

Nulato Seeking Ways To Develop Tourism

Nulato, Alaska
July 5, 1966

Mr. Howard Rock
Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Mr. Rock:

We are sending out this letter and resumé in hopes of arousing interest and getting support (financial and otherwise) for setting up a tourist trade in Nulato. Perhaps if you could print a story on Nulato or offer us any advice it would help.

Also, there is a girl in our village who, I believe, has extremely good art talent (especially her oil portraits). Could you recommend anything we might do to help her develop her painting ability further? Perhaps putting one of her works in the paper.

Very truly yours,
David La Porte
VISTA Volunteer

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Tourist Attraction

In opening up a tourist business in Nulato, the village wishes to rebuild the old Russian fort here, build a lodge with comfortable sleeping quarters including a gift shop of Indian arts and crafts, offer guide service for fishing and hunting, offer boat service for trips down the Yukon and Nulato rivers to old graveyards (of the Russian Orthodox type) and to the site of the old massacred village. The village offers a nightly schedule of baseball, volleyball, and live band dances in the Community Hall. A pool and game hall, and coffee house will also be nightly gathering spots. The air strip is suitable for larger planes and auto transportation between field and village is available.

Nulato is still in need of funds, however, to build up a tourist trade.

History of Nulato Village

Nulato is the oldest white settlement on the Yukon. It was established by the Russians in 1838. It is the scene of many Indian uprisings.

The massacre of 1851 is perhaps most famous when the chief of the Koyukuk Indians was insulted by the commander of the Nulato Russian fort. A Russian messenger and Nulato Indian guide were slain upon their arrival at Koyukuk. The Koyukuk Indians, in a frenzy, ate the Russian body and then commenced downriver to Nulato where they caught the Indians in their houses sleeping. The houses were set on fire and the fleeing Nulato Indians were slaughtered. The rampaging Koyukuks then hit the Russian

fort a half mile away where several Russians were knifed in their beds before the Indians were routed by gunfire. And so the end of the massacre and more than 100 people laid dead.

The new Russian commander and fresh recruits came in. However, the Koyukuk Indians were merely pardoned, Nulato rebuilt, and life on the Yukon went on.

San Francisco Bridge

During World War I a military post was set up in Nulato. The remains of the old generator and other equipment can still be seen. The high steel-constructed tower built by the Army has since been taken down and partially dismantled. A section of the tower is now used as a bridge across Muk Luk slough on the road to the airfield. This enormous piece of steel construction goes by the name "the San Francisco bridge."

Nulato Today

Today, Nulato subsists mostly on fishing and hunting. There are two stores including a co-op. One end of the village is Catholic mission grounds and schools. A gymnasium is under construction and there are plans for a regional high school.

Nulato is famous up and down the river for its Feast of Our Lady of the Snows on August 5th. Nearby villages compete in baseball, volleyball, and other events such as motorboat races, rowboat races, swimming, running, etc. Potlatch dinners are held on all holidays of the year.