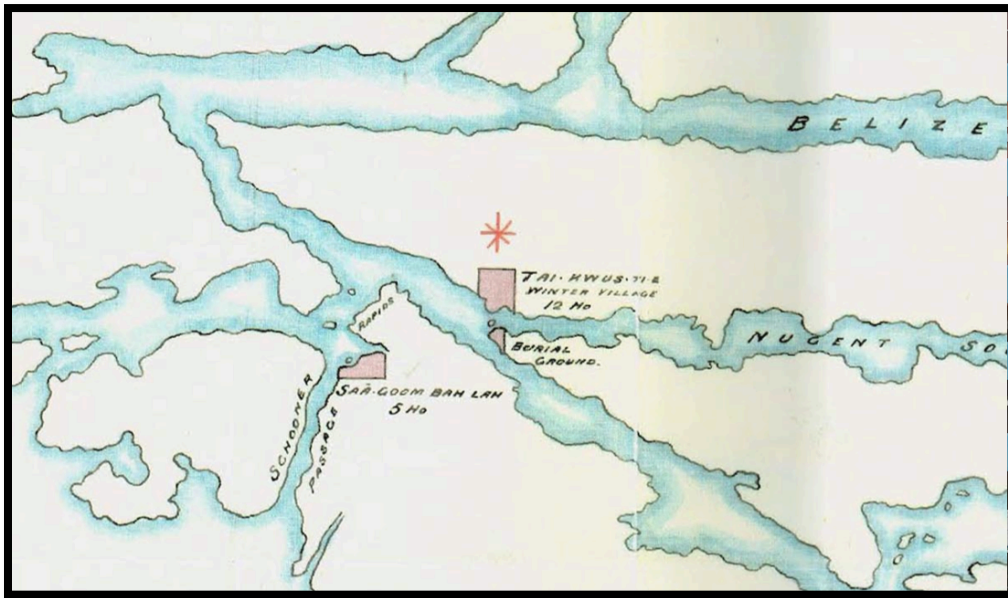


Tigwuxste and the Move to Ba'as

On July 31, 1882 when Indian Reserve Commissioner Peter O'Reilly first visited the main village site of Tigwuxste in Nugent Sound, he found thirteen houses on a well-defended site overlooking the entrance to Nugent Sound and Seymour Inlet. O'Reilly allotted a 174 acre reserve at Tigwuxste which he named IR#1 Kequesta and a small burial island as IR#2. In 1883 the Indian Agent George Blenkinsop made a sketch map of proposed 'Nakwaxda'xw Reserves.



Portion of Blenkinsop's Sketch Map showing Tigwuxste, 1883

In 1884, most of the people living at Tigwuxste began to relocate to Ba'as at Blunden Harbour. There were probably several reasons for the move. Populations had continued to decline rapidly after the devastating small pox epidemic of 1862. In 1881, 52 cases of sickness were reported at Tigwuxste and by 1885 the population had declined by 50 members. This rapid decline may have contributed to the decision to build a new village.

Tigwuxste was also under regular attack from northern tribes. In 1986 Katie Adams (Ubumpa) explained the move as a way to escape Haida raiding parties:

... people moved away from Tigwuxste because they got tortured by the Haida so badly. Its not a nice thing to talk about but they did... And there's a bay here facing outside the mouth of Seymour Inlet and this is where the Haidas used to sneak in ... its just a short walking distance in the forest to get to Tigwuxste village. They set fire to the first village they had there, the Haidas, they raided them through the night and set fire to their Big Houses there through the night....And then they built it up again, and the Haidas kept

sneaking in. The Haidas were really rough on our people cause they killed my great uncle Nandzi and they killed my great uncle Namugwus right up there, up at Seymour Inlet...

Willie Seaweed recounted a similar story of a Kitkatla raid on Tigwuxste. The Kitkatla attacked and set fire to the village, killing warriors and taking slaves until the Nakwaxda'xw warrior, Nandzi, turned the tide of the battle. During the raid, Hitlamas, Willie Seaweed's father, was captured and taken away in a canoe but was later rescued and returned to his people by the Heiltsuk.

The people of Tigwuxste may also have moved to Blunden Harbour for economic reasons. The rapid expansion of the canning and fishing industries on the coast and the beginning of the forest industry in Seymour Inlet, brought paid employment to the Nakwaxda'xw and there may have been economic advantages to moving closer to trading centres like Fort Rupert, the location of the first Indian Agency.