

## TATLAYOKO vs. TATLAKO

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I was curious about the name Tatlayoko vs. Tatlako, so I did a bit of research.

The first comprehensive map of British Columbia was produced under the authority of Joseph Trutch, and was published in 1871. This map uses the name "Ta tlah co Lake". A few years later, George Dawson surveyed the geology of the area. His report to the Geological Survey of Canada was published in 1878, and he used the name "Tatlayoco Lake".

At least four maps of BC were published during the 1880s, and these all used "Tatlahco Lake" or "Ta-tlah-co Lake". In the 1890s a few minor variations in spelling appear, such as Tatlahcoh, Tatlahco, and Tattacoh. Although most cartographers in this era used some variation of "Tatlahco", most publications on geological topics tended to use Dawson's spelling, and there were several mining companies registered with "Tatlayoco" in their name. It appears that Dawson introduced a new syllable for geologists and miners.

The Rand McNally maps published in 1889 and 1890 use "Tatlahco Lake". However, they changed it to "Tatlayoko Lake" for their 1895 map, which is the first occurrence I have found of this spelling. From 1895 onward, the Rand McNally maps always call it "Tatlayoko Lake", although maps from other sources continue to use some version of "Tatlahco Lake" until 1903. The last map that I have found that omits the extra syllable was published in 1903 by George Cram, and called it "Tatlahcoh Lake". There are a couple geological publications from 1905 that also use "Tatlahcoh Lake", which is the last occurrence of this name that I have found.

Although Rand McNally began to use "Tatlayoko" on their maps starting in 1895, this spelling doesn't seem to appear anywhere else until the 1910s. Variations of this name include Dawson's original "Tatlayoco", as well as "Tatlyako" and "Tatlayako". The "Tatlayako" spelling persists in some publications until 1920, and there is at least one occurrence of "Tatlayoco" as late as 1934.

The existence of many different spellings for a geographic location is not unusual for that era. Because of this, the Geographic Board of Canada was established in 1897 to standardize the spelling of place names in Canada. Unfortunately, they seem to have failed in this particular case. In the Eighth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada (for the year ending June 30, 1909), they decided that both "Tatlahco" and "Tatlayoo" referred to a river that was a tributary to the Bella Coola River, and that it should properly be called "Tatlayako River". This is obviously in error, and I have been unable to figure out where this idea came from. Unfortunately, it persists throughout their official reports.

The Geographic Board of Canada made their decision on the official name of "Tatlahco Lake" in 1911, and it was published in the Tenth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada. They were supposed to consider all the alternate spellings of a location, and determine the best spelling based on a set of rules. The name "Tatlahco" was not considered as an existing spelling for the lake, perhaps because they had already decided that it was an incorrect name for an entirely different body of water. They appear to only have been aware of Dawson's spelling of "Tatlayoco". According to their official rules for naming, a

hard “c” should be replaced with a “k”, so they decreed that the official name was “Tatlayoko”. They still maintained that “Tatlayako” was the official name for this mythical tributary to the Bella Coola River.

The Geographic Board of Canada’s decision in 1911 was obviously made in error. They had strict rules for determining the proper name of a geographic location. The relevant rules for this decision were:

4. As a rule the first published name should be retained.
6. It is desirable to avoid the use of hyphens to connect parts of Indian names.
17. The spelling of native geographical names should represent, approximately, the true sounds of the words as pronounced in the native tongue.
- 19.(b) Every letter is pronounced, and no redundant letters are introduced. The letter “k” should always be put for the hard “c”.

In this case, the name “Tatlahco” was both published first and is a better representation of the Tsilhqot’in name “Tahliqox”. Given that the name was pronounced “TA-tla-ko”, the extra “yo” should not have been introduced, as they represent unpronounced letters.

However, the Geographic Board of Canada would not have used the spelling “Tatlahco”. The unpronounced “h” would have to be removed, and the “c” changed to a “k”. So, they should have named it “Tatlako Lake”.

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#### REFERENCES USING DIFFERENT SPELLINGS OF TATLAKE:

##### TATLAKE (or TA-TLAKE-CO, or TA TLAKE CO)

Trutch, Joseph W. 1871. Map of British Columbia. London: Stanford’s Geographical Establishment. Available online at <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/singleitem/collection/collection5/id/150/rec/2>

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#### TATLAHCOH

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Reynolds, Francis J. 1920. British Columbia in "The New World Atlas and Gazetteer". New York: P.F. Collier and Son Company. Scale 1:8,236,800.

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A variety of mines spelled it this way:

Tatlayoco Gold Mines, Ltd.

Tatlayoco Lake Gold Mines, Ltd.

Tatlayoco Gold Mng. Co., Ltd.

Tatlayoco Lake Copper Co.

#### OFFICIAL DECISIONS OF THE GEOGRAPHIC BOARD OF CANADA

Eighth Report of the Geographic Board of Canada, for the year ending June 30, 1909. In: Sessional Papers, volume 12, second session of the eleventh parliament of the Dominion of Canada, session 1910. Available online at <http://www.archive.org/details/n12sessionalpaper44canauoft>.

On pg. 134:

Tatlahco. See Tatlayako.

Tatlayako; river, tributary to Bellakulla river. Coast district. B.C.

(Not Tatlahco nor Tatlayoo.)

Tatlayoo. See Tatlayako.

Tenth report of the Geographic Board of Canada, for the year ending June 30, 1911. In: Sessional Papers, Volume 15, first session of the twelfth parliament of the Dominion of Canada, session 1911-1912. Available online at <http://www.archive.org/details/n15sessionalpaper46canauoft>.

On pg. 178:

Tatlahco. See Tatlayako

Tatlayako; river, tributary to Bellakulla river. Coast district. B.C.

(Not Tatlahco nor Tatlayoo.)

Tatlayoko; lake, west of Chilko lake, Coast district, B.C. (Not Tatlayoco.)

Tatlayoo. See Tatlayako.

The official rules:

4. As a rule the first published name should be retained, but where a choice is offered between two or more names for the same place or locality, all sanctioned by local usage, that which is most appropriate and euphonious should be adopted.

6. It is desirable to avoid the use of hyphens to connect parts of Indian names.

17. The spelling of native geographical names should represent, approximately, the true sounds of the words as pronounced in the native tongue.

19. (b) Every letter is pronounced, and no redundant letters are introduced.

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