

“Myth explaining some of the crests (Chief Mountain’s version). The ancestral myth of the Gitrhawn (Salmon-Eater) clan gives the following account: After the canoes of the people had travelled down the coast a long way from the North, they landed at a place called Ahlknebaert, south of Stikine River. They were close Marhla’angyesawmks (now called Tongas Narrows). As the sockeye salmon were plentiful here they fished, caught some, and cooked them ashore. The day was warm. Gunas, a nephew of the chief, went into the salt water to swim. His fellows saw a large halibut come up and swallow him. They hunted around and watched, hoping to find traces of the fish. Soon they beheld the Eagle at the edge of the water, and close to it, the great Halibut. They caught the Halibut, cut it open, and found the remains of their kinsman inside. His flesh was already partly decayed, and he had a copper ring around his neck. The father of the dead Gunas stood at the head of the Halibut and started to cry: “This is the place of the Spirit Halibut.” It became a dirge, to be remembered every after. They burned the body and hastened on their journey south.”

—Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles*: 1950 page 52

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