

BROOMHILDA



Power Pole at Village's Burial Grounds . . .

(Continued from page 6)

calls stories of old battles with Eskimos who stole their women and of a fierce warrior called Esau who was barely over four feet tall.

Uncle Paul also remembers the flu epidemics of 1919. "Many, many people died," he said. "In that time, there was not even time to build a coffin. The bodies were wrapped in canvas and put in the ground."

"This used to be a big community, but many people died of influenza. A few women survived, two or three men, and two children out of the whole village who for some reason didn't get sick."

Those who make up the village now came there from many other places. "A lot from the Wood River area, Holy Cross, Ft. Yukon, Cantwell; David Esau and Margaret John from Tolovana. Susie Boatman has probably lived in the village longer than anyone."

Burial in Nenana today is done by family and friends. It is a community activity.

"Years ago," said Uncle Paul, "they used to cover them with birch bark. In Northway a long time ago, they used to

burn the dead. In Nulato and Kaltag the sleds, guns, and whatever a man owned were put into a little shack on top of the grave. No one was supposed to touch a dead man's things."

There was always a big potlatch when someone died.

"They don't do it because they're happy someone died," he said, "but to comfort the family."

As recently as last year a very large potlatch was held in Nenana. Potlatches are usually held in the Native Association Hall. There is always a gathering, if only for tea, coffee, and sandwiches. On Sept. 7 there was to be the burial of an infant who died at birth. The village would drop in later at the home of the family.

"That's another thing we need," said young Demientieff, "A clinic! We lost two babies this year."

Asked how many Native deaths occur in the village in a year's time, Mitch shook his head. "I don't know. We bury a lot of them."

One of the mothers who lost a baby could not climb the

steep hill to the cemetery for the burial. An old man who lost his wife was also too weak for the rough path uphill.

Part of the year it is possible to drive almost to the cemetery, but one road is closed in winter and the other goes only part way, and for some distance has to be traversed by foot.

"Picture six men trying to keep in step carrying a heavy coffin along railroad ties," said Mitch. "Then you've still got the hill to make."

Add snow and ice and the task becomes near impossible. The present cemetery has expanded upward. The older graves are mostly lower, newer ones higher.

Demientieff pointed farther along the cliff by the cemetery to two tall spruce trees close together, dark and brooding among the lighter golds of the autumn hillside.

"That's where I'd like to be buried when I die," he said, "right there between those two spruce trees. Sometimes I have to get away by myself and I walk up here on the hill or along the river. Sometimes I climb up and sit right there

between those two trees and think about things."

"Those poles have been there a long time. Maybe nobody ever thought about it. One day I'm standing there and I think about it. But I don't make up my mind what to do right away."

An old Athabaskan saying is that a good chief is a slow thinker. The chief of Nenana is not a young man in a hurry, but after much thinking, he has come to a decision about the burial ground of his people.

"The pole must come down," said the young chief.

Several men of the village have considered taking a chain saw to it but are awaiting the outcome of voluntary action by the railroad and/or whoever owns it.

In the book "Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee," author Dee Brown quotes a warrior called Shunkaha Napin, Wolf Necklace: "I never want to leave this country; all my relatives are lying here in the ground, and when I fall to pieces I am going to fall to pieces here."

Many relatives of the people of Nenana are lying in the ground.

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LEGAL NOTICE
INVITATION FOR BIDS
STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

Sealed bids in single copy for furnishing all labor, materials, and equipment, and performing all work on Project S-9999(1) & F-9999(1), School Crossing Flashers - 7 Locations in Southeast Alaska described herein, will be received until 2:00 p.m. prevailing time, September 21, 1972 in the Commissioner's Office, Department of Highways, 151st Center Building, Douglas, Alaska.

This project will consist of furnishing and placing standard school crossing flashers in Haines, Skagway, Juneau-Douglas, Wrangell, Petersburg, and Sitka, Alaska.

Items of work consist of the following: 876 square feet of standard signs; 48 signs to be removed and disposed; 7 standard signs to be relocated; 14 flashing beacon systems, lump sum, all required.

All work shall be completed in 120 Calendar days.

Plans and specifications may be obtained by all who have a bona fide need for them for bidding purposes from the Chief Design Engineer, P. O. Box 1467, Juneau, Alaska 99801. Plans may be examined at Department of Highway Offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Valdez.

B. A. Campbell
Commissioner of Highways
Publish September 6 and 13, 1972.

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY
NOTICE OF INTENT

The Alaska Federation of Natives Housing Authority is planning to advertise for developers for the construction of 332 single family housing units in 14 villages approximately October 16, 1972. These units will be built under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Turnkey III Method of Construction.

This notice of intent is issued to give prospective developers an opportunity to inspect the project sites prior to winter and before the formal advertisement date. The bid openings will be a minimum of 35 days from the date of the formal advertisement in October, which will appear in the legal section of this paper.

Information on the project locations in each village; preliminary schematics of the floor plans and elevations, and the estimated number of two, three, and four bedroom units to be built in each village can be obtained from the Alaska Federation of Natives, 1675 C Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

It is anticipated that when a category, as listed below, contains more than one village, developers will be required to submit a proposal on all villages within that category. The villages expected to be built in each village are as follows:

Category A	
Gambell	30
Savoonga	25
Total	55
Category B	
Wales	18
Teller	30
Total	48
Category C	
Shaktolik	20
Unalakleet	20
Stebbins	20
St. Michael	25
Total	85
Category D	
St. Mary's	20
Andreafsky	10
Pitka's Point	10
Total	40
Category E	
Fort Yukon	40
Category F	
Togiak	30
Category G	
Sand Point	30

When contacting us, please specify the category (or categories) in which you are interested.

Michael Dozette
Executive Director