

# Letters from Here and There

## *Wants Standard Alaskan Textbook*

June 23, 1971

Dear Editor:

I have often wanted to submit an idea to native leaders but things are so hectic on other issues that it's hard to find a receptive ear. Would it be possible in the next few years (if not too late) for Native organizations, the Human Rights Commission or some faculty in that area to get together with the blessings of our State (no doubt) and construct a standard textbook of the State of Alaska.

My concern is that there are so many books on Alaska which are inaccurate and tend to go off on the deep end in flowery language, etc., etc. Also I believe above all that fair treatment of Alaska Natives must be in THIS textbook which WILL treat us as PEOPLE, human beings with faculties, gifts, ideas EQUAL to ANY human beings in this country and on this earth.

I believe that it should be constructed by historians\* both native and non-native and that wherever necessary interpreters should be used.

The reason I stressed historians is because we as people are not some species or sub-species to be studied by other people. We are people and not anything else in any other anthropological term!

By such a textbook we may yet lead other states into doing what is fair and just and lasting to our future and our children. There are other things of which I may ask about in the future.

Thank you for your consideration in putting out news for us all. I enjoy reading this paper whenever I purchase one.

Sincerely,  
Al Judson  
Box 924

Hoonah, Alaska

\*P.S. Those picked in writing or being on the staff may be appointed by the State and native organizations which may eliminate a lot of "paper" qualifications.

## *Backs Upicksoun*

Box 285, Baychester St.  
Bronx, N.Y. 10469  
June 15, 1971

Dear Sirs:

Whose Land is Alaska?

I have read Joseph Upicksoun's statement to the House Committee on Interior & Insular Affairs May 3-4, 1971.

I have asked the above question in N.Y.C. at random among my patients (ordinary people) and among my highly educated acquaintances (Drs., Lawyers, Bankers, Politicians, Professors, etc.). Almost all of them gave me variations of the same answer "The USA owns Alaska." A few, who know of my Cherokee Indian blood, have smiled and replied "Maybe it does belong to the Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts and other native peoples who have always lived there."

One friend of mine laughed out loud after thinking about my question, then asked me "Do you think it's possible that the Russians pulled a fast one and sold the USA something that was not theirs? Did they fool the USA just like the 'city slicker' has time and again sold the Brooklyn Bridge (owned by the City of N.Y.) to some unknowing country bumpkin for a few hundred dollars?"

The question in my mind is; What does the Native Alaskan think? Has he been brainwashed to accept the story put out by the 'pale-faces' in the lower 48; or does he know that "there is evidence that his ancestors lived in Alaska as long ago as 6000 yrs. B.C. (7,971 yrs. ago)?" Does he know that "Barrow,

for example, has been a village for 2,800 years.

I hear a lot about Alaska here in New York City. I see many film clips about Alaska on T.V. The central theme is always, what a wonderful valuable land it is and how stupid were the Russians to sell it to the U.S.

What are the Alaskans doing to counteract this idea of ownership? I only hear one lone voice—that of Joseph Upicksoun. Are there other Alaskans ready to fight by his side? Are there clubs and frequent meetings where plans and ideas are discussed to prevent your children from being "trespassers in the land of their nativity?" Are you trying to preserve your languages? Are you proud of your heritage? Do you learn your history from the old ones; have they told you of your heroes? When you learn U.S. history in school, do you also learn the American Indian version of American history and learn of the countless and proud Indian heroes? Are you aware of the devious means used to take Indian lands in the past so that the U.S.A. could stretch from sea to sea? Will it one day stretch from pole to pole??

The important answers to these questions are in the hand of a few leaders and a few students. Each of you must ACT and show interest. Each must also be aware that it was not a 'paleface' who struck down Chief Crazy Horse, after he had wiped out the invincible General Custer and his troops.

You saw what just happened to the Indians exercising their treaty rights at Alcatraz. They say the government broke its word to them by suddenly physically forcing them off the island after solemnly saying they would not do so.

Time is running out. Need I say more??

Sincerely yours,  
K. M. Young, M.D.