

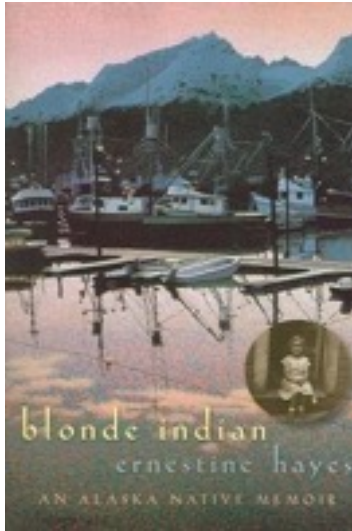


Ernestine Hayes was born to the Tlingit Kaagwaantaan clan at the end of World War II. Her work has appeared in *Studies in American Indian Literature*, *Tipton Poetry Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Cambridge History of Western American Literature*, and other publications.

In *Blonde Indian, an Alaska Native Memoir*, she weaves reminiscences of her life, stories from her grandmother, Tlingit history, nature writing, and fiction into a testament of the twentieth-century Alaska Native experience and a love song to the land. Her memoir received an American Book Award and an Honoring Alaska Indigenous Literature award, was named a Native America Calling Book of the Month, and was a finalist for the 2007 Kiriyaama Prize and the 2007 PEN Non-fiction Award.

In 2015, Hayes was recognized as a 2015 AWARE Woman of Distinction for her work in the Juneau community and was the recipient of an Alaska Literary Award and a Rasmuson Artists in Residence award, which enabled her to complete her next work, *The Tao of Raven, an Alaska Native Memoir*, scheduled for publication in Fall 2016 by the University of Washington Press.

She makes her home in Juneau, Alaska, near the Juneau Indian Village where she was born.



Called a “rewarding, evocative, ultimately uplifting view of Native life” by *Booklist* and “one of the most important books to come out of Alaska” by the *Anchorage Press*, *Blonde Indian* offers a unique window into the challenges, rewards, and ambiguities that one woman of racially mixed heritage experiences within her native Tlingit community and outside it. *University of Arizona Press*

After a long and varied life, Hayes articulates a sensibility and a way of apprehending the world that is truly indigenous. Therein lies the book's greater wisdom and strength. *Blonde Indian* is truly a memoir like no other. *Reviewed by Sally Ito Pacific Rim Voices*

With her opening words, Ernestine Hayes informs readers that she will tell her story in a fashion that honors her ancestors and Tlingit oral tradition. She begins in her native language—the book’s first printed words are “haa shagoon” (“our ancestors”) — and gives her Tlingit name, Saankaláxt, before her “white man name.” She proceeds to recount her ancestry, establishing both her right to speak as a Tlingit woman and her connection to the land: “We belong to Lingít Aaní.” It is a traditional beginning to what has become, sadly, a traditional story: Native families damaged by assimilationist policies and alcohol abuse. Yet Hayes offers a hopeful narrative of returning home to the land that will always embrace its people. *Reviewed by Becca Gercken, University of Minnesota Morris*

Reading this book is a humbling experience. Hayes accomplishes so much with disarming simplicity. She portrays in stark detail how, when losing connection to the earth or their own heritage, people ravage the land, one another, and themselves. The hopscotch framework, jumping from story to tale to story to story, is a bit jarring at first. But by the book’s end, these fragmentary leaps coalesce in a simple and understated eloquence that echoes long after the final page has been turned. *Reviewed by Sarah Werthan Buttenwieser*