

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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CULTURAL CENTERS —

Interested Villages Should Contact Park Service Now . .

By LYNN CHAMBERS

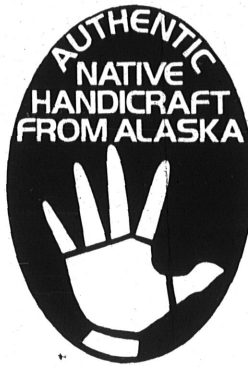
If you would like to have a Cultural/Heritage Center in your village and/or region write to Harold Gronroos, National Park Service, 334 West 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

For several years now the Park Service has been talking about Cultural Centers in Alaska. This year they are beginning to develop a staff to work on them as well as to assist in recreational plan development. The staff will be under the National Park Service Alaska State Director, Stanley T. Albright. The Native Assistance Program will be directed by Harold Gronroos assisted by Mickiet Baxter.

The first additions to their staff will be three park planners possessing expertise to meet anticipated demands. Further additions could be made either on a full time or contractual basis as needs arise from your requests for special assistance.

In October 1967, the Park Service Director prepared a briefing book for the State Governors. Among these ideas was "Native Cultural Centers."

During the summer of 1968,



a team of researchers from the Park Service visited 27 villages spread over much of Northern, Central, and Southeastern Alaska to obtain first hand information for a statewide preservation program.

Since that time National Park Service policy as expressed by Secretary of Interior Roger C. Morton and former Secretary Hickel is "to further the economy of Indian Reservations and Alaska Native's by developing their recreational and cultural

resources.

In many cases the development of recreation and historic sites represents the area's only potential for economic improvement. Corollary to this is the need for greater American Indian and Alaska Native involvement in the planning and approval of projects."

This winter, a proposed program was drawn up by the Anchorage Office and accepted in theory by the Washington D.C. Office for Alaska Heritage Centers. The plan basically suggests staffing to give technical assistance in planning and developing village, regional and state cultural heritage centers.

The plans suggest the following, but you are by no means limited to them:

"The Village Center oriented toward that particular village's specific resources and interests."

"The Regional Center, one or more in each regional corps area, more or less centrally located and accessible, oriented equally to regional residents and tourists." And can include craft competitions, exhibits of the area's finest workmanship, displays of student efforts, etc., as well as displays of artifacts and recordings of stories and dances.

And one or more State Centers representing all regions of Alaska and would be primarily tourist oriented.

The plan also suggests the functions of the centers "would be to collect, document, and preserve local artifacts and to display them in a meaningful, organized manner. It would provide education and enjoyment for young and old and insure preservation of information and traditions now being lost as the older generations die."

The Park Service will not come to you and suggest that you open a Heritage Center. It is up to you to contact them. If you want a center in your village and/or region talk to your village and regional corp and tell them to write to the Park Service, or you write personally and ask the Park Service to send a representative to our area to assist you in planning and developing your center.

The Park Service plans on acting as the catalyst to help start the centers, train local people to manage and operate them, then leave the center to the local people to own and continue.

The Service is currently developing a priority list of projects, if you want to be included at the top of this list, get your requests in now.

Also, the Park Service will respond to requests for assistance in recreational development planning on Native Lands. This can include, but is not limited to, the tour industry in the form of camp grounds, sports and other recreational facilities and accommodations.

Let the Park Service know what you would like in these areas and they will give you the assistance you require, or put you in touch with someone who can.

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
July 10, 1973

Dear Howard,

Hello my old friend! I am sorry for not writing to you for so long, but with the break-up and the nice spring weather, I was so involved in our village activities that I didn't have time to write. Springtime is so beautiful here in the village when our land comes back to life with so many flowers, birds, green plants, and animals. Even the people feel more alive when we can take part in all of this activity on the tundra just as our fathers have done for generations. It never fails to excite us even though it happens every year. No native is so old that there isn't a thrill when spring comes to the tundra.

Do you think that the people who wrote AN ACT have the same feelings? Can they understand the power of these simple pleasures or do they only see the land as something to be measured in terms of profits and losses? This seems to be a vision of Alaska that makes lots of dollars and no sense to the people who live here, especially the Natives.

The reason I bring this up is that last week we had a visit from some of the Land Use Planning Commissioners here in our village. They said that they were doing their duties under Sec. 17 of AN ACT and they wanted to know our thoughts about what to do with 80,000,000 acres of public land in Alaska. They were in a bit of a hurry, so they didn't even spend a full day here. I guess that if I got \$100 a day, I wouldn't spend too much time in any one place either, but the problems they are dealing with are so big that it was hard to know what is best for Alaska Natives. Besides we are mostly worried about the land near our village and I am sure that other Natives are worried about the land near their own villages. Actually, there should be no question about what to do with these 80 million acres — this land was Native land before the government got it and it would be only right that the Natives should get it back now.

Wally, my ex-VISTA friend, says that the Land Use Planning Commission seems like a bureaucratic boondoggle to him — or a blunder at best. To me it seems like a waste of money, especially since I understand that there is only one Native Commissioner out of ten and very few Natives on the staff. How come I never seem to hear about it when they are passing out the \$100 a day jobs?

Well, I still have lots more work to do here in the village since I am not 'old enough to "retire" and not do anything if I want to eat.

Your friend,

Naugga Ciunerput

Other Voices—

"Rubber Words" Erase Aleut Claim To St. Paul

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The U.S. Court of Claims recently ordered the Indian Claims Commission to hear evidence on whether the Aleuts have a claim against the United States, based on government restrictions on the tribe's fur seal trading.

Larry Mercurieff, land planner for the Aleut Corp., based in Anchorage, wrote the following article for the Tundra Times, to explain the full situation.)

Recently the U. S. Court of Claims rejected our contention that we (Aleuts) owned the islands of our residence in fee simple under Russian law. The court did concede that the Aleuts of St. Paul do have a claim under the fair and honorable dealings clause of the Indian Claims Commission Act.

We contend that we have obtained fee simple title via prescription under the laws of Tsarist Russia. The Tsarist Code states that "undisturbed, undisputed, and continuous possession" of property is turned into a fee simple right. In rejecting our claims perhaps the Court of Claims has overlooked the obvious.

The Russians began their conquest and subsequent domination of the Aleut Tribes along the Aleutian Chain during the latter part of the 1700's. Within 60 years approximately 20,000 Aleuts were victims of one of the most atrocious forms of genocide in the history of Alaska.

Today there are less than 3,000 Aleuts in existence. Throughout the period of Russian domination, Aleuts were taken as slaves to harvest the rich fur seal pelts. The inevitable point

in time arrived — the guilty conscience of greedy souls. The few haggard Aleut survivors were treated as equals among moral inferiors, and gradually the Aleut rights under Russian law increased.

The U. S. Court of Claims indicated that the Russian Imperial government evidenced concern "that the natives of the islands be disturbed in their possessions as little as possible." The court states that such "concern cannot be equated with a recognition of fee ownership" given existing evidence; in other words, we had less than full citizenship rights.

In a moment of intensive guilt, the American government granted U.S. citizenship to its near annihilated aboriginal inhabitants in 1934. Does the American government say that the Russian people are incapable of equal sanity and morality? In rejecting our contentions the Court of Claims is indicting the Russian people.

Today we are struggling to protect our vulnerable rights. Our rights have been rendered vulnerable by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The fact of the matter is that the Act imposes upon all native peoples unrealistic deadlines for identifying Natives and selecting 40 million acres of land. In order to protect our rights in land we must institute foreign corporate entities and teach our people in two years that which should take ten.

Unfortunately, when it is convenient for greedy and powerful members of society to overlook rights of citizens, it is attempted. Thus history repeats itself. The Aleuts must again fight a war — only this time the weapons are rubbery words. The Aleut Tribe's case in the U.S. Court of Claims is one step forward in an attempt to ride the rubbery word.

Whoops! WEIOC Forgot The Aleuts Too . .

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July 11, 1973

Chairman WEIOC
ESKIMO, INDIAN, ALEUT PUBLISHING CO., INC.
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Dear Chris:

In your letter sent to our office announcing the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, you state that the name was changed to include

(Continued on page 6)

