

The name Atfalati and its variants

Henry Zenk for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, 7/21/20

Note: The contemporary local names Tualatin, Tuality, and Atfalati (as in Atfalati Park, City of Tualatin) are all just different forms of the same original name. At the time of first Euro-American contact, the territory encompassing Tualatin Plains (Beaverton, Hillsboro, North Plains, Forest Grove), Wapato Lake (Gaston), and Chehalem Valley (Newberg) was home to indigenous villagers speaking a dialect of the Northern Kalapuya language. These villagers referred to themselves as the Tfalati or Atfalati people, and to their country as Chatfalati (Tualatin country). Speakers of surrounding tribal languages usually pronounced this name in agreement with the historical spelling Tuality—that is, with a “w”-sound replacing the Northern Kalapuya “f”-sound. Any of the forms Tfalati, Atfalati, Chatfalati, Tuality may be considered correct forms of the name—assuming that they are pronounced correctly. A difficulty here is that indigenous pronunciations are not always easily rendered within the constraints of conventional English spelling. I have heard the mispronunciation “aht-fuh-LAH-tee” for Atfalati; and there appears to be a trend now towards mispronouncing the “TU” in Tualatin and Tuality as “TOO”: “too-WAH-luh-tun,” “too-WAH-lah-tee.” The proper pronunciations are given in the following table:

Conventional spelling	Pronunciation: International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	pronunciation: anglicized
Tfalati	'tʰɸa:lat'i, 'tʰfa:lat'i ¹	TFAH-lah-tee
Atfalati ²	a'tʰɸa:lat'i, a'tʰfa:lat'i	ah-TFAH-lah-tee
Chatfalati ³	tʃ ^h a'tʰɸa:lat'i, tʃ ^h a'tʰfa:lat'i	tchah-TFAH-lah-tee
Tuality	't ^h wa:lat'i, 't ^h wa:lati	TWAH-lah-tee
Tualatin ⁴	't ^h wa:lətən	TWAH-luh-tun

¹ [ɸ] symbolizes an “f”-sound made using friction between the lips, not (as in English) lips and teeth; the name has been recorded both ways from speakers of Tualatin. The little “tick” following “t” ([t']) signifies a slight catch in the voice accompanying the articulation of the consonant: not all recordings from speakers register this.

² A- (“ah”) is analogous to the English definite article; this form just says ‘*the* Tfalati’.

³ Cha (“tchah”) means ‘place of . . .’.

⁴ The final “-n” of this form may trace back to an obscure indigenous suffix. It shows up in some of the earliest historical recordings of the name, but only rarely from later generations of Tualatin speakers. It remains as yet unexplained.