

# Lost VISTA Volunteer And an Old Eskimo

## Strange Encounter Leads Into Extensive Analysis of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Land's End Village  
State of Alaska  
May 15, 1973

Dear Howard,

I am sending this letter out with Joe Ayagtug, who is returning to Anchorage this week. When he left he was very worried about how the land selection is going to work in our village. Before he left he pointed out that about half of the available period for land selection is over since it says in Section 12 (a) (1) of AN ACT that we have until December 18, 1974 or three years. With so little time and such complicated rules how can we be expected to do such a thing when as Joe said, the State of Alaska has had thirteen years to select the land that was to be taken from us by the Statehood Act?

It seems a little odd to me that the land surveys will come after the land selection. How will we know if we are selecting too little land or too much land until it is surveyed? I also wonder how long it will take for the survey to be done and will any Natives be trained to do this work? In the past they never let us Natives do the

simplest things for ourselves and now they give us a task which is so complicated. Is this one more example of a fair and just settlement? It seems that we village people are the last to find out about these things and are expected to be the first to accomplish them.

Another thing that has been bothering me, Howard, is the division between surface and subsurface rights in the land. If the Regional Corporations are getting subsurface rights in the Village land, why can't the Village get subsurface rights in the Wildlife refuges, for example? Wally says that it would destroy the purpose of them, but then what will mining and drilling do to life in the small villages? Maybe they are afraid that if there are rich minerals underneath the ground, there may be rich Natives above it.

All of this is very confusing to an old man, so maybe some of your readers who live in villages could write and tell me how they are handling the problem of land selection where they live.

Your friend,

Naugga Ciunerput