

St. Lawrence Island: Who Owns It?

Gambell, Alaska
June 18, 1972

To Whom This Letter Is Addressed to:

From: The IRA Councils of Gambell and Savoonga, St. Lawrence Island

Dear Sirs:

We believe that it is provided for under Section 19 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of December 18, 1971, that we are entitled to claim and own the entire island.

It is to this end that we the people of St. Lawrence Island seek and ask for help and advice from all concerned.

Meetings have been held by all the people in the villages and it is the unanimous wish and choice to take this course, knowing that we lose participation in settlement monies awarded. We have lived from and cared for this land for hundreds of years and we believe this is the best way of preserving the wildlife and its environment.

Our previous requests and letters to this matter have so far failed to help us.

We invite all persons, firms, agencies and all concerned to give us assistance and advice in reaching our goal with the least amount of delay and trouble.

We thank you in advance for your help and will appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Lee Koozaata, President
IRA Council, Gambell

Vernon Waghiyi, Sr.
President, IRA Council
Savoonga

Letters from Here and There

Nulato, Alaska
June 27, 1972

Dear Editor:

You don't know what's going on in this beautiful country, till one morning you wake up and walk out the door to see the water puddles — yellow circles.

That was two days after the lightning or thunder. Well somebody is making it rain. That's what they tell me. Now we

cannot use the rain water and we have to go three miles to the spring. Also it's raining so bad we cannot even dry fish.

Why does the smart people buck nature? God made forest fires for reasons, flood, etc.

We don't live off the country anymore. Let it burn.

Ever since they started going to the moon, I notice the weather is different at times, I notice. I don't know what we're going to gain out of it.

Let the smart people kill all the mosquitos down here for us. We cannot even go the toilet. We should burn them up with forest fires so we can go out to fish camps to make a living.

Fred Stickman

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State Planning and Research

June 5, 1972

Dear Mr. Rock:

I read with interest Roger McPherson's story about Barrow in the May 24 edition of The Tundra Times. I hope Governor Egan does not read it, as he may conclude that I wasn't really in Barrow at all!!

Robert Arnold is a splendid person. He served on the late Senator Bob Bartlett's personal staff, and later was one of the principle authors of the Federal Field Committee's influential publication Alaska Natives and the Land. Bob Arnold is now connected with the State Department of Education, and is continuing to assist Alaska's Native people through his efforts to bring educational TV to the Bush. It should be pointed out to Roger McPherson, however, that Mr. Arnold is not the Director of Planning for the state of Alaska, nor is he in any way connected with the Barrow Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee!!!

It has been my privilege to serve as the Chairman of this unique intergovernmental group since its formal organization in February 1971. While the BICC represents over 35 federal, state and local agencies doing work in

the Barrow area, the steering committee has included Wyman Panigeo (City of Barrow), Commander Takeshi Yoshihara (U.S. Navy), Dr. Emery Johnson (U.S. Public Health Service), Robert Gajdys (Bureau of Indian Affairs), and me, Bob Pavitt (State of Alaska). The Committee has attempted to stress the need for coordination among developmental activities planned or operating in Barrow . . . the goal being (as Mr. McPherson did accurately report) to work together to improve the quality of life for the people of America's farthest north community.

Sincerely,

R. W. Pavitt, AIP
Director

June 23, 1972

Dear Editor:

He laughed at life. Even when his house burned down for the second time, he didn't mope, but soon got busy and stacked logs again. Often he was flooded out when the Tanana River overflowed its lower banks, yet he chortled as he waded back-and-forth through the water in his typical, happy-go-lucky manner. He often said, "I never had anything, and I don't want anything." Money and worldly possessions meant little to him. He worked only out of necessity. He loved his family and knew he had to provide. . .

But his idea of Utopia was moving swiftly along the Tanana River in his boat. Wholly care-free, and with the wind ripping through his hair, and the water lapping at his boat, occasionally spraying water lightly across his brow — he was exalted. Out-doorsey he was, and Roland spoke with boyish enthusiasm, of how he recently, "tore down his boat engine and was slowly teaching himself how to put it back together again."

He secured much of his food by hunting and fishing. The river was his life-line, he reminded many. "I'd never move away from the river," he vowed. He wanted to leave his ground to

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his two sons. It was their heritage.

Everyone who knew him, liked him. All races, ages, and social rank were represented as they came in droves to pay their respects to his family at their home. Later, they filed solemnly past his bier, many misty-eyed.

Roland Lord knew them all, but he often laughed, "I couldn't always remember their names unless they did or said something funny." Roland had one out-standing quality that separates the men from the boys — humility. He was much too pre-occupied with life and the livin'.

He will be greatly missed, but not forgotten. He received more than his share of tragedies in life: fires, floods, hard times, temporary illnesses, and the earlier loss of two, young children.

Yet even in death he was smiling . . .

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ruth Peger