

Save Valuable Art Products At Alaska 67

Millions of dollars worth of exhibits, displays, paintings and artifacts were saved from flood damage by several hundred volunteers who live in homes surrounding the Fairbanks Exposition Site.

As the Chena River, which runs beside the A-67 grounds, overflowed its sand-bagged banks Monday night, August 14, the volunteers worked 'round the clock to move everything of value—irreplaceable artifacts, stock and equipment—to safety.

Because of the unceasing and tireless effort of these volunteers, many of whom were stranded at the Site, Alaska's A-67 Exposition in Fairbanks suffered far less flood damage than first indicated, according to Frank H. Murkowski, Commissioner of Economic Development for the State of Alaska. "And the Site is virtually intact," he added.

Murkowski and Herb Adams, Director of the Alaska State Centennial Commission, toured the A-67 Site last week, immediately after the flood waters receded.

"Though considerable damage occurred at the Civic Center, high-light of the Exposition ground, features a 400-seat theatre surrounded by exhibit areas. Flood waters inundated the theatre area, stage-high, covering the first seven rows of seats, damaging the heating plant and the \$60,000 electrical system.

None of the exhibits—the Smithsonian, those in the Exhibition Hall, those in the Federal Pavilion, and the state's exhibits in the Civic Center—suffered anything more than minor damage, Adams stated, after inventorying the displays.

"In fact, he added, the statewide traveling art show, which had arrived in Fairbanks a week before the flood, is taking to the road immediately."

The Native village, which is beside the Chena River, will have to be partially rebuilt and perhaps a portion of it relocated. According to Adams, the river bank near the village was badly eroded.

Also to be relocated, will be a portion of the narrow-gauge Crooked Creek & Whiskey Island Railroad, which was partially washed out near the station terminal.

Bonanzaland Amusement Park, Gold Rush Town, Mining Valley, and the numerous other exhibition areas are suffering mainly from a heavy coating of silt.

The sternwheeler, "Nenana," and the President Harding railroad car, on loan to A-67 from the Alaska Railroad, were not damaged. The railroad car is presently serving as office for the Site.

A-67 was closed following the flood for the remainder of the year and will reopen next season after repairs with a new name—Alaskaland.

No detailed assessment of total damage has been made, but estimated losses will run about \$400,000 to \$500,000 according to E. F. Stroecker, A-67 manager.

The Exposition has an appraised value of approximately \$4.5 million.



FLOOD SALE—After the August 14 flood in Fairbanks, people removed flood-soaked materials from their establishments. The picture shows a flood sale conducted by Nerland's

furniture store. Many such sales were in progress on streets throughout the city.

—Courtesy of the FAIRBANKS DAILY NEWS-MINER

The Great Fairbanks Flood of August 14

(Continued from Page 1)

ground view of it is a drastically different picture.

Interiors of homes and businesses are horrors to see where the floodwaters raised havoc almost beyond belief. Fairbanks on the whole is a terribly wounded city.

The devastation from the flood is expected to exceed \$200 million.

NENANA AND MINTO

The town of Nenana 50 miles downriver from Fairbanks and the village of Minto 45 miles away, were hit by the flood.

Nenana was all but wiped out. It was flooded before Fairbanks and its residents were evacuated here. A day or so later, they were joined by their fellow citizens of Fairbanks in their evacuation quarters at Hunter School.

Minto people bravely sent a message not to worry about them and saying they had high ground on which to camp but urgently requested that a plane be sent down to pick up two very sick children.

Damage at Nenana was estimated to be over a million dollars and Minto damage at \$50,000.

NOISE WAS MUSIC

A few short hours after the Chena spilled its banks, streets of the city became treacherous water ways. Small boats of all descriptions began to comb through them as darkness fell and along with them—noise.

Air propellor boats, outboards, jet-propelled crafts roared and whined throughout the days and nights of the flood. Although noisy, it was music to many ears of the flood victims.

The noise increased in volume as daylight dawned on Fairbanks as huge Army Air Force helicopters and private helicopters churned the air over Fairbanks. Continuous roar—it meant the people of the city were being rescued by the thousands.

Seven thousand of them choked every available space at the University of Alaska. About 4,000 filled the halls and classrooms of the Lathrop High School. Every other available haven housed thousands more.

MASS FEEDING

Mass feeding of the victims began. Under the circumstances, those in charge did amazingly well. Strict regimentation became the rule—a necessary tool in handling the congregated population. Everyone ate in the evacuation centers.

THE AIRPORT

The City of Fairbanks can be forever thankful that the International Airport suffered comparatively minimal damage although a small part of it was inundated at the height of the flood.

Whoever placed the location of the facility deserves commendation. If the airport had been flooded the city might have suffered a great deal more. It was the city's good fortune to have the facility for full use during the disaster. As a result, the airport became a funnel for needed materials, evacuation of the flood victims and other needs.

SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army, as usual, did great service in a time of disaster. Its superbly trained personnel should always be

the model of other organized services for special functions in times of upheavals.

The SA bought up badly needed blankets, foods, and other necessities from local stores and necessities from other cities and serviced them personally. Its presence in times of great needs is a blessing that should never be forgotten by the public.

DOCTORS AND NURSES

Red eyed from lack of sleep, doctors and nurses administered much needed treatment for the sick and injured during the great flood.

Irene Brooks, a registered nurse, deserves praise. She worked tirelessly from the beginning of the flood to organize nursing facilities in all of the schools where flood victims were evacuated. All this while knowing her own home was being flooded while she worked.

Scores of volunteers should also be given special praise who worked until they literally dropped from exhaustion. Selfless service—there was a lot of that in Fairbanks.

RADIO STATIONS

Radio—this means of communication becomes a vital link in times of disaster. Fairbanks radio stations played important roles in keeping the troubled city informed of its needs and what was being done for it.

Radio KFAR operated under difficulties after its main power source was knocked out. Its personnel moved its operation to the transmitter where it broadcasted with reduced emergency power.

Announcers, both men and women, worked day and night with little sleep.

OTHER SERVICES

Other services worked tirelessly around the clock. Red Cross did its usual disaster work. The Army and the National Guard were kept busy evacuating and supplementing police power.

BRACING FOR WINTER

The distressed City of Fairbanks is attempting to pull itself up by its bootstraps to brace for the approaching winter which will be here altogether too soon. There is massive amount of work to do and little time in which to do it.

Hundreds of people are crowding a score of desks of the Small Business Administration set up on the ground floor of the Chena Building. They are in the process of getting the necessary tool—money with which to brace for winter. "...It is my urgent recommendation that SBA lend sufficient money to the owner of every damaged home to retire the existing FHA-insured mortgage and also make the repairs for damage inflicted by the flood," said Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska in his wire to Robert Moot, administrator of SBA.

"In this way, homeowners would have only one mortgage payment to meet monthly over the next 30 years."

"The SBA is handling the money like a bank would," said Ed Crittendon, Director of Alaska Housing Authority, "that is, they are lending money on the basis of a person's ability to pay back. If you don't have that, you don't get any money. However, they are also lending enough to retire existing mortgages."