a map of the western half of the Kenai Peninsula included in a geological treatise originally published in German by Constantin Grewingk in 1850 (Grewingk 2003: 21). The map, credited as “after Wosnessensky,” is remarkable in that it includes both Russian and recognizably Dena’ina place names. The challenge has been to match those names with Dena’ina toponyms elicited from Dena’ina speakers or transliterated from numerous written sources by James Kari over the past 50 years (see Kari 2019).

Wosnessensky refers to Il’ia Gavrilovich Voznesenskii (1816–1871), an assistant preparator for the Zoological Museum, Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences. In August 1839 the Academy dispatched him on an expedition to collect natural history and ethnological specimens throughout Russia’s North American possessions. Arriving in Novo-Arkhangel’sk (Sitka, Alaska) eight months later, Voznesenskii spent the next five years (1840–1845) documenting the natural and human environments in the vicinities of Ross in California and the various Russian settlements and outposts in Alaska. His voluminous notes, drawings, correspondence, and collections are still studied today (Alekseev 1987, Korsun 2013).

Voznesenskii’s time on the Kenai Peninsula was limited to two months in 1842, mid July to mid September by the old calendar, late July to late September by today’s reckoning. Based out of Nikolaevskii redoubt (present-day Kenai), his travels extended from Cape “Mikeshin” (East Foreland) to Kachemak Bay, inland to the Kenai Mountains and Tustumena Lake, out to Kalgin Island in Cook Inlet, and possibly across the inlet to Kustatan (Alekseev 1987: 32–33; Korsun 2013: 240–241).

Though Voznesenskii is reputed to have been fluent in German (Korsun 2013: 239), samples of his notes viewed on microfilm and a published example of one of his sketch maps (Alekseev 1987: 27) are all written in Russian Cyrillic script. From this we conclude that the sketch map and notes constituting the basis for the German map were also in Cyrillic script, and that the spelling of names on the German

map (Figure 1) are German transliterations of the Cyrillic. To reduce phonetic confusion, Arndt has attempted a reverse transliteration (German back to Russian Cyrillic) in the accompanying table (Table 1). Lacking access to the original material, in many cases it was possible to make only a best guess. In the table these are marked as “presumed R sp.”

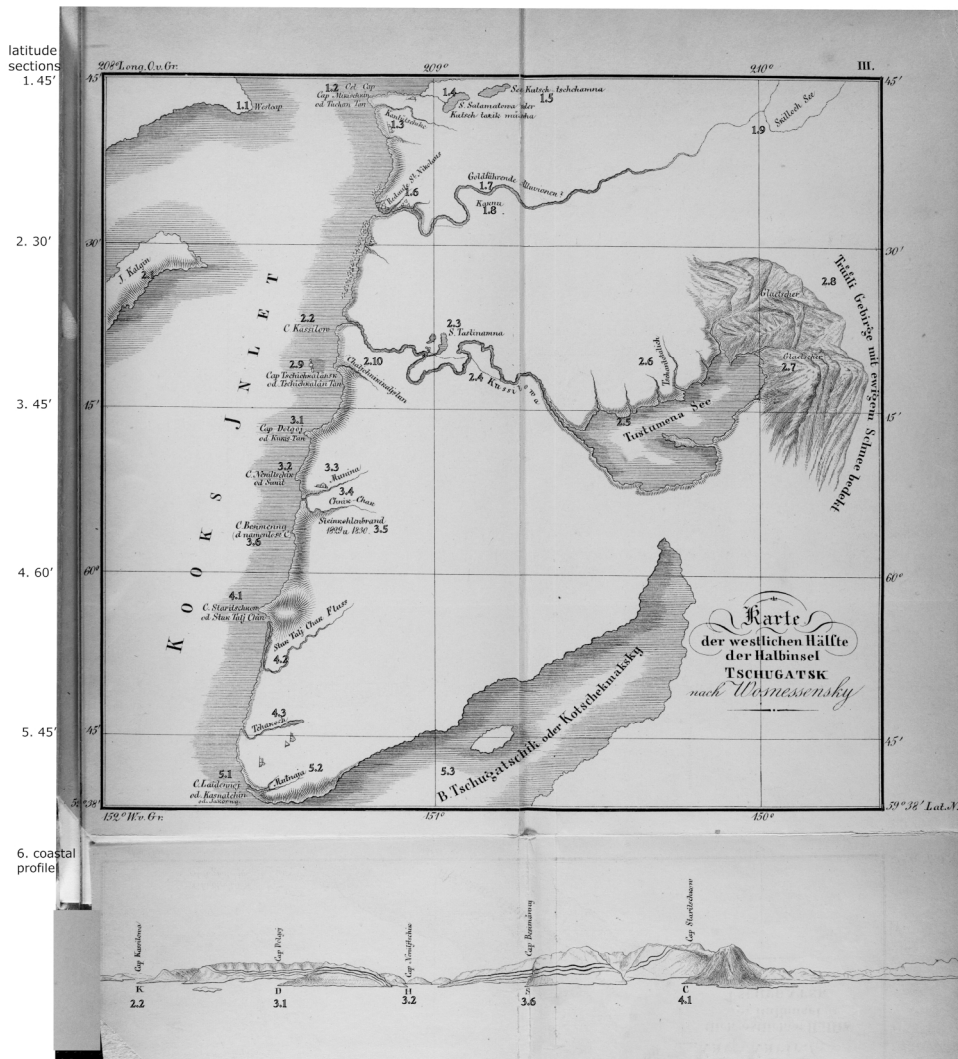


Figure 1. Voznesenskii 1842 map (Rasmuson Library Rare Books A0488). Reference numbers added by Kari.

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Dena'ina writer Peter Kalifornsky (1911–1993) was the source of most of the Kenai Peninsula Dena'ina names presented in the table. Most Voznesenskii map names were first published in Kalifornsky 1977: 125–137. (PK+page number on the table refers to pages in Kalifornsky 1991). Alexander Wilson (1910–1971) was a strong Outer Inlet speaker from the Soldotna area. In his last five years Wilson was writing about Dena'ina place names and land use. His papers with several hundred Dena'ina words are cataloged at the Alaska Native Language Archive; in the table they are simply cited as AW.

Table 1. Place names on 1842 Voznesenskii map, with current names and traditional Dena'ina equivalents

map no.	GNIS, official or local name	local Russian	Dena'ina names	literal translation	PK1991, others
1.1	Kustatan	“Westcap” Kustan (Voznesenskii 1842)	Qezdeghnen	‘peninsula land’	Korsun 2013:240
1.2	East Foreland Nikishka, Nikiski	“Ost Cap” “C. Mikischkin” or “Tuchan Tan” presumed R sp М. Ми- кишкин or Тухан Тан	Dnigiski [Tughen t'an?]	‘little moose place’ ?’by water people’	Rus-Den blend, JK AW
1.3	likely outlet stream of Salamatov Lake	“Kantütschike” presumed R sp Кантычике	Qantushchigi	‘ochre by water’ or ‘yellow mud’	PK334
1.4	likely Bernice Lake	“S. Salamatowa” or “Kutsch Tazik Mütscha” R sp О. Саламатова presumed R sp Куч Тацик Мыча	1 Ken Dech'etl' Bena 2 Nundazk'et'a Bena	‘scrub timber lake’ ‘lines extend down lake’	AW PK343
1.5	likely Island Lake	“See Kutschtschamna” presumed R sp Озеро Куч-чхамна	Keshch'a Bena	‘down feathers lake’	PK344
1.6	Old Kenai [& two streams]	“Redaute St. Nikolaus” R sp Редут Св. Николай	Shqitsatnu Shk'ituk'tnu	‘sloping flat rock stream’ ‘we slide down stream’	PK347
1.7	comment on local geology	<i>Goldführende Alluvionen</i>		‘goldbearing alluviums’	

map no.	GNIS, official or local name	local Russian	Dena'ina names	literal translation	PK1991, others
1.8	Kenai River	“Kaknu” R sp Какну	Kahtnu	‘river mouth river’	PK347
1.9	Skilak Lake	“Skilloch See” presumed R sp Скил- лох Озеро	Sqilan Bena Q'es Dudilen Bena	‘ridge is there lake’ ‘flows into outlet lake’	Kenai L. cf. Skilak L. PK349
2.1	Kalgin Island	“J. Kalgin” R sp Ост. Калгин	Qelghin	‘greasy’	PK 1977:137
2.2	Cape Kasilof Kasilof site (S of spit)	“C. Kassilow” R sp М. Касилов	Ggasilat	Early Aleut- Den. blend	PK345
2.3	lake N side, Pollard Lake	“S. Taslinamna” presumed R sp Оз. Тазлинамна	Tasdlen Bena	‘current lake’	PK345
2.4	Kasilof River	“Kussilowa” R sp Касилова	Ggasilatnu	Early Aleut- Den blend	PK346
2.5	Tustumena Lake	“Tustumena See” presumed R sp Озеро Тустумена	Dusdubena	‘downstream point lake’	PK346
2.6	Shantatalik Creek	“Tschantatalich” presumed R sp Чанта- талих	Shanteh K'eteleht	‘summer fish run starts place’	PK346
2.7	Tustumena Glacier	<i>Glaetscher</i>	Dusdubena Li'a		PK346
2.8	Truuli Peak, ice fields	“Trüüli” presumed R sp Трүүли	dghili or Yaghenen Dghil'u	‘mountain(s)’ ‘good land mountains’	PK347
2.9	Cape S of Cape Kasilof	“Cap Tschichkalänsk” or “Tschichkalän Tan” presumed R sp Мыс Чихкаленск or Чихка- лен Тан	Chix Qilant (t'an)	‘where-there- is-ochre (people)’	PK342
2.10	Clam Gulch stream	“Chal'jchnikikal'slun” presumed R sp Хальхникикальслун	Qalnigi Ka'a Qilantnu	‘big-rocks- are-there stream’	PK342

map no.	GNIS, official or local name	local Russian	Dena'ina names	literal translation	PK1991, others
3.1	Den. village site S of "Humpies Point" (AW)	"Cap Dolgoj" or "Kukis Tan" R sp Мыс Долгой Presumed R sp Кукис Тан	[Qeghek'istunt] "Carr-kees-tunt" "people were called Ca-tan-a"	R 'long point' D 'by it long object'	AW PK1991 n.k.
3.2	Cape Ninilchik Ninichik River	"C. Neniltschik" or "Sunit" R sp М. Ненилчик presumed R sp Сунит	Niqnalchint	'lodge is built place' or 'upriver orifice'	PK341 Sunit n.k. by PK
3.3	house on Ninilchik River	"Munina" R sp Мунина	possessive form of R surname Munin <i>and</i> PK: Hbunen'a	'Munin's [place]' <i>and</i> 'their land'	PK341
3.4	Deep Creek	"Chnik-Chak" presumed R sp Хник-Хак	Hnikaq'tnu	'embedded mouth stream'	PK341
3.5	comment on historical event	<i>Steinkohlenbrand 1829 u. 1830</i>		'coal fire 1829 and 1830'	
3.6	Cape S of Ninilchik, possibly lake bed	"C. Besimenny (d. namenlose C.)" R sp. М. Безымен-ный	Besi Bena	'nameless cape' <i>and</i> 'horned owl lake'	PK341
4.1	Cape Starikoff	"C. Staritschkow" or "Stuk Talj Chin" R sp. М. Старичков presumed R sp Штук Таль Хин	Shtuhtałent	R 'little old man' D 'where current flows out'	PK341
4.2	Stariski Creek	"Stuk Talj Chak Fluss" presumed R sp Река Штук Таль Хак	Shtuhtałentnu	'current flows out stream'	PK341
4.3	Chakok Creek, 2 nd creek N on Anchor River	"Tchakoch" presumed R sp Чакох	Ch'akaq'tnu	'from out mouth'	PK341

map no.	GNIS, official or local name	local Russian	Dena'ina names	literal translation	PK1991, others
5.1	3 distinct features: Laida Slough Den n.k. Anchor Point	“C. Laidennoj” or “Kasnatchin” or “Jakornu” R sp. М. Лайденной presumed R sp Казначин R sp Якорный	Layda (site) Kasnatchin n.k. by any Den speakers	R ‘intertidal slough’ n.k. R ‘anchor’	PK341
5.2	Mutnaia Gulch	“Mutnaja” R sp Мутная		R ‘muddy, turbid’	Orth 1967: 667, citing Voznesens- skii
5.3	Kachemak Bay	“B. Tschugatschik” or “Kotschekmaksy” R sp Зал. Чугачик presumed R sp Кочек- макский	PK’s pronunciation Kachakmak		

Notes for table

1.2. Mikishkin not recognizably Russian, no locally used name sounding like it is known. Orth (1967: 296) cites it as a variant name under the entry for East Foreland. Orth (1967: 888) notes that Petroff, on his 1880 map, was first to record the name Nikishka, also locally Nikiski. Kari thinks Voznesenskii misheard M for N. It seems that by the 1840s the local Dena'ina name **Dnigisgi** was a Dena'ina-Russian blend meaning ‘little moose,’ being the source of Nikishka or Nikiski.

1.3. **Qantushchigi** likely stream at Salamatov; note structure N of stream.

1.4. *Scenario 1*: if modern Salamatoff Lake corresponds to Voznesenskii map; *scenario 2*: if not, then two lakes shown north of East Foreland could be Bernice Lake near **Tuqeyankdat** site. Structure noted just below mouth of Bernice Lake outlet.

1.6. First stream likely **Shqitsatnu** N of St. Nicholas; second stream at **Shk'i-tukt** site with 3 triangles indicating structures. Note unnamed stream S of Kenai River with a structure, possibly chapel site on Kalifornsky Beach Road, near **Hdnadlent** ‘slanted place.’

2.2. and 2.4 A. M. Berge (Kari 2022: 23): Early Aleut, “Aleut *qasi-lix* ‘to be fishing, to fish for supply, to store fish.’ This etymology is plausible, as the Kasilof River is a major fishing site; the closest Yup’ik word, *kassighuq*, means ‘confluence of rivers.’” This blend between Early Aleut and Dena'ina **tnu** implies overlapping territories in the distant past.

2.3. Note structures or cache pits on N bank of river below Pollard Lake outlet. Trail noted, area called **K'isna Ch'adel** 'where the women come out.'

2.5. Relief at Tustamena Lake is highly accurate, shows Caribou Island.

2.6. Lower Shantatalik Creek is likely where Voznesenskii collected shaman doll (Korsun 2013:249).

2.7. PK learned of the Tustamena lake area from Old Man Nikanorga. Indian Creek **Litsaltnu** was the center of Dena'ina activity in the 19th century.

2.8. Close version of Dena'ina **dghili**, generic mountains.

2.9. German descriptive phrase following place name "Gebirge mit ewigem Schnee bedekt" translates as 'mountains covered with eternal snow'.

3.1. Bluff 8–10 mi. N of Ninilchik. Sharp point on Voznesenskii's coastal profile, perhaps eroded away since 1840s. A. Wilson 1967: 11 "Humpy Point or Carra-kees-tunt, the people were called Ca-tsn-a. This village was wiped out during an epidemic during the 1800s. Most of the men folks...were on a hunting trip further south... Three children survived who walked the beach towards Kasilof." The Name **Qeghk'istun** supplied by AW implies a linear bluff.

3.3. Important name, ("Munina") punning on Rus. Moonen or PK's **Hbunena**, implying Dena'ina-Ninilchik Creole bilingualism. This may refer to Efim Munin, short-term occupant of the first Russian house built at Ninilchik (Arndt 1996: 242–243).

3.5. German 'coal fire.' Refers to location of a fire in a bituminous coal seam that occurred in 1829–1830 (Grewingk 2003: 22).

3.6. Ambiguous and humorous double meanings. We have not yet discussed this lake name with the Ninilchik Traditional Council.

4.1. Stariski Creek names are important in that they show an established Russian-origin name and an accurately spelled Dena'ina name.

4.3. Note the lake and structure symbols on a north tributary of Anchor River; implies a Dena'ina village was on pond on lower Anchor River. No Dena'ina sites are known along lower Anchor River.

5.1. Osgood (1937: 13) lists this as the southernmost coastal village "Kas-natchin (Anchor Point)," using Voznesenskii's spelling. Kari asked numerous Den. speakers if they knew plausible names: Q'esnach'en, Qesnachin, Q'esnachen, but no one recognized such a name.

5.3. Peter Kalifornsky's usual pronunciation of "Kachemak" as **Kachakmak** has confirmation with the spelling on the Voznesenskii map. This may be an Early Aleut or a true substrate place name.

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