

# Who We Are - What We Are

Since 1962, one company has cared about what is happening in rural Alaska. For fifteen years, the owners of the TUNDRA TIMES have devoted all the resources of the Eskimo, Indian Aleut Publishing Company (owner of the Tundra Times) to addressing the problems of Native people and non-Native individuals alike in the rural communities which the Tundra Times serves.

We are proud of the advances made by rural Alaskans and Alaska Natives during the fifteen years since the first issue of the Tundra Times was published on October 1, 1962. People in the rural areas have made great strides in getting recognition of their rights guaranteed them as citizens of Alaska and as Americans, including the rights of Alaska Natives to their lands and resources.

Other than the land rights conflict, which was resolved by an act of the United States Congress on December 18, 1971, many other problems have met with solution, or at least progress toward solution, because of the efforts people in Alaska villages and rural communities have made to control their own affairs.

Rural areas of Alaska have developed many capable leaders and have been able to send well-qualified representatives to the State Legislature. Because of the talented, aggressive leadership in the "bush caucus" in the legislature, Rural Alaskans enjoy a fair share of state resources devoted to education and other public services, although rural Alaska still lags far behind in enjoying the standard of service residents of larger cities have come to expect.

Many rural Alaska communities have produced leaders who were very much effective in obtaining a Native land settlement. The Tundra Times remembers that many, many Alaskans believed that Native people didn't deserve any land at all, and that some U.S. Congressmen felt Natives should have only 200 thousand acres of land. Native leaders from the villages and communities of rural Alaska were able to overcome large obstacles to win a settlement of 40 million acres of land and nearly one billion dollars. Some big problems still exist in making the settlement a success, some of which cannot be adequately solved for decades to come, but rural Alaska has made great progress where little success was expected.

Rural Alaska's non-profit regional Native corporations (such as the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Mauneluk Association, and Kawerak) have made progress in providing for increased availability of social services to the people of their regions. Major contracts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service allow for these Native corporations to deliver health and social services to their own people, better and more effectively than ever before. A new government on the North Slope of Alaska is allowing Inupiaq Eskimos greater self-government and self-determination than ever before.

The Tundra Times is proud of what rural Alaskans have been able to accomplish in the past fifteen years. We hope that our efforts to increase communication among Alaska Native people have contributed to some of these accomplishments. That is the reason why the Tundra Times was created, to help improve communication among residents of Native villages and rural communities with the hope that increased understanding of issues help rural citizens better control their own lives.

Some large problems remain in rural Alaska. The great changes that are sweeping Alaska have generated confusion and social disorder in many forms. The many activities in rural Alaska in education, Native corporation activity, health services, social services require much effort. So it seems that sometimes the tradition values and cultural sensitivity are forgotten in the rush to deal with the many changes we experience. Confusion is a great part of our lives it seems at present, especially with the young people. Even the most peaceful, beautiful village is not free from the tragic ills of drug and alcohol abuse. Violent crimes, suicides and accidental death too frequently disturb the tranquility of our small rural communities. Despite all the advances rural Alaska has made, something is wrong. The Tundra Times believes that many of the serious social problems we experience at this time are associated with the battle for cultural survival the Native people are engaged in at this time. More effort must be made to instill in the young people the pride in heritage and respect for traditional cultural values.

We encourage the people living in the Native villages and rural communities to listen to advice from our late founder and editor. Howard Rock told young Native people that, "Your folks in the old days have done some amazing things to meet deadly obstacles, dangers, life and death situations and met them very well indeed. These facts were passed down to us and when they are studied a bit, they can give you a new awakening and spirit, strength to meet difficult situations that might come your way. Believe me, there will be some that will strain your very soul."

He said, "If troublesome obstacles come upon you, think of the achievements of your ancestors. They established cultures that very well met the unkind situations. They won over them and left ample room for fun, arts, and for big shares of lightheartedness."

That advice from the old gentleman is the reason why there is a Tundra Times. We want to remind you of the achievements of your ancestors and encourage people of rural Alaska to rise with similar strength and pride in heritage to meet the problems of the present much as your ancestors won the fight for survival. The Tundra Times is your newspaper. After fifteen years, we still care about the problems of Native people and the rural Alaska communities. The Tundra Times exists for you.

Thomas Richards, Jr., Editor and Publisher

Barry W. Jackson, Chairman of the Board



Agricultural Experiment Station College, Alaska  
University of Alaska Archives  
Charles Bunnell Collection



Rickert's Farm.

University of Alaska Archives  
Charles Bunnell Collection



Yaks at the U. S. Experimental Station in College, Alaska 1921.

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