

**The Legacy of Unjust and Illegal Treatment of Unangan  
During World War II and Its Place in Unangan History**

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and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas  
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**The Legacy of Unjust and Illegal Treatment of Unangan  
During World War II and Its Place in Unangan History**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis discusses the relocation of Unangan during World War II, and the effect that it had on them. It uses personal interviews and secondary sources to provide the Native American and scientific communities with historical information about the Unangax prior to WWII. I hope to offer the school systems new ideas for educating Unangan and other students about the Unangan past and present. At the same time, telling my story about reconstructing my roots may provide inspiration for others like me to find their roots.

In 1942, Japan bombed and invaded the Aleutian Islands in Alaska as a diversionary tactic. After the Japanese took control of Attu and Kiska, they took the people of Attu to Hokkaido, Japan as prisoners. Within days after the invasion, other Unangan were taken from their homes and relocated to canneries, mining camps and a Civilian Conservation Corps site in Southeast Alaska, under the orders of United States government officials. Japanese-Americans had been taken to internment camps in the Western states that same year. What makes the case of the Aleuts similar to that of the Japanese is that both represent forcible internment of legal residents of the U.S. and its territories during wartime. The Japanese-Americans were thought to have posed a threat to the U.S. and were said to have been interned for security reasons. The Unangax, on the other hand, were said to have been interned for their protection.

The internment began a story of the Unangan removal and relocation that remains largely unknown to most of the world. This sad incident resulted in the death of approximately ten percent of the Unangan population. The government seems to have ignored the Unangan basic human rights, causing them to suffer from lack of food, heat, plumbing, and medical attention. Prior to their internment, the Russian Orthodox Church had played a big part in the Unangan everyday life; however, those who were interned had to leave their churches behind. Only a few communities managed to bring their sacred icons with them to Southeast Alaska.

When Unangan returned to their villages, they discovered their homes and churches had been ransacked by the American military or non-Unangan civilians. The Unangax found themselves refugees on their own land, struggling to reestablish the lives they had before the internment. It was not until several years later that the Unangax decided to bring suit against the U.S. government for the unjust treatment that they had received. While the damage caused by Japanese-American internment is well-documented, the internments of the Unangax had even more profound effects on the families, culture, and consciousness of these Alaska Natives and their descendants.

This multidisciplinary thesis will draw upon official government and military documents, journals, books, documentary films, oral histories, and personal interviews. It will benefit from perspectives offered by the Unangax themselves in the context of accounts by government officials, attorneys, historians, filmmakers, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and others. Each chapter will be organized in a historical sequence in order to better illustrate the significance of the ordeal that the Unangax endured. The thesis will address the significance of World War II internment in Unangan history, giving special attention to how it is regarded by the Unangan internees and their descendants today.

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## **Dedication**

To those who were interned in Southeast Alaska, to my ancestors (who were with me throughout my research), and for the future generations of the Unangax.

## **Acknowledgements**

This thesis has helped me to realize why my mother was the way she was. She really did not disclose this part of her life to her family or at least to her children. I had no idea that these events in the history of the Unangax had taken place, not to mention that my mother's family was a part of them. I now know why I did not get a chance to know my mother's side of the family. The diaspora of the Unangax and my family after World War II made it difficult to know or understand why people chose to leave these memories or experiences to themselves. I hope that this thesis will help others to understand the Unangan elders and maybe why there was such a diaspora of families after the war, also to let others know of this history of the Unangax.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Professor John Hoopes, without whose guidance and persistent help completion of thesis would have not been possible. His direction is very much appreciated. I know that my writing was poor, his patience and assistance in finding ways to improve my writing was a bigger task for him than the content. Thank you for your great patience with me.

I would like to thank committee member Dr. Dixie West, who had knowledge of and worked with the Unangax. She also gave me ideas about whom I could contact for my thesis. This was very beneficial to my research. In addition, her direction in the writing of my thesis was very helpful. Thank you for your input and for assisting and sending me information that was pertinent for my thesis. I would also like to thank committee member Professor Jay Johnson for helping me with maps and for his input to my thesis. I would further like to thank Professor Margaret Pearce for her advice on maps. I am also grateful to Professor Michael Crawford for his assistance with my research.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Debbie Corbett and Rachel Mason, for without their great support and their assistance I could not have completed this research. Both have gone out of their way to assist me with my research. I cannot express my appreciation for all that both of them have done for me. I thank them for their time and effort with my trip to Alaska and for including me in on the Lost Villages Project. Thank you, Debbie, for letting me stay in your home and for driving me around Anchorage for my research. I also want to thank Maria Romero for her assistance, her enthusiasm, and her support. In addition, I want to thank Shannon Apgar-Kurtz and Christine Brummer, both of whom assisted Rachel in getting information for me.

I thank the University of Kansas libraries and those of other educational institutions such as, those of the University of Fairbanks, Unalaska High School, Kansas State University, and others (I apologize for those I may have forgotten) for their assistance in retrieving materials that were essential for my research. I thank KU librarian Julie Petr for her assistance in finding materials for me.

There are so many people who have assisted me with my research and that I would also like to acknowledge. I have benefited enormously from the work of Ray Hudson with his high school students and with surviving internees. Thank you, Ray, for sending me your work with the Cuttlefish classes and for the other work you have done. I could have not completed my research without it. I am deeply indebted to Alice Petrivelli, George Gordaoff and Mary Diakanoff. I appreciate the time that they have taken to sit and share their stories and experiences with me. Thank you for allowing me to share your stories. It has meant a great deal for me to meet with you and to use your experiences in my research. I want to thank Mary's daughter Evonne Mason. Had it not been for her recognizing who I was, I would have not known that we knew each other as children. It was a pleasure visiting with both you and your mother.

I also want to thank Jane Mensoff for sharing her adventures on the Lost Villages trips and for her input on my thesis and her pictures. I enjoyed visiting and getting to know you throughout my research. It was an honor to meet you and your family.

The Aleut Pribilof Islands Association, (APIA) it was the starting point where I thought I could get some answers about my mother's culture. I had no idea that I would discover information about the tragic history of the Unangax of which my mother was a part. She never disclosed her experiences to her family or I did not hear of them until I began researching this topic. I would like to thank Millie McKeown and Sharon Kay of APIA, both of whom were helpful in assisting me with in retrieving information and pictures.

I also want to say thank you to Laresa Syverson of the Ounalashka Corporation. I appreciated her time and effort in communicating with me and retrieving information for me. I want to thank her for going out of her way to locate my grandparents' graves in Unalaska. It means a lot to me and my family to know where they are located. Thank you.

Mike Baines, former Tribal Vice Chair of Sitka Tribes of Alaska, has made available his support in various ways. He pointed me in the right direction of where to get the correct information about my grandparents and the tuberculosis patients who were interred in Sitka as well as other information that was very helpful in my research. He introduced me to Shyla Neher, who also assisted me in retrieving information about the tuberculosis patients. I appreciated both their assistance with my research. Thank you.

I also thank Charles Mobley for helping me find an interview that he did with Nick Golodoff. His interview was helpful for understanding the experiences of the Attuans during the war, including Nick's experiences in Japan and his return to the Aleutians. Thank you for this information.

During the Lost Villages trip, I had a chance to get to know some of the surviving internees and other descendants of the Unangan communities in Kashega and Biorka. I got to know some of them and found new friends and family. I also got to meet Lauren Adams and Alexandra Gutierrez, both of KUCB in Unalaska, who were documenting the trips for film and radio. Thank you, Lauren, for filming and corresponding with me about the Lost Villages project. I would like to thank the crew of the *Tiglax*, a research vessel of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They were very friendly and helpful with those of us who traveled to Kashega and Biorka. It was a pleasure visiting and traveling with you. After arriving in Unalaska and Dutch Harbor, I met Janis Kozlowski of the U.S. National Park Service. She was kind enough to give me a tour and some history of the island of Unalaska, and also sent me information on its history. Thank you Janis, I appreciate your support and assistance.

I know that my writing needs much work and would like to take some time and acknowledge those who have helped me edit my thesis: April Beaty, Ginny Free, Debbie Corbett, Rachel Mason, Jane Mensoff, Camille Gerstel, Prof. Hoopes, Dr. West, and Richard Arnold. Thank you for your time and effort with this task. I know that it was time consuming.

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Finally, I would like to thank my husband's family and my family for all their love and support throughout my research. I know that my siblings, children, and grandchildren appreciate the time and effort I put into this thesis. I also want to thank my mom and dad for instilling good family values and ethics in me. I want to thank Jerry Painter and his family and the Waterhollow

Band for their support. It meant a lot to me to know I had their support. I really want to thank my husband Richard for his patience, love and support while I was working on this thesis. Thank you for pushing me when I needed it throughout my research. I could not have finished it without you.

## Preface

*"Tanang awaa. This is a work of my country."* According to Waldmar Jochelson, as he explains in *Aleut Tales and Narratives* (1990), "Thus the Aleut tale-tellers begin their narrations. They regard them as the product of a national, and not an individual, inspiration" (Bergland, 1990). Throughout the Aleutian archipelago, storytelling was one of the great arts among the Unangax.<sup>1</sup> The stories would begin in a loud voice with much authority and vigor. A few stories went on for one or two hours; others may have taken only a few minutes. Some stories tell of the origins of humans and animals. Storytelling is taken seriously, meaning that when one tells a story, he or she should pause frequently, followed by silence, seeking approval from the listeners, indicated by a prolonged "mmmm." The orator seeks approval from the audience for accuracy and style. When an orator tells a story and a mistake is made, he or she is never corrected. If he or she tells the story numerous times and wants to rectify their mistake, the listener may tell them "it is better, better hold it that way" (Turner, 2008).

No one can quit being who they really are, whether or not they know from whom they are descended or from where they come. Reconstructing events in telling the story of one's origins can aid in the process of community restoration. This is evident in the reconnection of kinship relations. This is why a connection with a specific place and a specific history is important for Unangan identity. In a sense, this thesis is a means of a spiritual healing and removal of grief for me and my mother. The narrative itself, although intensely culture-specific, is also universal in its concern with grief and the ability of the human spirit to transcend death (Dauenhauer and Richard, 1990). I will discuss my story of my trip to Kashega, Alaska, as well as the discovery

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<sup>1</sup> The term Unangan (pl. Unangax) is the one preferred by the people also referred to as "Aleut." This will be used instead of "Aleut" except where the latter appears in direct quotations or the titles of source materials.

of my mother's unknown story and the discovery of the location of my grandparents' burial crypt.

Having the right connections had a tremendous impact on my research, and each person led me to the next. Prof. Hoopes suggested I contact Dr. West, who connected me to Debbie Corbett, and in turn Debbie linked me to Rachel Mason. Without each step, I would not have had the opportunity to go on the Lost Villages trip, to meet a few of the survivors and other descendants, meet new family members, or gather information and pictures for my research. Without the right contacts and their help, this project probably would not have gotten off the ground.

When I first started this journey, I would never have thought that it would take me backward instead of going forward. There is a saying, "You can't really know where you're going until you know where you've been," and I believe this to be true in my situation. If truth be told, I wanted to know what lay ahead of me, my future. Rather than seeing my future, I saw something of my past, but I did not realize what I was looking at. It was like trying to solve a puzzle. I was at a loss, not knowing what this was. How or why was this important to me? Where was this going to take me? Little did I know that it was taking me back to my roots?

What I do I mean by journey? Well, it means that I wanted to know what my future was, and where it was taking me. So, I decided to go on a vision quest with the assistance of my husband's tribe (Chickamauga) and community. They helped me prepare for the vision quest. A few weeks before I traveled down to the ceremonial grounds, I had a couple of dreams that I believe that were pertinent to my vision quest. The first one was about choosing the women to go in the sweat lodge with me. There were three of them in my dream, and so I was guessing that I

should start thinking about who to go in the sweat with me. According to their tradition, I got to choose who went in the sweat lodge with me.

A few days later, I had another dream that was related to my vision quest. I thought it was more important, but did not understand part of it when I woke up. To start with, I was back in my hometown of Sitka, Alaska, downtown. My cousin yelled at me across the street and ran to greet me. He then gave me two items for my vision quest, and he told me that his family gave them to him when he had his vision quest. At the time, it perplexed me, because I wondered, “How did he know I was going on a vision quest?” One of the items was a part of an ear of corn that still had a few corn kernels on it. The other item, a three inch long leather-looking strip, was something I could not identify well. Since corn is an important part of my husband’s culture, I believe the ear of corn meant that my husband’s community was assisting me in my vision quest. I tried to understand what the other item was, and what its purpose was.

The time came to go down to the ceremonial grounds, and I prepared for the vision quest. First we built the sweat lodge and then I proceeded to locate and prepare the spot for my vision quest. When I met with the ladies who were going into the sweat lodge with me, they told me what to expect in the sweat. Following the sweat, we went into the creek, which is part of the ceremony of a sweat. We had the sweat, went to the creek as directed, then changed clothes and proceeded to the spot of my vision quest. Now, I will not discuss my vision, I will keep that to myself.

To continue, after the vision quest things began to fall into place. While researching a topic for my thesis, I learned about the evacuation of the Unangax during World War II and discovered my mother’s name on the evacuation list. As my research progressed, I was able to travel to Alaska with the help of Debbie Corbett and Rachel Mason. It was as though my

ancestors were there every step, guiding me and creating opportunities. I might never have written this thesis or explored who and where I came from otherwise.

Sometime after my return to Kansas, I reviewed the pictures that I had taken in Alaska and examined the Unangan Dancers regalia. It is in those moments that I realized that on their regalia was the strip of leather I saw in my dream. I finally recognized what that was and what it meant in my dream. It meant that I should to go back to my roots and find my family's history. The end depends on the beginning.

When I was growing up, my parents rarely discussed the family or the history of the cultures from which they came. Regrettably, I did not realize that my parents were of different tribes. Dad was Tlingit, born and raised in Sitka. Mom was Unangan, born in Unalaska before she moved to Wrangell. Even when my mom said she was from Unalaska, it still did not register that she was not the same tribe as my dad. I was really naïve in my youth, and in some respects still am. However, since I returned to school I have learned so much more.

In the fall of 1979, my parents sent me to an all-Native American college, Haskell Indian Junior College. I came from a little island of the coast of Alaska and I had never really been outside Alaska. This was a big cultural shock to me, in so many different ways. I did not know how I was going to adjust to this new environment. It was big, hot and humid, and filled with tribes from all across the nation. It was overwhelming! Most students knew their tribal or cultural traditions, whereas I did not. It was embarrassing, knowing very little about my culture or cultures. I ended up completing one year of college and did not return, choosing instead to get married and have a family.

Some years ago, I was watching a documentary about how the Tlingits were treated before and after statehood, in the video of *The Land is Ours* (1996). This film inspired me to

finish my education because I felt that Native people needed more educated people among them to help protect against unjust treatment. This is why I returned to Haskell, which by that time had become a four-year university. It wasn't until I had taken classes regarding Native issues, history, and culture that I became aware that I still did not know anything about my own cultural background. Once again I was embarrassed about having no knowledge of them. I had had twenty-some years to learn them, but as usual, I did not. It was funny that it took me going to school in a faraway place to learn about my cultural background. To make a long story short, during my undergraduate education I got to know my dad's Tlingit cultural history through assignments. However, I did not research my mom's side of the family.

I graduated from Haskell with a major in Business Administration, with an emphasis in Tribal Management, and tried to find employment, but with no luck. I looked into programs at University of Kansas and found they had a program in Indigenous Nations Studies offering an emphasis in Tribal Policy and Governance, something I thought went great with my undergraduate degree. I had a tough time finding a topic for my thesis. After changing so many times, I finally found one that was of most interest to me.

Because my mom had not disclosed her family background to us, I decided to look into Unangan culture. I began by researching the Aleut Corporation and other Unangan corporations. I discovered that there was a history I did not know, that during World War II there were some Unangax who had been taken as prisoners by the Japanese while others who were on other islands had been evacuated to Southeast Alaska by the United States military. I also found on the Internet that there was a documentary called *The Aleut Story*, so I looked to see if the university had a copy but with no luck. I tried to get it through the interlibrary loan program and received a

copy from another university. As soon as I got home, I watched it. It was heartbreaking to see what the Unangax went through.

I discovered that the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association Inc. sold a package deal, a DVD and a CD set, describing the untold justices that had occurred to the Unangan people. When it arrived, I immediately opened and watched the video and went over the information about John C. Kirkland and David F. Coffin, counsel to Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association Inc., and how they collected and assembled nine volumes of evidence and depositions from the surviving internees. Upon reading these volumes, I found my mom's and her family's name on the list of evacuees from Kashega. Needless to say, I was surprised, not only because they were on the list, but I also discovered that my mom had a brother I did not know about. This information gave me more incentive to continue research not only on Unangan history, but on my mom's specific background. I needed to know for myself, but also for my siblings, kids, grandkids and for those thereafter, what this story was all about.

Now that I had a foundation to begin my research, I needed to find more resources. With Dr. Hoopes's guidance, I contacted Dr. Michael Crawford, a professor of anthropology at KU who had worked in the Aleutian Islands, and Dr. Dixie West at Kansas State University, also a professor of anthropology who has worked in the Aleutians. Dr. West suggested I contact Debbie Corbett of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). At the time, I did not realize what the FWS had to do with the evacuation of the Unangax. I contacted Debbie and she was more than happy to give advice to help me find what I needed. She also suggested that I contact Rachel Mason of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS). After many discussions with both of them by email, both decided that it would be good for me to go to Alaska and participate in the Lost Village Project. I said, "Yes!" enthusiastically; however, I did not know what the project was about. Rachel or

Debbie later explained what this project was and when it would take place. Debbie and the FWS provided support for my round trip to Alaska from Kansas.

In the meantime, I had to obtain as much information as possible about the Unangan evacuation before I traveled to Alaska with interview questions for the evacuees. I attempted to get an approximate number and names of the evacuees. Rachel and Debbie were very helpful in pointing me in the right direction to obtain information on who to contact, as well other resources about the Unangax and the evacuation.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the relocation of Unangan during World War II (WWII) and provide the Native American and scientific communities with historical information about Unangan way of life. In addition, it will detail the impacts of WWII relocations of the Aleutian villages and individuals using personal interviews and formulate new ideas about educating the Unangax and other people about the Unangan past and present. I hope that by telling my own story about reconstructing my roots, I will assist others like me to find their own roots.

Chapter One discusses a pre-contact history of the Unangax, including a description of the Aleutian Islands, the indigenous language, the climate and environment, the cultural traditions, and traditional way of living, including fishing and hunting. The chapter also, discusses Unangan religion and political organization. Finally, I discuss how the Unangax adapted to their environment in which they lived in.

Chapter Two discusses the Russian occupation and later U.S. control of Unangan territory, why World War II came to the Aleutians, and how the Japanese invasion of the islands affected the Unangax. I also describe the circumstances of the Unangax internment and the conditions in the internment camps. In addition, I present and discuss personal insights about the internment from survivors who I interviewed in September 2010. Finally, I discuss how the camps affected the Unangax as a whole.

Chapter Three discusses leaving the villages and the arrival to the internment camps. It also discusses the planning of the Unangax back to the islands for sealing and the return of the Unangax to their villages. I discuss the four abandoned villages and why people were not allowed to return to them, and make observations about the post-internment geographic dispersal

(the “diaspora”) of the Unangax and why some did not return to the islands from Southeast Alaska. Additionally, I illustrate the impact of the evacuation of the Unangax. Finally, I describe an account of one of the Unangan survivors who was taken to Japan as a prisoner of war, his experiences in Japan, and his return to the Aleutian Islands.

Chapter Four focuses on how the Unangax discovered the unjust treatment and the civil rights that were denied them. I describe how the Unangax coped with conditions in the internment camps and sought restitution for their experience. Finally, I discuss what the Unangax are doing today in the way of establishing businesses under the Alaska Native Corporation Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1972.

Chapter Five discusses why the Lost Villages Project was created and describes the visit by internment survivors and the descendants of internees to the abandoned villages of Kashega and Biorka. I explain how a few key people helped the Lost Villages trip to become a reality for those survivors and the descendants of former residents of the now-abandoned villages of Kashega, Biorka and Makushin. I discuss my own history and my personal narrative of trips to Biorka and Kashega. Finally, I discuss my findings of my grandparents.

Chapter Six discusses the implementation of ideas of how to incorporate the Unangan history into the educational school system. Finally, I draw on my research and discuss my findings.

Dorothy Jones tells how the Unangax adjusted to the contact with the Western world in *Aleuts in Transition* (1976). Jones describes what some of the Unangan cultural traditions were before contact with the Russians. Jones’s knowledge of the Unangax on both the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands is drawn largely from her ten-year residency in the Aleutian Islands. She became familiar with most of the villages in the Aleutians. Because of her research and her knowledge of

the Unangax, the Justice Department gave Jones an opportunity to investigate and write about the Unangax and their history with the United States government. This was informed by documents created when the Pribilof Aleut (Unangan) brought a suit against the United States government for their years of servitude. Jones had access to Congressional hearings, specialized reports, censuses, an enormous personal correspondence file, records of the Unangax' grievances, agents' annual reports, files, and other documents. Jones put together a book, *A Century of Servitude* (1980), that describes what the Unangax went through, first under Russian occupation, and then under the United States government.

Books about the internment of the Unangax and Marla Williams' documentary *Aleut Story* (2005) made it more clear to me that the Unangan story needed to be told. This film makes it apparent that the government treated the Unangax as lower class citizens because they are Natives (indigenous people). For example, Flore Lekanof, a survivor of the Unangan internment during World War II, stated, "The Government owned us ... and they treated us as property. People learned that they weren't being treated as full citizens" (Williams, 2005). Alaska was different from other places in the U.S. in that, in most situations, the government wanted *land* from Indians. In the situation of the Unangax, they wanted *labor* from them.

*Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* describes the Japanese-American and the Unangan experiences of relocation and internment. The commission depended on John C. Kirtland and David F. Coffin, Jr.'s *The Relocation and Internment of the Aleuts During World War II*, which compiled and analyzed thousands of documents, government letters, telegrams, and letters from the internees. Then put the information into eight volumes that include military and government documents; depositions of the survivors; sections on the sealing operations, military situation, and conditions

of the camps; a summary of the relocation and internment; and the case in law and equity for compensation for the Unangax.

# Chapter One: The Aleutians and Their People

## Introduction

This chapter discusses the geographic area, the various dialects of Unangan language, climate, environment, the traditional Unangan culture, their customs, religious beliefs, politics, and the adaption of their lifestyle.

## Geography

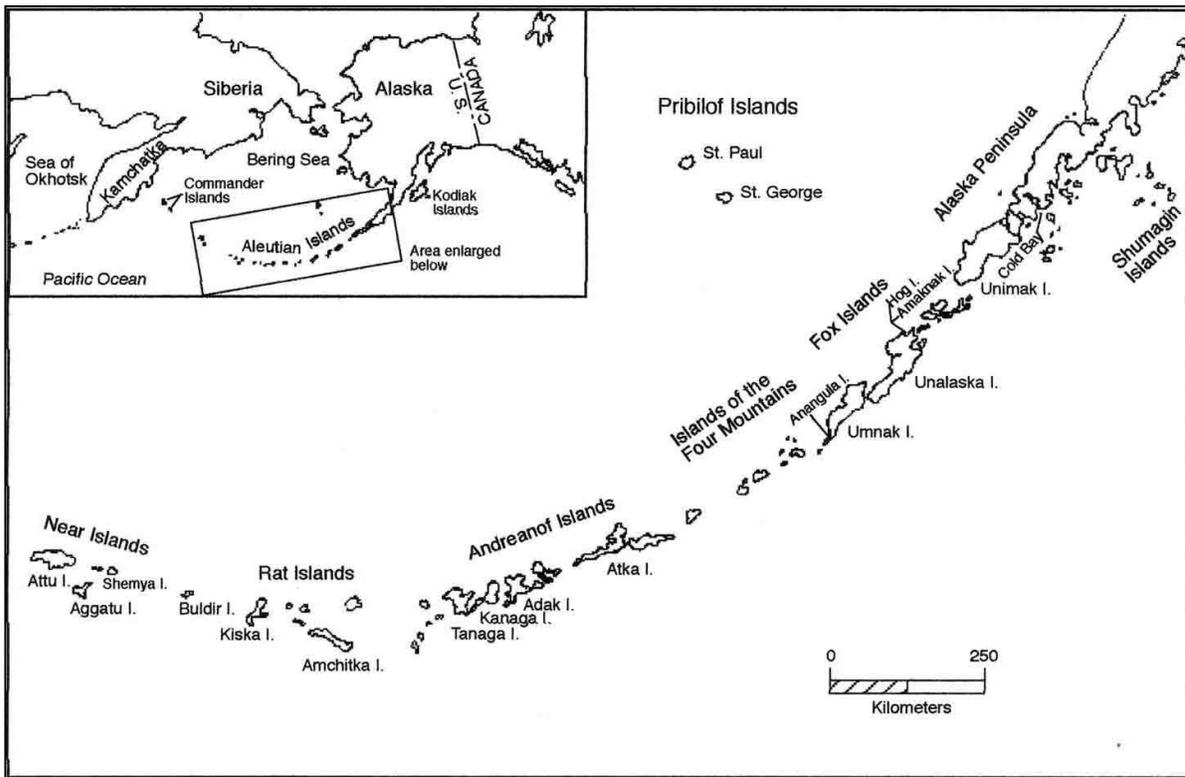


Figure 1.1. Map of Aleutian Islands. Courtesy of Dr. Dixie West.

The Aleutian Islands form a chain extending over more than 1200 miles from the Alaska Peninsula to the Asian continent. The slender chain of islands separates the Bering Sea on the north from the Pacific Ocean on south (Wilson & Richardson, 2008). The indigenous people who settled along the archipelago are referred to as Aleuts or (in their own language) Unangan. The people known by that name prefer to call themselves *Unangan*, or *Unangax* (pl.) which

means “coastal people” in the Aleut (Unangan) language, called Unangan Tunuu. The original definition may have other variations, but there are at least two theories, according to Unangan Tunuu expert Moses Dirks (Wilson & Richardson, 2008). One definition is “seaside,” “living by the sea.” The second is loosely translated as “those in between” and is thought either to reference the fact that the Aleutian Islands are located “between” mainland Alaska and Russia, or most probably, to reference the many turbulent passes “between” the major islands, which the Unangax frequently crossed in their journeys throughout and beyond the Aleutian chain. (See Fig. 1.1.) Early research documented human presence in the eastern section of the Aleutian Islands for approximately 9,000 years and in the western islands (Near Islands) for a third of that time (Petrivelli P. J., 2004).

Documented Unangan populations have been identified with these listed communities:

1. Qagaan Tayaġungin: People of the east, including the Alaska Peninsula, Shumagin Islands, and Sanak and Unimak Islands. Present villages include Sand Point, King Cove, False Pass, and Nelson Lagoon.
2. Qigiiġun: People of the eastern portions of the Fox Islands, the Krenitzin Islands and the eastern portions of Unalaska Island. Present villages include Akutan on Akutan Island.
3. Qawalangin: People of the western portions of the Fox Islands, the western part of Unalaska Island, and Umnak Island with Samalga. Present villages include Unalaska, Nikolski, St. Paul and St. George.
4. Akuuġun: People of the Islands of the Four Mountains. Presently, there are no villages. There are indications that there were villages on these islands at Russian contact.

5. Niiġuġis: People of the Andreanof Islands. Currently Atka on Atka Island is the only village. Adak was also part of the Niiġuġis group, but there has not been a Native village on the island for many years.
6. Naahmiġus: People of Tanaga and the Delarof Islands. Presently, no villages exist. The islands were used briefly for fox-trapping in the 1930s.
7. Qaxus: People of the Rat Islands. Presently, the U.S. government uses the island of Amchitka for seasonal scientific work; it has also been a site for atomic bomb tests. There is no permanent Native village.
8. Sasignas: People of the Near Islands. There was a traditional village on Attu before World War II. All of that changed when the island was invaded and the Japanese captured the Attuans (Wilson & Richardson, 2008).

Due to the effects of arrival of Europeans in the mid-eighteenth century, including displacement and epidemic diseases, only five out of the eight are still in existence. The groups lost include the Qax<sup>un</sup> or Qax<sup>us</sup> from the Rat Islands, the Naahmig<sup>us</sup> from the Delarof Islands, and the Akuug<sup>un</sup> from the Islands of Four Mountains (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004).

## **Language**

The language that the Unangax speak belongs to the Eskimo-Aleut language family, which is spoken in a region that extends from the Shumagin Islands, to the Pribilof Islands and to the Alaska Peninsula west of Port Moller. Patricia Petrivelli identified “zones” of variation that roughly correspond to the three historic dialects of the Unangan language (Petrivelli P. J., 2004):

1. Eastern Aleut, spoken on the Eastern Aleutian, Shumagin, Fox and the Pribilof Islands;
2. Atkan, spoken on Atka and Bering Islands, and a now-extinct dialect, Attuan;

3. A variation of Eastern Aleut that is spoken in local villages but has not yet been studied sufficiently to determine its relationship with other sub-dialects.

In Russian colonial times, many Unangan learned to speak Russian. The Unangan kinship terminology underwent significant changes after the time of contact, reflecting the frequency of unions between Russian men and Unangan women, and families which included “Creole” or mixed Russian-Native children. At present, many Russian loan words are used; particularly those which designate kinship. Today, Unangax speak English, and Russian continues to be used in the context of Russian Orthodox religion.

Not only do the Unangax and the Alaskan Eskimos have a common language, but they also have a similar appearance. For example, the Unangax and Eskimos have comparatively high sitting heights, medium to sub-medium stature, and small feet and hands, all cold-climate adaptations that help prevent loss of body heat. Both have similar frequencies of blood group markers, (ABO, MNS, and Rhesus systems) and other classic genetic markers, and molecular genetic markers, including mitochondrial DNA haplogroups A and D. The Unangax show high frequencies of haplogroup D and lower frequencies of haplogroup A, while, the Eskimos have a high frequency of haplogroup A and much lower haplogroup D frequency (Justice, Rubicz, Chittoor, Jantz, & Crawford, 2010).

### **Climate and Environment**

The Aleutian Islands are mountainous, treeless islands set along a chain of volcanoes that had deposited layers of ash, and now are layered with soggy tundra, with *Elymus* grass and broad leafed plants. The cold winds from Siberia and the ocean currents extend down from the cold Bering Sea runs into the warm air masses and currents of Pacific Ocean. The interaction of these

air masses produces the williwaw—winds of high velocity—and dense fog, rain, mists and snow (Goldstein & Dillion, 1992).

### **Traditional Unangan Culture**

The Unangax were very resourceful in making use of the marine life and the few land resources that provided food as well as sources of raw material for a rich material culture. When the Unangax first occupied the Aleutians, they used caves for protection from the harsh weather until the population grew beyond the capacity of these (Turner, 2008). The Unangax then built semi-subterranean dwellings, *barabaras*, from driftwood, sod and grass. Whale bone, especially ribs and mandibles, often supplemented driftwood timbers as roof beams and rafters. Vertical posts were set for the walls and longer posts were placed inside the house to carry cross beams. Long grass was laid directly on the frame and lashed tightly for roofing. Hatches were built into the center of the roof and served for light, as smoke outlets, and for entry and exit. Usually, but subject to variation, earth was placed on the grass and then covered with turf or sod. Sod would grow and blend into the surrounding grass, resulting in dwellings that blended into the landscape. When the Russians arrived, they introduced cows and goats to the area that created new dilemmas. Livestock would fall through the dwelling as they tried to feed on the roofs. Windows were introduced later (Jones D. M., 1976).

The Unangax used outdoor pits for cooking. Indoors, lamps gave enough heat so people could sit or lie comfortably. The best oil for the lamp was from the killer or sperm whale; it burned cleaner than oil from a baleen or seals, which created soot. The women utilized various parts from mammals and birds for clothing and ornaments. For instance, they made hooded garments from halibut bladder, the skin of whales' tongues, or the intestines of sea lions, which are waterproof and offered protection from moisture. The bones of birds and fish intestines were

made into needles and thread to make clothing. The Unangax also used bone needles to make tattoos on their faces and hands, rubbing black clay into their skin.

The women were also known for making grass baskets, especially the women from the island of Attu. During the American territorial period and up to the modern day, the baskets were rarely if ever used for practical purposes. Instead they were sold to earn income to buy outside goods. (See Fig. 1.2.)



Figure 1.2. Women making baskets in Unalaska, Alaska. Circa 1930s.  
Courtesy of Mary Diakanoff.

The Unangax were very resourceful in their use of whale, which was much more than a food source for them. They used ribs from whales to construct boats (*baidarkas*), tying them together into hoops and covering them with the hides of sea lions or seals. Blades made from ribs were used as paddles. A skirt of whale gut, drawn around the body of the fisherman, allowed no water to penetrate. Blubber was used as a heat source for their *barabaras* (houses).

The Unangax used darts, spears and throwing boards to hunt whales, sea lions, sea otters, seals and birds. They would make hooks from bones to fish for halibut, cod, greenlings, sculpins, Atka mackerel, herring, and salmon. To round out the diet, berries, and roots were used when

available. Not every hunt or fishing trip was a success; this is one of the reasons that the Unangax shared their catch. It was better to share food supplies than to hoard them (Jones D. M., 1976).

### **Social Customs and Social Complexity**

Ivan (Ioann) Veniaminov, a Russian Orthodox priest, kept detailed records of the eastern Unangax between 1823 and 1836 and developed Eastern Unangan ethnography. He describes how a new *barabara* was built. The elder of the dwelling was responsible for the building of the home. When the house was completed, there was a ritual sequence of who was permitted to enter the home. This was the ritual feast, and observances were held in accordance with the construction. The elder moved in first with “all his wives” followed by the rest of his family. After this happened, another feast was held (Petrivelli P. J., 2004).

Marriages, as documented by Veniaminov, were prearranged by the families. Veniaminov states that the groom carried out bride service at the home of the bride for a year or two unless he was able to pay bride wealth. After the two years and the birth of their first child, the couple returned to the groom’s family. If, for some reason, the wife did not fit in completely, or her husband died and she did not remarry into his family, she returned to her family.

Veniaminov also states that both patrilateral and matrilineal parents took part in naming the child. When a child was given a lineage name, it might come from the mother’s side, the father’s side, or both. Today, it is the custom at a naming ceremony for the grandfather of the child to deliver the history of the lineage and end it with assertion of its connection with the child. The education of the children fell to the maternal uncle. The principal responsibility for raising a child goes first to the mother’s brother, followed by the father’s brother, and finally the father (Petrivelli P. J., 2004).

Not everyone was wealthy. According to Veniaminov, there were three social classes: 1) the “honorable”; 2) a middle class, or ordinary Unangax and liberated slaves; and 3) a lower class of slaves. The honorables received a greater share of the bounty of war, including rare stones and slaves. Owning slaves, of course, was a sign of wealth. Slaves were taken from other villages during warfare and used for barter.

Wealth was not the only criterion of status or prestige. If a wealthy person did not have good hunting skills or show signs of bravery during warfare, he was subjected to mockery. Status, therefore, depended not on possessions alone but on demonstrations of the qualities the Unangax valued most highly: generosity, fortitude, patience, industry, self-sufficiency, cooperation, skill, and bravery in hunting and war.

Unangax had two contrasting sets of values. One was shown in the relationship between honorables and middle-class persons within the village. The other was shown in honorables’ and middle-class persons’ behavior toward enemies and slaves. Within the villages, they believed in harmony, cooperation, generosity, and cohesion and avoided conflicts at all costs. The displacement of hostility to enemy villages and the capture of slaves appear to have been an important means to maintain internal village cohesion.

### **Religion and Politics**

Philosophy and religious beliefs went hand-in-hand for the Unangax. They believed that there were good and bad spirits and a creator, and revered all those who were more powerful than themselves. There were male and female shamans who had the power to call on the spirits of their ancestors, see into the future, and heal the ill. Because the shamans had no special privileges, and sometimes were not paid for their services, they often lived and even died in poverty.

The political leadership consisted of a chief and elders. According to Veniaminov, there was an unclear understanding of how a person became a chief. Being of direct lineage was usually how one became chief, but if there were no descendants, then a choice was made. If a person met the criteria, that is, if he had skills as hunter and warrior and could organize a collection of activities, then he could become chief. In some cases, if only one family lived in a village, the head of the family was the chief. His duties were to insure the welfare of and protect the village, mediate disputes, organize and lead in warfare, and make decisions on what kind of punishment was handed out for wrongdoings.

### **Rites of Passage**

A hunter would sit for hours in his kayak, his feet outstretched in front of him, paddling. From the kayak, he would throw his harpoon with a throwing board. Because of the long hours that a hunter spent in the kayak, he would stretch the ligaments, tendons of the knee, back and shoulder. It was therefore essential to begin training for survival and for hunting while boys were young. A way to exercise was for the child to be seated on a box, his legs extended and heels resting on another box. A tutor would then massage his knees and press down on them gently, accompanying this treatment with a rhythmical sound, “t-t-t-t.” The boy would be required to bend his foot and toes far forward and then far backward. This exercise lengthened the hamstring muscles on the back side of the lower thighs and lower legs. It also loosened the muscles in the small of the back, enabling him to sit comfortably in a kayak.

A boy was taught not only physical and technological training, but he was also tutored to observe animal behavior. He was taught to observe the age changes in each animal and bird, their food preferences, their flying or swimming attitudes, and their responses to other animals. Their behavior in relation to time of day and weather conditions was particularly important. Keen

observation meant the difference between a good shot, a poor one, or none at all (Laughlin, 1980).

When a girl became a certain age or a young woman menstruated for the first time, a hut was built for only her. No one but her mother could enter the hut to bring food and drink. It was customary to make her put on the skin of an animal that was not slit down the front, and have her sit there with her front covered. This was done so that she would not be able to breathe moving air nor see the rain. It was said that, if she did, her tears would flow continuously through her life. No man could see her while she was sequestered in the special hut. It was thought that if a man did see her, he would become deaf and blind. While she was in the hut, her mother would take her excretions and menstrual discharge to a ditch outside, making sure that the wind did not reach them. If this was not done, it was thought that animal(s) would be afraid of what she sewed. If this tradition was done correctly, it would be possible for her she to become someone's wife. The young woman could not leave the hut until she had menstruated for the second time. Then her mother would bathe her, and put a fur parka on her, take her home, and then braid her hair. The end of the braid would be bleached with whale gut. When she was married, she would not be allowed to sleep with her husband while she was menstruating; to do so would prevent him from having a successful hunt (Bergland, 1990).

The only times warfare occurred was when it happened between villages that used different dialects or when foreign countries invaded the islands. Raids were carefully planned but with limited objectives. Usually, these were intended to take revenge for an insult or to maintain an ongoing feud. Those villages that spoke the same dialect and had strong bonds through common ancestry helped or assisted each other. They took turns in celebrations, dances, singing, and games, sharing in gifts that were important for their lifestyle.

## **Unangan Adaptation**

Since the Unangax first arrived in the Aleutian chain, they have adapted to the environment with its limited materials, and resources the land and ocean have provided for them. For example, they built their *barabaras* from timber, grass and sod; made clothing from birds and marine life; and for food gathered bird eggs, berries, roots, and hunted and fished the marine life. The whale was used for many things: its oil for fuel; ribs used as part of the frame of the *barabara* and the *baidarkas*; intestines used as protective clothing; and of course, the meat for food. Had the Unangax not adapted to their environment from the beginning, they would not have survived.

From a young age, the boys were taught lessons to prepare them for adulthood and survival. They were expected to sit for hours in one spot, so that they could stay in their *baidarkas* for hunting and fishing, or stretch their limbs, so that they may handle situations when it came time to gather eggs on cliff ledges. Also, they learned to observe animal life, so that they had knowledge of animals' habits, and when to hunt them.

Not only did the Unangax have to adapt to the environment, but they had to adapt to foreigners like the Russians, and Americans. Under the Russian occupation the Unangax were able to sustain part of their culture, as they were allowed to speak their language and the Russians were willing to learn the Unangan language; Unangan culture or history was taught in schools when they were under Russian occupation. The Russian Orthodox Church, which also operated schools, was also more accommodating to Unangan culture than other religious institutions under American rule. The Americans did not learn Unangan language and prohibited its use and the teaching of Unangan history and culture in the schools. Oral history was passed down through the years, from generation to generation, until they were under the United States

government control; some of the oral history managed to survive even through the World War II evacuation era.

## **Chapter Two: Invasion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter tells about the Russians' arrival in the Aleutian Islands and how this changed the lives of the Unangax. It discusses what happened to the Unangax after the Russia sold Alaska to the United States and the. I then describe the Japanese invasion in the Aleutian Islands and World War II, focusing on the U.S. government's attitude towards the Unangax and how the government made the decision whether or not to evacuate the Unangax from the islands.

### **Russian Occupation**

Peter the Great had designed a plan to raise a Russian flag on the American continent. He died before this happened, but his widow Catherine, his grandson Peter II, and his niece Anna oversaw actions that ultimately realized his plan. Anna, who had a head for business, was interested in implementing of a trade agreement with China following the Treaty of Kiakhta. This treaty set up Kiakhta as the point of entry for Russian trade groups that traveled to Peking as an international trading center where Russian and Chinese merchants met and traded on a regular basis. For the Russians, this meant a very lucrative business with the Chinese, especially in furs. The Chinese paid in gold and silver--hard currency--so the Russian government wanted to make sure that it would maintain a monopoly at Kiakhta for the sale of furs (Black, 2004).

Russian sovereignty in Alaska was based on the "Right of Discovery" established by Mikhail S. Gvozdev in 1732. In 1741, the "Right of Occupation" was established by Vitus Bering, a Danish navigator who was in the service for the Russian Navy, and Alexei Chirikov, a Russian captain and navigator (Black, 2004). Bering was the first to observe the Unangax at Nagai Island, one of the largest Shumagin Islands located in the Gulf of Alaska. He reached the vicinity of a number of islands in the Aleutian chain before he was shipwrecked. Bering died on

one of the Komandorsky Islands that was later named in his honor. Subsequently, on a voyage in 1742, Chirikov came in the vicinity of Umnak Island or Unalaska and to the island of Attu. He sent back reports of an abundance of fur-bearing animals. Since the Chinese were paying well for furs, Russian fur hunters and explorers were inspired to travel to Alaska.

In 1745, Michael Nevodtsikoff and his crew discovered three islands in the Aleutians. They spent the winter months on one of these unknown islands so that they could get at the large population of sea otters for pelts. Nevodtsikoff transported an Unangan back to Russia for the purpose of learning his language. After being in Russia for a short while, this Unangan began to learn to Russian language and gave the Russians a report. He said his name was Temnac, that he was from Att (Attu), and that he was a native. He described a large or great island, Sabya, where the inhabitants were called Koggi and another closer island where the Russians stayed for the winter. The Russians baptized Temnac and gave him the name Paul.

In September, the Russians were traveling among the islands and landed on one where they noticed approximately a hundred inhabitants coming to the beach to greet them. Uncertain of their intentions, the Russians tried to speak to them through their interpreters. Unfortunately, the Unangax could not understand what they were saying. (The Russians did not realize that there were different dialects among the Unangax.) The crew decided to leave. However, the winds took them to the other side of the island, where they anchored (Cox, 1780).

The fur traders later increased their operations in other parts of Alaska and extended as far as California. After Russian contact, the Unangan population declined approximately 80 percent due to disease, malnutrition, and massacre. The Russians not only competed against each other, but now had to contend with countries such as the United States and Great Britain. In 1799, the Russian government granted a monopoly to the Russian-American Company, a private

firm. The company also had the authority to govern and represented an occupation by both the Russian government and private citizens. The company's occupation led to the mistreatment of the Unangax. Over time, the Russian Orthodox missionaries who accompanied Russian settlements replaced Unangan spiritual institutions with Christianity. Eventually, the Unangax were considered Russian subjects. As such, they fell under the general laws and protection under the empire, but the company had few legal guidelines to govern its behavior.

As stated earlier, each pre-contact village had a chief and council of elders. Under Russian control, the company decided to institute a joint village administration, meaning there was a village manager from the company as well as the Unangan chief. However, it was an unbalanced partnership. The company's authority always dominated, and the Russian managers also had the power to appoint chiefs or remove them from their positions. Additionally, the managers wanted to take the prestige and power from the one chief system, changing it to a three chief system. Although the company attempted to take the leadership away from the chiefs, the villagers still came to the chiefs to have them help resolve disputes, organize communal decisions, and help with other community activities.

With the Russians' discovery of the abundance of furs on a few of the Aleutian Islands, they transferred the Unangax closer to where the furs were and consolidated the villages. This made Russian administration easier and more economic. Furthermore, the Russians realized that they relied on the labor of the Unangax because: 1) there were few Russians in the territory; and 2) the Russians lacked knowledge, experience, and technology in the necessary hunting skills. However, the Unangan laborers were paid the same wages that the Russians paid other workers.

In 1786, a Russian navigator, Gerasim Pribilof, identified two islands that were the breeding grounds of thousands of seals. One he named George, after his ship, and the other

Peter-and-Paul. The first would eventually be called St. George and the second St. Paul, known together as the Pribilof Islands. The Russians relocated Unangan hunters and their families to these islands to avoid having to transport the Unangax back and forth to their villages in the Aleutians.

The Unangax relocated to the Pribilofs eventually lost most of their traditional skills. They were far away from their traditional hunting territories, and the Russians industrialized the fur industry. Local Unangax were put to work driving, slaughtering, and skinning the seals on the beaches during the summer months, the best time for harvesting these marine animals. Other Unangan communities were free to hunt up and down the coast for part of the year and to hunt locally for their families or villages during the rest of the year. They were more successful than the Unangax who were moved to the Pribilofs in maintaining their aboriginal skills in boating, hunting, and fishing.

Evidently, the Russian-American Company did manage to do a decent job of sustaining seal populations, in contrast to independent Russian fur traders who threatened the survival of the sea otters with overhunting. The Company undertook preservation measures, implementing harvesting policies that limited seal capture to males of two and three years of age. This age limitation aided in maintaining seal populations and also provided skins that were in prime condition. Few males were needed for breeding, as with herds of domesticated animals, and the females were not killed. During the last forty years of its occupation of the islands, the Russian-American Company monitored and harvested an average of 20,000 seals each year. However, this was only a fraction of the potential harvest. When Russia sold Alaska to the United States, the seal population was estimated to be over two million (Jones D. , 1980).

This economic climate did not remain static. By the 1850s, Russian attention to Alaska began to decrease as a result of changing economics and geopolitical concerns. The fur trade in Russian America had been profitable for more than a century, but changing ecological and commercial conditions required new strategies. Russian power in the region contracted and became more focused and consolidated. Alaska, whose economy was inefficient, distant, poorly defended, and poorly provided for by the Russians, was left wanting. After weighing all its options, the Russian government concluded that it had little choice but to sell its American colony. Although some Russian statesmen opposed the sale, others realized that Russia was overextended in Alaska. Despite Alaska's potential, the future of Russia on the Pacific lay in the fertile Amur valley and not in Alaska (Wrangell, 1867).

Great Britain had an interest in Alaska as an addition to its territory Canada. However, after losing the Crimean War to Britain, France, and Turkey in 1856, Russia was in no mood to negotiate with Great Britain or to see Alaska go to its enemy. It chose the United States instead. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russia and the United States agreed on most foreign policy issues, including a common hostility to Great Britain.

In March 1857, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich dispatched a letter to Prince A.M. Gorchakov in which he stated his concerns in reducing Russia's spending on naval forces by one-fourth. He also expressed a view that the United States would eventually take control over the entire North American continent, reasoning that the Russian government might as well be paid for its colony before either Great Britain or the United States took possession of it.

The Alaska Purchase took nearly fifteen years and involved many key players. In Russia, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, the younger brother of Emperor Aleksandr II, was the strongest advocate for the sale. Prince Aleksandr Gorchakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, did

not want to give up any of the Russian territory. But Edouard de Stoeckl, the Russian ambassador in Washington, helped convince the powers in St. Petersburg that selling Alaska would be in the best option for Russia. The pressure to sell proved overwhelming. Baron Ferdinand Von Wrangell, who had been chief manager of the Russian-American Company, argued that the price of Alaska should reflect its current and future worth in land, seaports, and rich stores of resources such as fish fur, timber, and mineral and coal deposits, land.

On December 16, 1866, Emperor Aleksandr II met with his key ministers in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg and made the final decision to sell. The Tsar set the price at five million dollars as the lowest acceptable offer. He sent the Russian ambassador to Washington with instructions to finalize terms for the deal with Secretary of State William H. Seward (Russia and the Sale of Alaska). Capitalizing on Seward's enthusiasm, the Russian government's price went to \$7.2 million. The Alaska Treaty was signed March 18, 1867. Ratifications followed, without any problems in Russia, with a few delays in the United States, including, perhaps, some bribery to officials. By the terms of the treaty, ratification had to be achieved within three months from the signing or by June 30, 1867 (Black, 2004). Two years after the Civil War, Alaska became a U.S. territory.

### **Post-Russian Unangan Affairs**

The purchase of Alaska by the United States marked the end of the Russian era. It took almost a year after the purchase for the United States to pay Russia 7.2 million dollars for the Alaska territory. Congress was occupied with rebuilding after the Civil War and was in the process of trying to remove President Andrew Johnson, who had been impeached, from office. Johnson, acquitted by one vote in his impeachment trial, had failed to persuade Congress to make provisions for "the occupation and government of the territory as part of the dominion of

the United States” (Hutchison, 1994). The immediate administration of Alaska was a low priority for the United States and its leaders. As a result, Alaska was governed under a military rather than a civilian administration for its first seventeen years as a United States territory.

With the purchase of Alaska, traditional life ways and governance changed for most of the Unangax. For example, Unangax went from living in traditional *barabaras* to carpentered frame houses. This was in part due to the ridicule they received for not living up to the standards of non-Natives, who felt that *barabaras* were filthy. However, not all villages with *barabaras* were regarded as dirty. Historian Ray Hudson has done research based on interviews with four elders from villages in the Aleutians. Ivan Petroff told him that, “Biorka was famous for its well-built, clean, and attractive *barabaras*” (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004). The requirements for heating their new frame houses with coal, oil, and wood stoves made the use of Western cash necessary and the Unangax eventually became dependent on U.S. currency. Formerly, it had only taken an oil lamp to heat a home. The Unangax also found it easier to use wooden boats and guns for hunting, rather than taking the time to build *bidarkas* and hunt with spears and throwing boards. Teachers, missionaries and the settlers worked to assimilate the Unangax to European ways through systematic introduction of non-Unangan values and life ways. Their goal was further accomplished by not allowing the use of the students’ own language in school, disregarding Unangan history in classes, and also by public ridicule of Unangan customs such as eating raw fish or using fermented fish oil.

As mentioned earlier, the Russians established a well-thought-out system to preserve the seal population that allowed them to continuously harvest enough seals to turn a profit. During the Russian occupation, however, the Americans criticized the Russians for having forced the Unangax into labor they did not want to perform. At the time of the Alaska purchase, the

Americans expressed concern for the Unangax. In fact, the Secretary of the Treasury, in promoting a public monopoly of the Pribilof Islands, stressed the importance of establishing humanitarian institutions for the care and welfare of the Native Alaskans. The majority of the workers there were Unangax who had been forced to work for wages not only by the American Commercial Company, but by the U. S. government as well.

The Secretary of the Treasury granted a lease of the Pribilof sealing operations to the American Commercial Company. It happened to be the lowest bidder, had already owned property on the Pribilof Islands, and possessed industry knowledge of the pelt trade. Although the company had a private monopoly on the trade in the Pribilof Islands, it did not re-create the Russian system. The legislation gave the company control only of trade; the government maintained some control over the seals and the Unangan sealers. Furthermore, the legislation also demanded that the Secretary of Treasury set rules and regulations for the comfort, maintenance, education, and protection of the Unangax. In 1870, the Act to Prevent the Extermination of Fur Seals was established. It emphasized three key points: 1) monetary concerns of the trade; 2) the seal harvest; and 3) the welfare of the Unangax (Jones D. , 1980). The Bureau of Fisheries, created by the Department of Commerce and Labor, had the responsibility to watch over the Pribilof Islands and thus had a substantial role in the administration of the Unangan villages there. Today, the seal harvest is managed by the reorganized Bureau of Fisheries, created in 1909.

Statements by U. S. officials about the Unangax were in contrast with the actions of the U. S. government and reveal a hypocritical approach. For example, the American Commercial Company prohibited the Unangax from selling furs or meats to other companies. It limited their

subsistence fishing to only the shorelines of their villages, and they were not allowed to travel without permission.

In 1911, D. P. Foley, the Senior Captain of the United States Revenue Cutter Service and commander of the Bering Sea Patrol Fleet, attempted to relocate the people of the three Unangan communities of Makushin, Kashega, and Akutan to a single settlement in Chernofski because he wanted to concentrate everyone into a single settlement. However, the people from the different villages did not want to live together. He wrote, “Like other people . . . they have a love for their native places and are moreover remnants of tribes that once waged bitter warfare against one another and some of the old animosities still live though the war spirit is dead. . .” (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004). Foley believed that the Unangax should become farmers and forget about hunting and fishing. He also thought if they had schooners, rather than their traditional *bidarkas*, they could make a living off the ocean. Although Foley underestimated Unangan attachment to their traditional life, his goal was to improve their lives. He did not like seeing the Unangax taken advantage of and he tried to protect them from the abuses of outsiders. Foley pointed out that hunters and traders were poisoning the foxes and trading whiskey for furs, calling the trade in alcohol a “growing evil that should be abolished” (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004, p. 22). Foley tried to improve the lives of and protect the Unangax.

### **Government Attitudes toward the Unangax and the Decision to Relocate Them**

The threat of Japanese attack in the Aleutians mounted in the first months of 1942. A meeting was held on March 13, 1942 among various government departments and agencies and Acting Alaska Governor Bob Bartlett concerning the evacuation of the Unangax. The consensus at that time was not to evacuate the Unangax. Most of the officials felt that “these people could never adjust themselves to life outside of their present environment, whereas they could ’take to

the hills' in case of danger and be practically self-sufficient for a considerable period" (Kirkland & Coffin, 1981). If the Unangax could adjust to the island environment of their villages, the thinking went, why could they not adjust to other local environments? There is no evidence that the Red Cross intervened on behalf of the Unangax, or that there was military protection for any Unangan village except Unalaska, adjacent to Dutch Harbor. Women and children from Unalaska were moved to other outlying villages, where they would be among familiar faces and an environment that supported their subsistence hunting. The military gave the Unalaska Unangax a choice as to where they would be relocated (Kirkland & Coffin, 1981).

In April of 1942, a letter was dispatched from the office of Commissioner John Collier, asking for an immediate answer whether arrangements should be made to evacuate the Unangax from their villages. This issue was considered in an informal meeting with representatives of the Navy Department, Red Cross, War Department, Federal Security Agency, and other agencies. The representatives in Juneau and Superintendent Hirst agreed that the Unangax should be evacuated; however, Alaskan Governor Ernest Gruening thought that the Japanese would not bomb non-military areas and that a forced evacuation would do harm more than good.

By June 4, 1942, Governor Gruening sent a letter to the Secretary of the Interior stating his own and Superintendent Hirst's concerns about evacuating Attu and Atka. The officials doubted that an evacuation would occur because of the presence of the Japanese and the amount of money needed to evacuate the Unangax. However, the Office of Indian Affairs was in favor of evacuation. Despite the many discussions whether or not to evacuate the Unangax, little preparation was made. Consequently, when the Japanese invaded the U. S. military was forced to evacuate the Unangax without adequate direction or support from the Interior Department. The military was not administratively equipped to conduct such actions (Bernstein, 1982).

The Interior Department exercised its authority over the Unangax through three agencies or departments. They included the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Office of Division of Territories and Island Possessions. The OIA focused on education, creating schools and appointing teachers. The FWS were responsible for maintaining a profitable harvest of the fur seals from the Pribilof Islands. The FWS were also responsible for the education and welfare of the Pribilof Unangan. However, none of these offices exercised its influence to the benefit of Unangan villagers. Because the Unangax were the only people who could harvest and process the fur seals, their work remained under the control of the United States government.

## **The Japanese and World War II**

There was some Japanese presence in the Aleutian Islands before WWII. According to Mary Diakanoff, a Unangan internment survivor, in an interview in Juneau in 2010, she remembers how, before the war, she and other kids would hide when the Japanese came into Kashega. She also mentioned that her grandfather told stories about how the Japanese would capture and keep them as slaves and how the people in the Pribilof Islands chased off the Japanese or had some kind of battle with them. Mary was not really sure why this had happened though, speculating it was because they had been taking seals or harvesting other sea life. She mentioned that the Japanese were surveying the inlets and surrounding area. This suggests they were considering more advanced plans, possibly commercial plans, for the area (Diakanoff, 2010).

In 1940, global tension was growing. At that time the United States realized the need to strengthen its defense perimeter in the Pacific Rim: Alaska, Hawaii, and the Panama Canal. The Army sent approximately five thousand troops to Alaska. Construction of air bases at Cold Bay

and Umnak Island was designed to be part of a strategic plan to help protect the Aleutian Islands. The port of Dutch Harbor was a primary center of concern. According to Kevin Hutchison's *World War II in the North Pacific* (1994), as early as November 1941 the Japanese made urgent plans to invade and destroy the U. S. presence in the Aleutian Islands. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States military sent more troops to Alaska. In March of 1942, U. S. Army Intelligence reported that the Japanese planned to attack the Aleutian Islands. The Aleutian Island campaign was largely a diversionary strategy meant to divide the United States military's resources. This was accomplished by simultaneously attacking the Aleutian Islands and attacking Midway Island (Hutchison, 1994).

Alice Petrivelli, a former Atka resident and internee survivor in the Aleutian Islands, described what happened in 1942 when the Japanese attacked the Aleutians. In the fall of 2010, she permitted me to interview her. Alice told me that residents had their first indications of a Japanese attack from seeing military preparations by the United States. Fox holes and dugouts were prepared and routine siren practices held during which the villagers would go to an assigned area for cover. Recalling some of the events leading to the invasion by the Japanese, Alice gave a firsthand account of the June 3, 1942 attack, and of the internment.

When the war started, the Magee's, were our teacher and I guess at that time, they decided that in order for us to be safe from the Japanese, they would move us, so now remember I was 12, nobody talked to me, I learned later, that they had, I know that they had a meeting when the men came back from trapping, ... and the men came back sometime in April, they had community meeting, and my father came back and told us they're going to move us...(Petrivelli A. , 2010).

Alice stated the Unangax were preparing to evacuate in April, but nothing happened and no ships came. In June 1942 Dutch Harbor was bombed. Alice remembers how Patrol Bomber Consolidated Aircraft. (PBY) planes would come to Atka to refuel and replenish their ammunition. She also related that the military told the village leaders to take the Unangax to

their summer fish camps where they would be safer. The villagers moved to the fish camps. Eventually they were running out of supplies, so her father and other men went back to the village. While the men were gone, the village children heard a plane. They would usually run up the hill and wave to the American planes; they discovered that this was a Japanese plane. They ran down the hill and told Mrs. Mercian, the adult left in charge, yelling out, “Japanese, Japanese, the Japanese planes.” She told the children to hide.

When the Unangan men arrived at Atka, the Navy did not allow them into the village to get their supplies. When the Atkan men saw the Japanese attack planes, they headed back to the fish camps. As they left they saw the Navy burn their homes, leaving only four houses. Later it was learned that these four homes were preserved because they had complete indoor plumbing. Alice believes that the Unangax finally left Atka on the twelfth of June. That same day, some of the Japanese planes came back; the villagers saw one plane go down in the Atka harbor (Petrivelli A. , 2010).

Darlene Smith interviewed internee survivor Reverend Ishmail Gromoff from Unalaska, who recalls that on that day he and his fellow villagers were having a baseball game. The police sighted a distant ship and were afraid because they thought it was a Japanese ship. The ship proved to be American; the Navy gave the Unangax twenty-four hours to evacuate their village. They gathered what they could and boarded the ship *Delarof*. Gromoff also recalls that the *Delarof* was being escorted by the Coast Guard and “they think that they detected a submarine so they didn’t want to take a chance so they went through Bristol Bay Area then came down here. I remember the boat used to zigzag like this” (Smith, 1997).

Internment survivor Mary Diakanoff, also living at Unalaska when the war began, recalls the day after the bombing at Dutch Harbor:

This was after the Japanese had bombed Dutch Harbor, and they killed, I think it was 27 that were asleep in the barracks, and they, didn't demolish the hospital, but the bomb fell in front of the hospital, and it pulled the wall off and bunks, beds were hanging out, and then before, before they got too vicious we had to climb on back on the of the Army truck and go up in the valley, I used to wonder how safe we were on top of the hill, but my son told me the Japs wouldn't waste a bomb on a few people scattered above, that's why they thought it was safe (Diakanoff, 2010).

## **Chapter Three: Conditions in and Effects of the Unangan Internment Camps**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses: 1) the Unangax departure of the villages and the arrival to internment camps in Southeast Alaska, 2) the Unangan internment, 3) U.S. discussions on whether or not to return some of the Unangax for the sealing season in 1942, and 4) strategies for returning Unangax to the Aleutian Islands. Some of the Unangan people were not allowed to return to their villages; I discuss why they were not allowed to return. I also illustrate the impact that the internment has had on the Unangax and the geographic diaspora after the war. Finally, I discuss the experiences of the prisoner of war internees that were taken to Japan and their return back to the Aleutians.

### **Leaving the Islands and the Arrival in the Internment Camps**

Among the concerns the Unangax had when they were first told of the evacuation were: How long will we be gone from our villages? Where is the U.S. military going to take us? Initially the Unangax from Kashega were boarded onto the ship *California*, to go to Chernofski and pick up more Unangax; they remained on board for about ten days. “It was a nice big boat and it had nice staterooms, dining room, a real passenger boat...” stated George Gordaoff (2010 interview), a surviving Unangan internee. He also mentions that it took some time to round up everyone from the surrounding villages. Days later they arrived at Wrangell in southeast Alaska, where the boat crew, the chiefs of the villages, and the Tlingit people at Wrangell discussed at length how the Unangax might be accommodated. The Unangan families and their luggage were loaded onto trucks and taken to Wrangell Institute, a Native school built in 1932 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Unangax were dropped off on the beach; survivors remembered that the school was closed at the time and that there was a shortage of food. It was difficult to obtain

enough groceries for such an influx of people. George Gordaoff mentions that the Tlingits provided the Unangax with some dog salmon, and they made the best of what they had in “kind of like a beg and steal sort of situation” (Gordaoff, 2010). George’s village arrived after others, because when asked if there were tents set up for them he said no, they had had to set them up and there were still more people coming in.

In contrast, Mary Diakanoff recalls that on her arrival at Wrangell Institute there wasn’t any room for the people of her village. There were tents up, but she stayed in the dorms. Mary was excited when she arrived, because there were Kashega people already there. She narrates that they had to stand in line for food, that it was demoralizing to the Unangax, and that she did not like the meat in large cans. Villagers were given small amounts of flour, sugar, and other supplies. Because Mary’s father was white, he was not evacuated from the islands, and her mother would write to him requesting money. With cash they were able to order food from Wrangell. Mary Diakanoff remembers that she was happy to get off the boat and that they picked blueberries and crabapples. Pauline Lekanoff, an internee survivor from Unalaska, recalls, that “they had to make three trips to Burnett Island. The people that arrived first received the best equipped housing” (Smith, 1997). Some stayed in the bunkhouses; others received equipment to fix up other housing that was in poor condition.

After a few days at Wrangell Institute, Mary Diakanoff was taken to Burnett Inlet. She mentions that Burnett Inlet was not as bad as Funter Bay, because the people who were interned at Burnett were accustomed to being around other people who were not Unangax. When they first arrived at Burnett, the Unangax were all put into a bunkhouse; each family was put into one room. However, Mary remembers that her mother and another older woman found a cannery

cookhouse that had a stove and two bedrooms where they could stay, which was better than the bunkhouse. Eventually, the villagers received lumber to help build or fix the houses at Burnett.

On their arrival, the Unangax were given vaccinations, regardless of their health status or medical histories. Being under their care, she said;

I guess, they didn't, all the kids, I guess they didn't have records, but maybe some places they didn't have their shots, but at Unalaska we had the hospital, we all had shots, but they didn't listen to us, if we tried to tell them, it wasn't important, but it seemed like we didn't have any freedom (Mary Diakanoff, 2010).

George Gordaoff was ready to go to Burnett Inlet, but asked to stay at Wrangell to cook and help clean. When the job was done, he was sent to Ward Lake. The principal sent George to school at Juneau; after school, he entered military service. George therefore had no experience of the internment camps, only of Wrangell Institute.

Alice Petrivelli recalls that from Atka, the people of her village went to Nikolski and then to Dutch, where they met up with the Pribilof people. They spent a week or two on the ship *Delarof* and arrived at Killisnoo on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June. At Killisnoo, the villagers were given a mattress, a pillow, and a blanket for each person and a weeks' worth of food, but no aspirin or any medical supplies. Alice's sister was ill with pneumonia. Lacking medical supplies and unable to locate the leaves they would normally have used for healing at home because they were unfamiliar with the local plant life at Killisnoo, Alice's sister nearly died. Another Unangan, Annie Golley, happened to have healing knowledge and was able to treat the girl with traditional medicinal practices.

Alice recounted that when they arrived at Killisnoo, the Unangax had no guns or fishing gear to use to sustain themselves. She said that if it weren't for the people bringing fish from Angoon, the Unangax would not have survived the first winter there. Over time, people found

jobs in Chatham, a fishing cannery, and some men worked on the fishing boats. The Unangax walked to Angoon to buy groceries, supplies, and lumber to build a skiff for traveling back and forth between Killisnoo and Angoon. The people at Killisnoo were able to repair and maintain their camp, because they were able to find paying work and were unwilling to wait for the government to come in and help them.

The people from the Pribilof Islands, who were interned at Funter Bay, were not so fortunate. According to *The Aleut Evacuation: The Untold Story* (1992), a documentary co-produced by the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association Inc., when the Unangax first landed at Funter Bay, people fell through the damaged floors, slept in shifts because there wasn't enough room for everyone to lie down at once, and were forced to use outhouses placed over the ocean because there was no plumbing. Two outhouses had to accommodate more than 200 people. People had to choose between using a blanket for privacy or warmth; most chose privacy. The Unangax had no access to clean water and or heat. In contrast, the white supervisors who oversaw the Unangax lived in warm, well-built and plumbed cottages, and had fresh meat and foods brought in from Juneau. It was said that one person begged for bones from the supervisors so that the Unangax could make stew from the scraps (Thill & Jo, 1992).

Overall, ten percent of the Unangax died while they were interned in Southeast Alaska. The first year of internment saw the highest mortality rate. By the second year, the camps began to acquire supplies and tools, which allowed the Unangax to start repairing the buildings they lived in. In the early months, however, risk factors included no proper heating, drinking stagnant water, and lack of food or medical supplies. The resulting tuberculosis and pneumonia struck the children and elderly especially hard. Elders who held the keys to tribal knowledge and the young people who were the future of the tribe died. Government officials possessed the information that

the Japanese were going to attack the Aleutian Islands in time to evacuate villages with Unangan consent and input, to an adequate place, with an organized plan. Instead, they waited as they argued among themselves about whether to evacuate the Unangax and whether the Unangax could adapt to the outside world.

### **Returning the Unangax to Their Villages**

As early as November 1942, several months after the Unangan villagers had been distributed among several evacuation camps in Southeast Alaska, Ward T. Bower, the Chief of the Division of Alaska Fisheries of the U.S. Department of the Interior, sent a letter to Edward C. Johnston, the Superintendent of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), to discuss the possible return of the Pribilof Unangax to their islands in spring of 1943. As a result, Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, wrote Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, stating that Ickes had not been consulted about the evacuation of the Unangax nor of the FWS employees and their families. Secretary Ickes' primary concern appears to have been lost revenue, estimated at a million dollars, due to the loss of Unangan labor in the Pribilof Islands and the subsequent discontinuation of seal harvesting. Congress in 1870 had enacted legislation instructing the Secretary of the Treasury to grant an exclusive private lease to the Alaska Commercial Company. The government received \$50,000 in rent and a royalty of \$2,625 per seal taken.

Within this lease agreement were three primary goals:

- 1) to protect the seals, it established the Pribilofs as a permanent government reservation, the country's first national wildlife refuge; 2) to advance commercial interests and bring money into the Treasury, it granted an exclusive private lease to the seal fishery from which the federal treasury was to receive annual rent and royalties; and 3) to provide for the Aleuts' comfort, maintenance, education, and protection, it created a government protectorate for the residents of the islands (Jones D. , 1980).

Secretary Ickes wanted the Pribilof Unangax returned to their island as early as spring 1943, so that they could prepare for the seal harvest. This would have also removed the Pribilof

Unangax from the deplorable conditions at Funter Bay (Kirkland & Coffin, 1981). At the time of this correspondence there does not appear to have been any discussion regarding the return of any Unangan internee groups other than the Pribilof Islanders.

In January 1943, the War Department approved the return of approximately 151 Unangax and other employees to the Pribilof Islands that spring in time for the summer sealing operation. The plan involved transporting a total of 346 people via one ship. Of these Unangax, two groups were formed, one for services on St. Paul Island and the other for St. George Island. Others involved in the seal operation were white employees, including some military troops and supervisors, assigned to help with the seal harvest. The ship arrived with its passengers at the Pribilofs in late May or early June. A letter regarding sealing operations and supplies was dispatched from St. Paul Island on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1943.

The U.S. occupation of other Aleutian islands happened in piecemeal fashion. In May 1943, the U.S. military successfully took control of Attu Island from the Japanese. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, the Japanese withdrew from Kiska Island under cover of heavy fog; two to three weeks' later U. S. troops landed. The Aleutian Islands were completely clear of Japanese soldiers before November 1943.

In the fall of 1943, Bower sent another letter to Johnston that described the plans to “rehabilitate” the remaining Pribilof Unangax in early spring of 1944. He also requested that the U. S. military give deferments to the other Unangax during sealing season. The Unangax who remained in the camps did not return to the Aleutian Islands until early spring or summer of 1945, two full years after the Pribilof Unangax had been returned to their homes. Reasons for the delay included prioritizing revenue from the seal hunts (in which only the Pribilof Islanders were engaged), the expenses of relocation, and the lack of an intact educational system for the

children. Moreover, little housing remained available in the Aleutian Islands, due largely to wartime damages. The continued U.S. military occupation was thought to present a potential source of conflict, should the remaining Unangax return. During the delay, the U. S. government began stocking supplies that would aid the future “rehabilitation” of the original Unangan villages. The burden of rebuilding destroyed or greatly damaged Unangan villages fell mainly on the shoulders of the internees.

### **The Return to the Islands**

The Pribilof Unangax were returned to their homes in the spring of 1944. In 1945, the remaining Unangax departed from the camps in Southeast Alaska for their own homes. I can only imagine the excitement and anticipation they experienced as they drew near the islands. The first stop was Akutan Island, where thirty-five former residents of Akutan, including twenty-one from Biorka Village and eighteen from Kashega Village of Unalaska Island, began to rebuild their lives. The people from Biorka and Kashega villages were prohibited from returning to their original villages.

The return to Unalaska was traumatic. Although the Unangax were excited to be home, they soon realized that their homes and church had been plundered and burned. In Marla William’s film *Aleut Story* (2005), a documentary that tells the story of the Unangan internment, Maria Turnpaugh says of her family’s first view of Unalaska:

Well, it was a very happy time, at first. Just to get home. We stopped at that hill up there and, looked down and saw the church. Our whole life revolved around that church before the war, our whole family...(Williams, 2005).

Mary Diakanoff recalls that some of the houses had been ransacked, but that her home had been untouched because her non-Unangan father had been permitted to stay in Unalaska during the war. She states:

Well they tried to get back, to how it was, but the main thing they were so upset about were their houses, were the Army men, never kept out of the houses and they made wreck things, and made messes, in them, it was hard for the people (Diakanoff, 2010).

Alice Petrivelli and George Gordaoff did not return to their own villages because they were employed in other parts of Alaska, so they did not experience this initial return themselves. However, Alice does describe how “when Atka people went back, they had all they need, they had stoves, they had the boats, they had fishing gear, they had the guns...” (Petrivelli A. , 2010). George speculates on what happened upon the return to the Aleutians, and why four of villages were not rebuilt:

Because the government didn't want to spend money on them, they wouldn't give them material to upgrade their houses, or anything like that, they did little bit in Unalaska but, it was all wet lumber, but that is the way it was...(Gordaoff, 2010).

While watching *The Aleut Evacuation*, (1992) a documentary that tells the story of the Unangan experiences before, during, and after the evacuation, one expects that the homecoming would have been a joyous one. Rather, it was heart-breaking to see the Unangax return to find their homes and church ransacked or destroyed.

### **The Four Abandoned Villages**

Among the Unangax, there has been speculation as to why Attu, Biorka, Kashega, and Makushin were not resettled after the war (Hudson, *Cuttlefish Two*, 1978). Some thought that the military had damaged or destroyed the Unangan houses, and that the government did not want to devote time or money to rebuilding the villages. Another theory is that deaths in the Southeast internment camps meant some populations were too small to sustain a village. Ray Hudson interviewed four former residents of the abandoned villages for a National Park Service

project. Ray asked Eva Tcheripanoff, a Kashega survivor, “When you were in Southeastern, did you expect to go back to Kashega?” Eva replied:

We were going to, but we weren’t enough people to go back. Because some, like people from Kashega, they died in Southeast Alaska. We were just me and my mom and Olga and her brother was just [all]. We weren’t enough to go back so I think they picked a place to go. All of them would get off in Akutan” (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004).

In *Cuttlefish Two: Four Villages* (1978) the book prepared by Ray Hudson and his Unalaska High School class, Henry Swanson mentioned that the superior housing and better fox trapping available in Nikolski was absent in Kashega, Biorka, and Makushin, and that, unlike the other villages, Nikolski had a store. Henry believes that the villages could have survived if there had not been any war damage. However, he also notes that several people had already moved from the smaller villages to Unalaska to find work before the war. According to accounts, when the Unangax returned, they noted a lack of fish in the streams, speculating that fish had been either destroyed or that their habitat patterns had changed during the internment period (Hudson, *Cuttlefish Two*, 1978). The fish populations that disappeared during the war included those in Unalaska, King Cove, and all along the Alaska Peninsula.

Ray also interviewed Nick Galaktionoff. Nick recalls that the former residents did not want to resettle in Akutan, but that they did want to live in Makushin. He also noted that other people wanted to go back to Kashega. However, he said that there were too few to live in all of the villages, so most of the ones who wanted to return were taken to Akutan. He reported that some people did go back to Biorka to live after the war. Approximately thirty people moved back to Biorka after the others were dropped off at Akutan. Unfortunately, in the 1950s a bad storm wreaked havoc on Biorka. The additional damage was too much for the village to survive,

and the people from Biorka either moved to Unalaska or Akutan (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004).

### **The Impact of the Evacuation and Subsequent Internment of the Unangax**

The stay in Southeast Alaska had a lasting effect on the internees; some traditions and knowledge were lost. This happened because of the deaths of elders and the lack of items essential to traditional Unangan culture such as grass for making baskets, tools to make their *bidarkas* (kayak-like boats as mentioned in Ch. 1), hunting and fishing implements, and similar materials. In Alice Petrivelli's interview, she says:

It introduced us to the outside influence, in the village, we lived a typical subsistence lifestyle, everybody worked together and so forth, and after the war, the prices of the foxes, you know, foxes was our main cash economy before the war, the Russians flooded the market with foxes, so the men started working on different jobs outside of the village, the women had to stay home and run the village, that was a big change, and the south east, back home they only had dances, when there was special occasions, and then we were in Southeast, they had dances every Saturday night, and that really upset the elders, cuz we went to church Saturday nights, but there was a conflict... (Petrivelli A. , 2010).

Alice did not return to Atka with the others because she continued with her education, first at Wrangell Institute and then at Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, Kansas. After she graduated from Haskell, she went to work at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka, Alaska 1951. Alice said that when the villagers returned to Atka they got back to eating traditional food, after having eaten mostly corned beef and Spam at the camp. She also mentions how the children changed. Before the war, the whole village raised a child. However, after the war there were problems. For example, upon her return, she saw a six-year-old girl throwing rocks and told her to stop. The child told her, "I tell my mother, and she'll sue you." Alice believes this was the effect of television. However, this incident occurred forty years after the villagers had returned to Atka, and after their own successful lawsuit. It is not clear whether these cultural changes were

immediate. The little girl's comment may have the result of a feeling of legal empowerment after successful lawsuits had been brought against the U.S. government. In her interview, Alice stated that she is referring only to Atka village and did not know about what happened in the other villages.

George Gordaoff mentioned that he did not return to the Aleutians with the rest of the people from his village because he was in Juneau serving in the military. When he got out, he lived for a while in Anchorage. From there, he moved to Cordova, Alaska, where he lived for twenty years. George recalls that his aunt's house was torn down and that they had to rebuild it. He says that the reason he did not return was because he did not have a home to go to, so it was a long time before he went back to the Aleutians.

### **Geographic Dispersion After the Evacuation**

As stated earlier, approximately ten percent of the Unangan population died due to aging, lack of nutrition, medical aid, and various diseases during the internment in Southeast Alaska. During this experience, some men left the camps to look for work, sending for their families whenever it was feasible. Others left the camps because of the conditions and found it better to live in the surrounding towns. While they were in Southeast Alaska, some of the families sent their children to the Wrangell Institute in Wrangell or Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, thinking they would have a better chance of surviving at the schools than by staying in the poor conditions in the camps. Older students, such as Alice Petrivelli, and George Gordaoff, either continued their education or found work outside the camps and survived. Students who went to school in the various towns either stayed where they were and found their future spouses there, or continued their education by going to colleges such as Haskell Indian Junior College (now

Haskell Indian Nations University) in Kansas, the Carlisle Institute in Pennsylvania, or Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka on Baranof Island, Alaska.

Descendants of the internees also went to schools outside of the Aleutians. Jane Mensoff, a descendant from Akutan, mentioned to me that she graduated from Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka because the school system only went up to eighth grade at Akutan. She continued on to vocational school in Los Angeles. She also mentions that her mother's brother stayed in Juneau because of his employment and that her family was from Kashega, a community to which they were unable to return after the war. Her family had been one of those dropped off at Akutan. Had it not been for the war and internment in Southeast Alaska, the Unangax would probably not have been dispersed so quickly throughout Alaska and the "Lower Forty-Eight." Nevertheless, there was an up side to having been moved to Southeast Alaska: the Unangax continued to build upon a long tradition of surviving extreme conditions, building relationships with newcomers in what had once been Native homelands.

It was a sad home-coming, for all the Unangax who returned to the Aleutians from Southeast Alaska or Japan. Their homes and churches were either ransacked or destroyed by the military or civilians. The government had prohibited the return to four of the villages because there were not enough people to repopulate them or it would be too much trouble to rebuild the villages.

The impact of the evacuation was devastating to the Unangax. They lost ten percent of their people, most of whom were elders who held the cultural knowledge and traditions by which the Unangax lived. Some of the language was lost, along with skills such as building *baidarkas* or weaving baskets. Also, children's relationships to their elders changed, and children today are different. Unangan children once did what they were told without question and were taught to

have respect for all elders, no matter who the elder was, but today they talk back when told to do something. Finally, Unangan culture was affected because the people were no longer in their traditional homeland. After the war, they were spread out through Alaska and the lower forty-eight, many in order to pursue employment or education.

### **The Japanese Internees**

Thus far I have only discussed the Unangax who were taken to Southeast Alaska. In this section I address some of the experiences that those who were taken to Japan, the residents of Attu Island.

Forty-two Unangan prisoners were taken from Attu to Japan but only twenty-five returned. To my understanding, there are now only three survivors left out of the forty-two. I found out about only a few of their experiences through interviews in the fall of 2010. For example, during my interview with Alice Petrivelli, she reveals the identities of some of the Unangax who had been taken to Japan as prisoners of war (POWs). She mentions that she had two cousins who were taken, recalling:

When I was working, huh, I went home in '51, I talked to 'em, but we were kind of estranged there 'cause I haven't seen Olena or Parri since I was, huh, 8 or 9 so. I had to get reacquainted but when my cousin Olena was dying--up here--she told me all kinds of things and so did Parri. And that's when I learned the Japanese, the way the Japanese treated them...(Petrivelli A. , 2010).

Alice does not disclose the stories to me during the interview, but she asked me if I had read the book, *Last Letters from Attu*, for which she had also been interviewed (Petrivelli A. , 2010). In it, Alice told how the internees in Japan were treated: how they were forced to work and were experimented upon with medicines without permission, as human guinea pigs. Alice explained that the people who had been taken and returned home just do not talk about it. (It is

understandable how such treatment may leave individuals and families in an unsure and uncomfortable state of being.)

George Gordaoff also mentions that he knew a woman from Attu who was taken to Japan. He said that while she was there she was tortured. He mentioned how she had cigarette burns all over her body and how they also did other things to her. However, he also mentions that the POWs who did what the Japanese wanted received better treatment than those who refused to listen. He also says that people died from various diseases and mistreatment. Only about half of them returned (Gordaoff, 2010).

Mary Diakanoff also mentions another person who was taken to Japan. He was a man who would come to her house to cut her husband's hair. She says he must have had a really traumatic experience in Japan, because if someone were to ask him about his experience there he would start to shake. For this reason, it was never brought up.

In 2005, Dr. Charles M. Mobley, of Charles M. Mobley and Associates, conducted an interview with Nick L. Golodoff, a Unangan POW who had been taken to Japan. Nick recalled his return voyage to the Aleutian Islands, saying:

I remember taking a bus to Japan and a plane to Okinawa, I think, and I don't know how we got to Philippines, but we were in Manila. They had a big hurricane over there. I was lucky. I was in the hospital. They had a big hurricane...(Golodoff, 2005).

He went on to describe his return trip from Manila. The group he was in took an Army transport to California followed by then a train to Seattle. It stayed there for a few days, then continued on to Adak and finally to Atka. In his family, only Nick, two brothers, one sister, and his mother had returned from Japan; Nick's father and his older sister and brother had died. He mentioned that one brother went to Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, Alaska, where a few military personnel were still present. The military was constructing small shacks for the families

to live in until bigger homes could be built. Mobley also stated that there were two buildings still standing in Atka after the war, and that the military left some coal for the people to use.

Nick Golodoff's return to Atka was not a happy one. He mentions that he was just dropped off without either food or money, and had to live off the land digging clams, picking berries, and eating roots until he got a job at the seal factory on St. Paul Island. After this, he found odd jobs here and there until getting a permanent one. He stayed on St. Paul Island for twenty-one years.

Golodoff said that after the war the Attuans did not prepare food in the way that his people used to, by drying or salting it, because they had freezers or refrigerators. However, there are a few people that still use the traditional ways of processing food. During Nick's internment in Japan, he mentioned that he got to know one of the soldiers' that guarded him, enough to have his picture taken with the soldier, and that Nick was on his back. In 1995, Nick returned to Japan and located the same Japanese soldier who watched over him and had taken a picture of him, but this time the Japanese soldier is on Nick's back (See Appendices L and M).

## **Chapter Four: Taking a Stand**

### **Introduction**

During the war, Unangan people left the evacuation camps for various reasons including education, employment, and the military, even though the agents or supervisors at each camp tried to prevent them from going. When the government officials wanted the Pribilof Islanders to leave Funter Bay to participate in the seal harvest in 1943, they presented those who left with an ultimatum:

If any workman remains in Juneau or deserts his post during the summer (he) will forfeit any share of the sealing division...any workman who refuses to return to this spring will...not be allowed to return at any later date if I could help it. This will include his immediate family (Jones D. , 1980).

This chapter discusses how the Unangax came to realize that while they were in Southeast Alaska or was in the service their civil rights had been denied and how they decided to fight for those rights. I follow with what the Unangax are doing today in terms of business and how they are trying to revitalize their culture through programs.

### **Understanding Mistreatment of the Unangax**

During their stay in the evacuation camps in Southeast Alaska, when the Unangax managed to go outside the camps, they began to realize that they were allowed much more freedom than they had experienced at the camps or even back in the Aleutians. For example, Alice Petrivelli mentioned that one of the men could have joined the Alaska Native Brotherhood, saying “when in Southeast we learned that the brotherhood could do a lot more, so from there they we learned that you could fight for your rights through the organization” (Petrivelli A. , 2010). There was another story about joining the brotherhood: A person who had attended one of their meetings was inspired to start the same type of organization on St. Paul Island. In

Southeast Alaska the Unangax learned that they and other Native Alaskans had more power to fight for their rights (Madden, 1993). Having the opportunity to attend brotherhood meetings in Southeast Alaska gave the Unangan men more confidence and incentive to take stands and organize activities focused on obtaining freedom and dignified treatment.

In *Aleut Story*, Mary Bourdukofsky said, “Little by little, the men started having secret meetings in their homes. They didn’t want what they were talking about to leak out to the government” (Williams, 2005). They were probably discussing how different their experiences were in Southeast Alaska while they were working outside the camps, attending school, or joining the military. Helping substantiate Mary’s comment, Unangan internment survivor Flore Lekanoff said:

They learned from being in Juneau, being in the armed forces, and having seen how other people lived, other places, they began to realize that they were losing out on a lot of things: Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of movement. And I think it was those kinds of freedoms that the Aleut people decided they better do something about (Williams, 2005).

This was good, in a sense. If people had not left the camps looking for employment or education, they would have never found out that they were entitled to rights that they did not experience in the camps. They benefited greatly from what they saw and heard from being outside the camps. Not only did they realize that their freedoms had been denied, but they also began to recognize the effects of racism on the part of the U.S. government. This was reinforced by experiences they had in Southeast Alaska as well as in the “Lower Forty-Eight,” and ones that they had while in the service or attending school. The Unangax had some appreciation of the extent of their mistreatment from the beginning of their evacuation and internment. Later, however, they discovered their formal or legal rights and learned that a legal framework existed to protect and exercise their rights.

The internment system, despite its wide-ranging effects on the Unangan people, served to unite communities, including ones that had been separated both geographically and culturally before the internment. As they became united, they began a new chapter in Unangan history, starting with finding ways to fight back and to tell their stories.

### **Taking a Stand**

Unlike other situations with American Indians in the lower forty-eight, where the state or government wanted land, in the Pribilof Islands the government wanted the labor of the Unangax. For this reason, the government actually took full control over the lives of the Unangax, from assigning marriage partners to restricting freedom of movement. When the Unangax refused to work, agents fined them, put them in irons and warned them that they could be exiled, or worse, removed them from the islands (Jones D. , 1980). This section discusses the Unangax, from the Pribilofs and from other areas, taking a stand against colonialism and fighting for their civil rights. For those who were fortunate to have been outside the camps, they realized that most freedoms were denied them. In addition, they also knew that other people knew of the treatment that they were receiving inside the camps, including the doctors, nurses, people living in the area of the camps, and the news media. Therefore they could use that knowledge to their advantage. After or even before the war, most Natives/American Indians realized that the government did not recognize them to be U. S. citizens; they had no voting rights, or other civil rights to speak of. Nonetheless, the U.S. wanted to enlist or draft the Natives/American Indians into the military. In the case of the Unangax, draftees would be valuable in the Aleutians, because Natives knew the landscape. The sealing managers opposed the registration, stating the Unangax were excluded because of wardship status. However, the draft board disregarded the

managers' logic, and required all eligible evacuees to register under the Selective Service Act (Jones D. , 1980).

An Unangan joined the ANB and attended a convention in Juneau after the internment where he and a couple of people established their own chapter on St. Paul Island. With that in mind, the Unangax began an upward battle for equal rights. They made gains that they never thought they would get, including: land rights, the right to enter into business, the right to keep, administer, and dispose of all community property, and the right to file a lawsuit. Moreover, the Pribilovians had petitioned for more supplies, asking to share in the profits in the seal business. More importantly, they asked for a decrease in governmental management, and a change in school supervision from FWS to the BIA. In the Pribilovians' thinking, it would be more to their advantage to be under the BIA, with better opportunities for getting educated toward possible employment within the BIA (Madden, 1993).

The evacuation not only brought the Pribilof story to the attention of other Unangax, but it also got the attention of the outside world. This increased awareness about their oppression also confirmed the Unangan suspicion that their rights were being violated. Organizations began to develop, the Indian Rights movement grew, and the United Nations dedicated itself to eliminating oppression around the nations and pan-Indian organizations. This also got supporters for the Unangax, Fredericka Martin wrote several articles illustrating the injustice toward the Unangax while under the government's control. Her articles brought attention to groups such as the National Congress of American Indians, the President's Advisory Commission on Indian Rights, the Navajo Institute, the United Nations' Ad Hoc Committee on Slavery, and the International Labor Organization (Jones D. , 1980).

In 1947, on behalf of the Unangax, the National Congress won the interest of two well-known attorneys – James Curry and Felix Cohen. Cohen, formerly a solicitor for the Department of Interior, was revered as the leading authority on Indian law in the United States. He was also a key designer of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. Later William Paul, the first Tlingit lawyer, who was one of the founders of Alaska Native Brotherhood, joined Curry and Cohen in representing the Pribilovians. Although the Pribilovians got the attention of these attorneys, the lawyers still had to get approval to represent the Pribilovians from Secretary of Interior Warne, who did not think the Unangax were able to choose the attorneys they wanted to represent them. For the first time, the Indian Reorganization Act gave Indians the right to choose their own legal counsel, but they still had to have the approval of the Interior Department (Jones D. , 1980). The attorneys' main concern was the fight for justice on behalf of the Unangax, rather than the fees or the promise of wealth from this case.

One of the main Unangan priorities was legal counsel to help the Unangax secure the right to self-government. It took the courage for the Unangax to take this big step into a political world, with little or no experience. Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear. The Unangax had to decide between who they thought they were and who they could be. Therefore, the Unangax were using more aggressive means to take control of their lives. In 1949 the Pribilovian sealers went on strike, which gained much publicity, and resulted in the government creating a better wage system for the Unangax.

In 1951, the Unangax brought a lawsuit against the United States, claiming:

- 1) Aboriginal title to lands and adjacent waters,
- 2) Fee title to lands and adjacent waters under Russian law,
- 3) Fishing and hunting rights,
- 4) Lack of fair and honorable dealings (Jones D. , 1980).

Unfortunately, three years later the Indian Claims Commission denied the claim because the United States had designated the Pribilof Islands as a special reservation and chartered the land for commercial lease. This decision, though, dealt only with the land issue, not the charge of violation of fair and honorable dealings. Therefore, the attorneys reopened the case and through several appeals won the case in 1978. The Unangax were granted \$11.2 million in damages (Jones D. , 1980). The next year, they settled for \$8.5 million to avoid an appeal from the government.

In 1978, the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) asked attorneys John C. Kirkland and David F. Coffin to represent them in a suit against the United States for reparations for internment during World War II. Kirkland's office went through thousands of documents and scores of boxes focused on the internment period—letters, logs, Western Union telegrams, minutes of meetings—that established, fundamentally, the case for the Unangan people to show the injustices they had suffered (Williams, 2005). The Japanese-Americans were already lobbying to Congress for reparations, but their situation was different. The Japanese were interned for security reasons, whereas, the Unangax were interned for their own safety. On July 31, 1980, President Jimmy Carter established the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians with two mandates: to consider the claims of the Japanese Americans and to consider the claims of the Unangan people.

Between 1983 and 1988, there were seven redress measures introduced to Congress. Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska and Representative Don Young of Alaska spoke on behalf of the Unangax during the hearings. One of the leading people who spoke for the Unangax during the hearings was Philemon Tutiakoff of Unalaska the Chairman of the Board of the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association. John Kirkland describes him as a wonderful little man, and yet he was a

towering giant of a person. He was effective, he was articulate, and he spoke from the heart (Williams, 2005). Quite a few people attended and completed depositions at the hearings; others who could not attend the hearings completed written depositions. Finally, in 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 100-383, and the battle was over.

The new law provided for a \$5 million trust fund, for the benefit of the villagers who had been returned and their descendants. It also provided \$1.4 million for restoration of church properties, \$15 million for the loss of Attu Island, and individual payments of \$12,000 to those Aleut who had survived the camps and were still alive at the time the public law became effective. The total amount authorized, and ultimately appropriated, was \$26.4 million (Williams, 2005).

The Public Law 100-383 was largely about the Japanese-Americans, but it did recognize the Unangax case as well. President Reagan gave a speech concerning the Japanese-Americans and the Unangax? Relocation and Internment. Within it, he acknowledged that the United States owned the internees an apology. President Reagan did say in his speech that the Law:

“Provides funds for members of the Aleut community who were evacuated from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands after the Japanese attack in 1942. This action was taken for the Aleut’s own protection, but property was lost or damaged that has never been replaced” (Madden, 1993).

For the Unangax, the apology and the recognition from the United States government, even though it was late, was important. Although they won the case, it won’t erase the memories of the experiences that they endured while they were interned, or the loss of life and property. It took over forty years for the recognition and the payment of restitution to be made. Only 100 of the 880 Unangan that were interned received the compensation.

## Today

In this section, I discuss what the Unangax are doing to produce revenue and preserve and revitalize the Unangan culture. Currently, one third of Unangan people reside in the Aleutians, one third reside in Anchorage, and the other third are scattered throughout the lower 48 states (Aleut Corporation, 2008). Approximately, 600 Unangax live in the Seattle area, according to Jane Mensoff, a descendant from Kashega, who now lives in the Seattle area. Mensoff was the Secretary-Treasurer for the organization Pacific Northwest Aleut Council (PNAC) for a few years. PNAC was created in 1971 to help those in the area keep informed with what was going on in Alaska, primarily through the Aleut Corporation's headquarters in Anchorage (Mensoff, 2011).

In 1972, under the terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), there were thirteen village corporations that were established in the Aleutian Islands.<sup>2</sup> The Aleut Corporation is one of the thirteen regional corporations, and it received a settlement of \$19.5 million, 66,000 acres of surface lands, and 1.572 million acres of subsurface estate. (Aleut Corporation, 2008). The Aleut Corporation and its subsidiaries include environmental remediation, fuel sales, government contracting, telecommunications, and real estate management. The corporation also participates in various partnerships, joint ventures, and other business activities. In addition, the Aleut Corporation, through the Aleut Foundation, provides programs for the shareholders and their descendants including: the Leadership Program, Career Development Program, Culture Camp, Community Program, CH2M Hill Training, and Scholarship Program.

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<sup>2</sup> The names of the corporations are: Akutan Corporation, Atxam Corporation, Belkofski Corporation, Chaluka Corporation, Isanotski Corporation, King Cove Corporation, Nelson Lagoon Corporation, Ounalashka Corporation, Sanak Corporation, Shumagin Corporation, St. George Tanaq Corporation, Tanadgusix Corporation, Unga Corporation

The Leadership Program is sponsored by the Aleut Foundation partnered with Afognak Native Corporation and the Kodiak Island School District. It is a three-day intensive program that centers on four main areas: culture and identity, post-secondary education, leadership development, and employment readiness. It assists those who are older and are seeking job training or courses that are twelve weeks or less, for instance, the CDL course or six pack licensing course. The Foundation offers up to two thousand dollars per fiscal year for those who wish to attend these courses.

Programs that are geared towards working in the community include courses that are offered in grant writing or 40-Hour Hazwoper Training. Also there is CH2M Hill training, a three-week course in the spring for those who want to work on the North Slope.

Finally, the cultural camp, which is funded in part by the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association (APIA), helps preserve the Unangan culture. It provides cultural enrichment activities for youth and adults who have the opportunity to learn traditional skills such as bentwood visor construction, kayak building, language, dance, basket weaving, making beaded headdresses, regalia sewing, subsistence activities, and many other fun activities (Lind, 2011).

## **Chapter Five: Lost Villages**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the creation of the Lost Villages Project of the National Park Service and provides a detailed description of a brief visit to the sites of the abandoned villages of Kashega and Biorka in September 2010. The Lost Villages Project, which has focused on all four villages—Attu, Biorka, Kashega and Makushin—is intended to help survivors of the Unangan internment and their descendants to return to places that were abandoned during relocation and remain unoccupied. The Unangax displacement during WWII was difficult for all, but those who were not allowed to return to their villages after the internment suffered additional sadness at the permanent loss of their homelands.

### **The Lost Villages Project**

The purpose of the Lost Villages Project is to help former residents to see what remains of the villages where they were raised and for survivors and their descendants to be able to walk where their family houses and churches once stood. The visit allows descendants to see the place where their ancestors originated. During each visit, a cross is placed at the location of the former Russian Orthodox Church.

The origins of the Lost Villages Project can be traced to an initial collection of information more than thirty years ago. In 1977, teacher Ray Hudson started a series of books and projects on the Unangax with his high-school classes in Unalaska. Because these books were published by the Unalaska School District, there was a limited print run and few are available today. Although Hudson's work included all the abandoned villages—Attu, Biorka, Kashega, and Makushin--Hudson primarily was acquainted with the people in the Unalaska area. He did not include or interview the people from Attu in his original Lost Villages research.

Hudson's high school classes called their project "Cuttlefish." Between 1977 and 1982, students at the Unalaska City School produced six volumes. The first three volumes have been reproduced in one publication, *The Cuttlefish Series*. The *Cuttlefish* volumes helped to integrate the rich Aleutian Islands cultural traditions and community into the school system. The lives of students,

whether native to Unalaska or recently arrived, were enriched by Hudson's investigation process.

The project books are as follows:

- *Cuttlefish: Stories of Aleutian Culture and History* (Vols. 1-3) (1977).
- *The Aleutian Islands* (1977).
- *Four Villages Abandoned in the Aleutian Islands During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (1978).
- *Home on the Bering: the Jesse Lee Home at Unalaska, 1911 to 1915* (1979).
- *Unalaska Today* (1980).
- *The Aleutian Invasion: World War II in the Aleutian Islands* (1981).
- *The Unknown Islands: Life and Tales of Henry Swanson* (1982).

Much later, in 2004, Hudson worked on a National Park Service report called "*The Beginning of Memory*." Hudson collected oral histories from five elders from different villages, who discuss the historical backgrounds and their recollections of their villages. Hudson's interviewees were: Eva Tcheripanoff from Kashega, Nicholai S. Lekanoff from Makushin, Nicolai Galaktionoff from Makushin and Biorka, Irene Makarin from Biorka, and Moses Gordieff from Unalaska and Biorka. Hudson notes that none of his primary consultants spoke English as a first language. All were fluent in eastern Aleut yet each graciously accommodated his lack of skill and spoke English (Hudson, *The Beginning of Memory*, 2004).

Hudson's project was contracted through the Affiliated Areas program of the National Park Service (NPS), one of which is devoted to telling the story of World War II in the Aleutians. Although Hudson completed his project, the Affiliated Areas program wanted a more

formal product. Unfortunately, two of the elders he interviewed, Irene Makarin and Moses Gordieff, have since passed away.

Rachel Mason, a cultural anthropologist for the NPS, was my primary source for learning how the Lost Villages Project originated. Anna Bateman, a historian for NPS, started working on this project in 2005. Bateman gathered a tremendous amount of historical and archival research on all four villages and especially on Attu. Bateman had plans for a book about the villages, but because she was attending graduate school full-time, she was unable to complete it. Rachel inherited this project in late 2007. Her goal was to build upon Hudson's original work. As Mason started talking with the elders from the four villages, she realized that people still had strong feelings for their former villages. Conversations with O. Patricia Lekanoff Gregory, daughter of Nick Lekanoff, Sr. of Makushin and Polly Kudrin Lekanoff of Kashega, gave Rachel the inspiration to travel to the Lost Villages sites with the internment survivors. However, in talking with the elders, she realized some of them were not in sufficient physical condition to manage the challenging trips. This led to the idea to include survivor descendants and create more value from the project for the Unangan community. Mason developed a plan, obtained funding, and made logistical arrangements for the survivors and descendants.

Identifying and locating former residents and descendants of the Lost Villages was another challenge. Mason had a list of residents from Hudson's work, but she needed more sources and additional information to locate people. Mason put a notice on a Unangan-oriented list-server, stating that she was organizing a trip to these villages and was looking for interested people. She had been in contact with George Gordieff of Unalaska and Nick Lekanoff, Sr., two of Hudson's interviewees, since 2008 and both had agreed to join the trip.

Initial responses came in from people familiar with the villages. For example, someone knew Mary Diakanoff, former resident and family historian, and Jane Mensoff, a survivor descendant from Kashega. Once Mason made contact with her travelers, she set a date in Fall 2010 to visit Kashega and Biorka. Unfortunately, so many years had passed since the internment that few of the former residents were in good enough health to attend. For those who could not join the trip, Mason made plans to gather berries and soil from the villages to bring back to them. She also planned to show videos and pictures taken during the trips and put together a photo album for those who were unable to go.

In 2009, Mason planned a trip to Makushin and Kashega with the former residents and descendants plus a medical provider and a video crew. The boat passengers were Nick Lekanoff Sr., O. Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory, Irene McGlashin, Jane Mensoff, Josephine Borenin-Shangin, Fred Lekanoff, his grandfather Constantine (Kusta) Lekanoff of Makushin, Lauren Adams, Brian Rankin (his grandmother Alice Moller was from Kashega), Laresa Syverson, George Gordaoff, Debbie Corbett, and Rachel Mason. Because the weather was so bad on the way to Makushin, they decided not to go on to Kashega, and spent a longer period in Makushin. On the beach at Makushin, Nick told stories of the village before the war.

This was the first trip for the Lost Villages; the following year a trip was planned to visit Kashega and Biorka, with hopes of a final trip in the next year or two to Attu. Attu is the furthest island trip for those who hope to attend, so Mason expects it will take longer to find funding and plan logistics.

### **The 2010 Lost Villages Trip to Kashega and Biorka**

This section discusses the Send Off Ceremony in Unalaska before the trips to Kashega and Biorka, and a little bit about the Russian crosses that were taken to the villages. According to

Russian tradition, when an elder passes on, a cross is donated to the family. In this case, crosses were donated to each of the villages. In September, boat trips to Kashega and Biorka were sponsored by the National Park Service in partnership with the Ounalashka Corporation. Moreover, the Ounalashka Corporation's Maintenance Department built the crosses and also donated them for Kashega and Biorka villages to be placed at the former site of the Russian Orthodox Church. Each village had a small ceremony after the cross was placed, with the former residents and descendants of villages. The Russian Orthodox priest gave advice on what type of material to use and how to treat the crosses, and blessed each cross before the trips. Although, the Russian Orthodox Church gave advice about the crosses, it did not play an active part of the Lost Villages project.

Once Mason had received all the confirmations of those who were attending, she organized a Send Off Ceremony in Unalaska. She arranged for Unangan dancers to perform during the ceremony. After they were done, she introduced the former residents and descendants and gave a little background on each of the people who were going on the Lost Villages trip. She also gave a slide presentation on the 2009 trip to Makushin for those who attended. After Mason's slide presentation, everyone was getting to know everyone before going on the trip after her presentation. The ceremony was over and everyone was heading to the restaurant for dinner. Rachel had reservations for everyone, including the crew from the RV *Tiġlax* (the Fish and Wildlife Service research vessel) that would transport us to Kashega and Biorka. We headed down to the *Tiġlax*, and prepared to leave in a few hours. The captain thought that it might be best if we were to travel by night and arrive by morning because of rough weather expected the next morning.

## **The Trip to Kashega**

This section discusses the events that took place during the trip to Kashega on September 1, 2010. On this trip, passengers included two of the former residents, Mary Diakanoff and George Gordaoff, and descendants Jane Mensoff, Ruth Kudrin, Roberta Gordaoff, Brian Rankin, Eva Kudrin, and Anesia Kudrin. Irene McGlashin also attended the trip as a medical provider, along with Rachel Mason, Debbie Corbett of FWS, and Lauren Adams of KUCB, a radio and TV station. Also, I will discuss a little bit more of the 2009 trip to Makushin and Kashega.

We continued to get to know one another while aboard the boat. Mary was joined by her daughter Evonne Mason, both of Juneau. George Gordaoff was accompanied by his granddaughter Roberta Gordaoff, both of Anchorage. Both Mary and George were originally from Kashega. While Mary and George were telling stories, Mary had brought with her a diagram of Kashega that had been drawn by Polly Lekanoff (See Appendix G). Both Mary and George discussed who had lived where in the houses shown on this map. However, this was difficult because it had been seventy years since they had been there. Mary was kind enough to give me a picture of Kashega before the evacuation (See Fig. 5.1.). Mary and George's descriptions and stories gave everyone an idea of what the village had looked like at the time of the evacuation. Rachel also gave me a copy of the sketch map of Kashega before the evacuation.



Figure 5.1. Village of Kashega on Unalaska Island, before evacuation.  
Courtesy of Mary Diakanoff.

We woke up and had breakfast and got ready to go ashore. Mary and George were in the first Zodiac to go ashore. When everyone else had arrived, they began to explore the area of the former village (See Fig. 5.2). There were very little traces that remained. We found a few boards or posts from the original church that people picked up to take back with them. Everyone was gathering little souvenirs such as berries, pans, and soil to take back with them. They were also taking pictures of each other and the area of the former village. I could hear people talking about how beautiful Kashega was--and still is--nestled in a nice location for fishing with a good beach for gathering seafood and berries when they were ripe for the picking.

Afterwards, everyone gathered at the former site of the church. A Russian cross was brought out and, with George's direction (See Fig. 5.3.), the cross was placed there followed by a small service where the group blessed the cross with holy water and sang a song. Having the opportunity to go back to Kashega meant a lot to Mary and George. One could see it in their

faces and the emotions were more than words can express. By the end of the ceremony it was early evening and time to head back to the *Tiġlax* for the return to Unalaska.



Figure 5.2. Survivors and descendants exploring Kashega village on Unalaska Island 2010.



Figure 5.3. George Gordaoff directs Brian Rankin where to place the cross at the village of Kashega on Unalaska Island 2010.

Jane Mensoff said that when she first heard about the Lost Villages project, she knew immediately that she had to be part of it. After the visit, she mentioned that it was good to see and to walk on the land where her mother had grown up. Her father was from Biorka, the next village that was visited after Kashega. Jane's cousins Ruth, Anesia and Eva Kudrin, are also descendants and attended the trip to Kashega.

Jane had also attended the 2009 Lost Villages trip. She mentioned that the trip had begun with really rough weather when they left the bay. The weather was so bad that the captain suggested that the portion of the trip to Kashega be canceled. Because they did not visit Kashega, they were able to stay longer in Makushin. Jane described it as having been magical when they arrived at Makushin. The weather had changed and a rainbow appeared right in the middle of the old village. Nick Galaktionoff had not been feeling well during the trip, but when they arrived at Makushin he perked up and was excited to go ashore. While ashore, the group asked him many questions and he told stories about Makushin. Jane recalled that the village brought back memories of Akutan when she was younger, when they would go on seining trips with others, going ashore to sit around and tell stories and have a kettle of tea. Jane also said that she had been disappointed when they were not able to go to Kashega because her mother was from there. However, she had been happy to be at Makushin, where it was beautiful and she had been able to hear Nick's stories.

### **The Trip to Biorka**

After the Kashega trip, we returned to Dutch Harbor; the next morning we departed for Biorka. Most of the same people that went to Kashega also attended the Biorka trip. Jane's father was from Biorka, and Kathy Dirks is a descendant from Biorka. Nick Galaktionoff and his son John were unable to attend because of health conditions; maybe the rough weather also was a

part of the reason they did not go. Anna Merculief, a former resident of Biorka, decided not to go because such bad weather was predicted. Although this portion of the trip was for the descendants from Biorka to actually set foot on the site of where their family originated, some people from other villages also participated in the trip.

Friday morning, September 2, 2010, we left Dutch Harbor and headed to Biorka, a shorter trip than the one to Kashega. The weather was bad, but not as bad as it had been on the 2009 trip, according to what everyone who had gone was saying. It was mostly the women who had ties to Biorka, so they were especially excited to go.

The seas were rough during the entire trip. When we arrived at Biorka, I was surprised to see the way the grass was there. It was unlike Kashega, which had wild cows that helped keep the grass low. At Biorka, the grass was so tall that one could not see the ground. Because ground visibility was poor, a couple of people fell into relatively deep holes, but no one was hurt. At times, the wind blew sideways, making it hard to look around. However, I have to say that even with the bad weather it still seemed as if it had been a beautiful place to live. It was mountainous, good for hiking, with a nice beach for beachcombing. Fred Lekanoff and Brian Rankin dug a hole for the cross to be placed at the site of where the church had been. At Biorka, it was easier to locate where the church had been because an altar was still standing. Although it had deteriorated, it was possible to see what it was. Andrew Makarin, Kathy Dirk's grandfather, had built the altar on an earlier visit in 1965. A storm had blown down some of the houses there. Makarin had torn down the walls of these and the surviving roof of the church and built the altar on the church site.

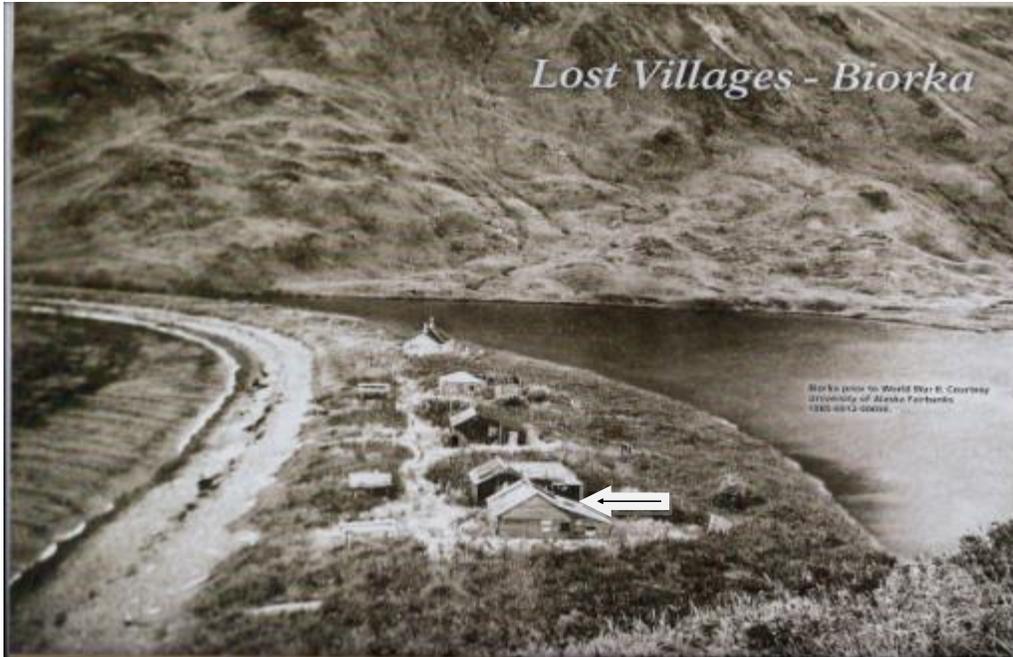


Figure 5.4 Biorka village on Unalaska Island, prior to Unangan evacuation. The arrow points to Andrew Makarin's house, Kathy Dirks' grandfather. (Aleutian World War II National Historic Area, 2010).

While the men were digging, we went exploring. There was a lake near Biorka and it was very peaceful although the weather was bad. From the boat, I had noticed that there was a partial building still standing. I learned it had been the house of Andrew Makarin. Figure 5.4 is a picture of Biorka before the evacuation with an arrow pointing at Andrew Makarin's house. Figure 5.5 illustrates present day Biorka with Kathy is standing next to her grandfather's house. One could see some items in the house, such as a dresser and part of a bed. It was amazing to see these items still in place after all these years (See Fig. 5.6.). Kathy was excited to see her grandfather's house, and either Fred or Brian went inside it to retrieve a souvenir for her. Words could not express her feelings of seeing the house still standing there with the possessions of her grandparents still inside.



Figure 5.5. Kathy Dirks (left) standing beside her grandfather's collapsed house at Biorka village, Unalaska, Aleutian Islands 2010.

After looking at the house, everyone gathered at the cross to begin the ceremony. In Russian Orthodox tradition, we blessed the cross with Holy water and each of us put dirt in the area where it was located. Both Kathy and Irene McGlashin said a prayer and we sang "*Memory Eternal*," a song that had been sung at funerals. The cross and the ceremony were a suitable memorial for the village and for the remains of those who had been left behind. By the end of the ceremony, it seemed as if the weather was getting a little bit better. We headed back to the beach and waited for the Zodiac to come and take us back to the ship.



Figure 5.6. Inside Andrew Makarin's house at Biorka, Unalaska, Aleutian Islands 2010.

As we headed back to Dutch Harbor, the weather was much better; the sun had come out and the winds had died down. Before we arrived at Dutch Harbor, we gathered on the deck for a group picture (See Fig. 5.7). All in all, the group had enjoyed successful trips to both Kashega and Biorka.



Figure 5.7. Group photo of 2010 Lost Village participants on return from Biorka Village, Unalaska Island, Aleutian Islands.

After we docked, everyone made sure that they had each other's email addresses or regular addresses so that we could send pictures of the trip to each other. A lot of good memories for the former residents and the descendants came from these two trips.

Lauren Adams of KUCB, a radio and TV station in Unalaska, filmed the Lost Villages trips to Kashega and Biorka. She also interviewed a few of the people who attended the trips. Alexandra Gutierrez, also from KUCB, attended the Biorka portion of the trip. They collected stories from both Mary and George while they were on the boat. Lauren promised to send a copy of her recordings on DVD to the Lost Villages participants.

### **Post Trip**

After the trips to Unalaska, Kashega and Biorka, I went to Anchorage to interview Alice Petrivelli, a former resident of Atka. I then continued to Juneau to interview Mary Diakanoff. Most of this second interview was about the evacuation. Mary mentioned that Kashega used to be her favorite place to go because her grandfather was there. "I felt so good about and being there, even though I didn't recognize it a whole lot, just to be there and feel it and know how it looks, it made me feel happy" (Diakanoff, 2010). She said that her grandfather kept her out of his work shed and that he always kept it clean in there. While I was there, she got out some old pictures of Kashega that her mother, Mrs. Alice Moller, had given her. Mary gave me copies of these photos.

Although I had an opportunity to visit with George Gordaoff, I did not get to much information from him about the trip. I did not want to intrude on his time with his granddaughter Roberta. She had been away at college, but one could tell they had a close relationship just by watching them. I was happy to see them together on this trip. I know that it had been good for both of them to get back to Kashega. George had also attended the 2009 Lost Villages trip. I had

a good interview with him and he had interesting stories about the evacuation and events both during and after the evacuation. I enjoyed visiting with him, Mary and everyone else that went on the Lost Villages trip.

Both trips to Kashega and Biorka were a success. Former residents and descendants got to see the villages, gather mementoes, take pictures and videos of the area, and participate in the ceremony of blessing the cross before it was placed in the former site of the church in each of the villages. Stories and memories will always be in the hearts of everyone who attended the Lost Villages trips to Kashega and Biorka.

Although, my mother and I were not close, I feel that she or her parents had a part in my findings or research. I don't know why my mother did not disclose this part of her life to me or my siblings. But I am glad to have the opportunity to discover this part of her life for myself and for the rest of my family. However, there are still some unanswered questions that I will continue to look into. Had it not been for me returning to school, I probably would have not found out about my mother's family history. I was fortunate to have the available resources and assistance of several people to aid in my research.

Since I have begun this thesis, I realized that a lot of people do not know about the Japanese attacking the Aleutian Islands during WWII. I also went to a few book stores, to see if there was anything about the Aleutian Islands or the events that took place during that time period, such as the evacuation of the Unangax to Southeast Alaska, or the Unangax that were taken to Japan. If there was anything written in the history books, it was only a sentence or two about the Japanese attacking the Aleutian Islands.

When I have spoken to various people about the Unangan history in person, by phone or on the internet, not many have known about these events. Therefore, I believe that this history should be taught in schools, and not just in Alaska, but nationwide.

## **Grandparents**

While conducting research, I discovered some information that I really did not know about. I found a newspaper article in Sitka telling that the city was expanding its airport, and while they were working they came across an underground bunker that had a collection of caskets with no names on them, only numbers (See Appendix K). Apparently, during the years from 1947 to 1966, there was a tuberculosis (TB) epidemic, and these patients were sent to Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka. I learned that my grandparents were a part of this story. My grandparents were evacuated from Kashega to Southeast Alaska, and while they were there, both contracted TB. They were sent to Mt. Edgecumbe, where they eventually passed away, and were buried in the underground bunker. This explains why my mom and uncle were adopted. But I still do not know in which town they were adopted; this is one matter I will follow up on after my graduation.

It had been twenty years since the mausoleum had been opened up. After it was opened, Bob Sam, coordinator of the Native Graves Protection and Repatriation program at Sitka Tribes of Alaska at that time, researched hospital records and had DNA tests performed on the patients. I believe that most of them were identified. They contacted my brother with the findings, and the city had a ceremony for those families that had family placed to rest in the mausoleum. In addition, if they found the family or where they came from, in accordance with the Native American Graves Repatriation and Protection Act (NAGPRA), most were repatriated back to where they originated.

I later learned that my grandparents were repatriated back to Unalaska. I had been in contact with Laresa Syverson from Ounalashka Corporation in Unalaska on various inquiries about the Unangax. After informing Syverson about my thesis and family history, she discovered that my grandparents were buried in the Unalaska cemetery. I was very appreciative that Laresa had gone out there to look for me. I understand that there was a ceremony for my grandparents when they were returned to Unalaska. I wish I could have attended the event myself, but what has passed is still heartwarming.

## **Epilogue**

Although I discussed the Kashega and Biorka trips in the previous chapter, I did not include my personal narrative there. At the Send Off Ceremony, I was excited, but nervous at the same time because I knew that I was going to meet new family members whom I did not know before. After the ceremony, Mary caught my attention and told me that she knew my parents and grandparents from Kashega, and how they kept their house very clean and that it was the biggest house there in the village. Later, I discovered that Mary and I were cousins. I also was introduced to Eva Tcheripanoff, also a cousin, and she had known my grandparents. Eva lives in Unalaska; she was from Kashega at the time of the evacuation.

Following the ceremony and dinner, we boarded the *Tig̃lax*, (FWS research vessel) and talked with Mary's daughter Evonne. She asked me where I was from and what my maiden name was and she recognized who I was before I knew anything. She said that they lived in the same neighborhood as my family, and that they stayed in Sitka until she was in fourth or fifth grade. We discussed classmates and the neighborhood; small world! I was more at ease after talking with Mary and Evonne (See Fig. 5.8). because I really did not know anyone and felt like an

outsider because I knew very little about the history of the villages, the language, culture, or anyone else at the time, except for Debbie and Rachel.



Figure 5.8. Evonne Mason and Mary Diakanoff, Kashega, Unalaska 2010.

I became acquainted with Jane Mensoff, whose mother was from Kashega and father was from Biorka. Jane was traveling with her partner Greg and her cousins Ruth, Anesia, and Eva Kudrin, descendants of Kashega and Biorka. Jane had previously traveled to Makushin, so she was more familiar with the trip. It was easy to talk with her, and we still keep in contact with each other via e-mail or phone calls. While on the boat, Mary and George told stories of their childhood at Kashega, from the time when Mary was only ten or eleven and George was a little older.

We arrived in the bay of Kashega; it was a little windy, and both George and Mary were the first to land on the beach. The rest of us joined up with them. The *Tiglax* crew were great, in that they were very patient and worked well with the elders (See Fig. 5.9).



Figure 5.9 *Tiġlax* crew assisting Mary Diakanoff, George Gordaoff and Irene McGlashin onto the Zodiac, 2010.

They enjoyed listening to George's stories of his childhood in Kashega. I was excited to see where my mom and her parents were born and being able to walk where they lived. It had a certain beauty to it. I have grown up with trees around us all the time, but seeing the landscape of Kashega was beautiful and peaceful. I could see how the people loved this place and were disappointed that they could not return to it after the war. As we explored the site, we mostly found boards from the houses. At the site of the church, there were posts. I stayed with Mary, who was trying to remember where everything was. She pointed out where my grandparents' house was and said that it was the biggest house there, and that everyone kept their homes clean. For her, it was a special place when she was growing up; it was her favorite place to go of all places. She did not like Unalaska; it was big and was like a metropolitan type place for her.

I had never thought that I would be able to see where my mom was from, much less to have walked on the land that she knew, before being taken to the Southeast. I was very fortunate to have attended the Lost Villages trip; the timing was great for my research and I would have missed a lot had it not been for Rachel and Debbie's invitation to attend the 2010 trip. While I

was exploring, I picked some salmonberries, gathered some soil from the area of the church, and took it back with me to Unalaska so I could take it to my grandparents' graves and give them something from Kashega.



Figure 5.10. Anesia, Ruth Kudrin, Jane Mensoff and Irene McGlashin exploring Kashega village, Uanlaska, 2010.

After everyone explored the former village site, (See Fig. 5.10.) we gathered and placed a Russian cross at the former site of the church and had a small ceremony, blessed the cross, said a prayer, and sang a song. Also, when the cross was being placed, everyone placed a shovelful of dirt at the cross, as is a tradition with the Russian Orthodox Church. While the ceremony was taking place, I felt a sense of peacefulness, and I could sense the ancestors who were there during the ceremony. It was an experience that I have never felt before, and I will always remember that day of the ceremony at Kashega and keep it dear to my heart. As we headed back to Dutch Harbor, I had an opportunity to interview George Gordaoff. I enjoyed talking with him. I wanted to find information on the people that were taken to Japan, and he knew of one of them; and that she had been tortured. I could not imagine being taken to a foreign land and treated so badly; I felt for the people in Japan and for those who were taken to Southeast Alaska.

The next day we traveled to Biorka and the weather was windy and raining. Most of the people stayed in the boat until we arrived at Biorka. When we arrived on the beach, I noticed that the grass is much higher than in Kashega, because of the wild cows that I hear graze there, but when we were in Kashega I did not see any cows. I have to say though, even with the bad weather there, it was still a beautiful place to live. The weather did not let up while we there at Biorka. It was rather hard to explore the village site, because of the weather and the tall grass, (See Fig. 5.11.)



Figure 5.11. Altar, Biorka, Unalaska, Aleutian Islands 2010.  
Courtesy of Jane Mensoff.

and it was hard to take good pictures there. There was a partial house still standing, after all these years; it was amazing, with the strong winds that the islands get each year. Either Brian Rankin or Fred Lekanoff went inside the house to retrieve something from there and gave it to Kathy Dirks, because it was her grandfather's house. For Kathy, it meant a lot to see her grandfather's house still there, and to see what was still in there and retrieve something from there was a bonus. When the cross was ready to be put in place, there was another ceremony as mentioned earlier. While they were singing *Memory Eternal*, I had the same sense that the ancestors were

there again (See Fig. 5.12.) During both ceremonies, it seemed liked there was a peaceful or calmness about it. I believe everyone there felt the same way.



Figure 5.12. Ceremony Biorka, Unalaska, Aleutian Islands 2010.  
Courtesy of Jane Mensoff.

As we returned to Dutch Harbor, the weather improved, the sun came out, and it was still windy but nice. A great way to end the trip; everyone was out talking and exchanging addresses. We said our goodbyes, and exchanged hugs, and kisses (Fig. 5.13.). A lot of good memories came from these two trips for the former residents and the descendants. For most, they were going back home, but for me, I stayed one more day.



Figure 5.13. Departing *Tiġlax*, Dutch Harbor, Aleutian Islands 2010.

The next day Rachel took me to the cemetery in Unalaska, where my grandparents are buried. There I place the berries and dirt that I collected at Kashega on their graves, and talked with them for a little bit. (See Fig. 5.14. and Fig. 5.15.)



Figure 5.14. Grandmother's headstone.



Figure 5.15. Grandfather's headstone.

While I was in Unalaska, Rachel had taken me and a few others to visit with Nick Galaktionoff, also an evacuee from Biorka. While visiting with him and his son John, we discovered that we are cousins. Rachel or I told Nick who my parents were, and Nick told us that his mother was my grandmother's sister from Makushin. My grandmother was Natalia Lekanof

and her sister was Parascovia Lekanoff. Nick was unable to go on the Lost Villages trip to Biorka, due to his health and worries about the weather. John calls me every once in awhile to see how I am doing. So, this trip was a discovery of new family for me as well.

### **Anchorage Interviews:**

My next stop was in Anchorage, where Debbie Corbett took me to APIA to meet with Millie so that I could gather more information and pictures on the Unangax. Millie introduced me to Sharon Kay, her assistant. Sharon was a big help in pointing me in the right direction in the area of the evacuation, but she also found my grandparents' names and the camp they were taken to as well. They were taken to Burnett Inlet. I spent a couple of hours going through some documents and old pictures that people donated to APIA.

My next stop or visit was with Alice Petrivelli, who was from Atka. The interview went well, and I met her daughter who was mentioned in the documentary, saying that her school did not teach the class about the evacuation during WWII. Alice was a pleasure to talk with, and was very helpful about the evacuation (See Fig. 5.16.). She also has gone to schools and talked about her experiences of being an evacuee. She said that she did not hold bad feelings about her experiences, that you could look back at it and laugh; that it was not good to hold bad feelings in, it would just eat at you, what good would that do? You have to find a funny aspect in everything that happens (Petrivelli A. , 2010). She also said that it was time for others to take over her work, which I believe: that those who know about the evacuation and are descendants of the evacuees should continue to talk to others, to let them know about this history that is widely unknown.



Figure 5.16. Alice Petrivelli, Anchorage, Alaska 2010.

I completed two interviews. I had one more with Mary Diakanoff in Juneau. While I was there, she got out some old pictures of Kashega that her mother gave her, made a couple of copies and gave them to me to take. I was hoping that she or someone else had a picture of my grandparents, because I wanted to see what they looked like, but she did not. Someone else might have a picture of them; I just have to wait and see. She was also a pleasure to visit with; we also have kept in contact with each other since the trip.

Rachel has been more than helpful in regard to my trip to Alaska and since then. She has discovered that my grandmother gave birth at the camp to a boy; unfortunately, he died three days later. Rachel also mentioned that he was buried at the cemetery in Ketchikan, and that she will be going there in May. Moreover, she stated that she will be going to Sitka to follow up on the people who were in the mausoleum. I hope she will have luck contacting Bob Sam, who was in charge of the project years ago. Meanwhile, I was still trying to find out what happened to my mom's brother Paul; he was two years younger than she was.

I made lots of contacts through my research, one of whom is Mike Baines from Sitka; he is a councilman for Sitka Tribes of Alaska (STA), and he knew that I was interested in the

mausoleums that were discovered there. Working at STA, he found that Shyla Neher was working on a cemetery project and working as an assistant for an anthropologist who was writing on the TB epidemic in Alaska. He said that she had a lot of information about the mausoleums. So he sent me her email address and let her know that I was interested in her project. After I talked with her, she forwarded me a diagram of the caskets in the bunker, a list of the people who were in the mausoleums, and an article that the paper wrote up on the mausoleums, and I have passed the information on to Rachel, thinking it would help her when she traveled to Sitka. Rachel was happy to receive what I had.<sup>3</sup>

It should have never taken me this long to learn about them, and I am rather sad that it took me going back to school to set me out to find my family background. In a sense, my parents sending me to school helped me find myself or where I came from, on both sides of the family. In addition, I was beginning to learn both cultures; I may know more about my Tlingit culture now, but I am continuing to learn the Unangan culture.

The timing was perfect; I would have never discovered where my mother and grandparents came from, had it not been for doing research on the Unangan people. Seeing the beauty of Kashega and sensing the ancestors that were there during the placement of the Russian Cross was more than I could have imagined or hoped to experience just reading other peoples' articles or books. Furthermore, while on the trip, I got to meet new friends and family who will always be a part of my life. Also, I discovered more about my mom's family, such as that her grandparents were interned in Sitka and were repatriated back to the Aleutians, and that my mom had a brother that I did not know about. I will continue to search or find out what happened to him.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendices M and N.

Since I have started this research, I have kept my siblings and children informed of my findings. My sister Kathy has told me that I was answering questions that have always been on her mind about our mother's family. Moreover, she appreciates that I am finding the truth about our history and learning more about our family than we have imagined existed. Kathy also encouraged me to finish so that she could read what I had learned and pass on the findings to her children. She also mentioned that her husband is now looking into his family history

My children are interested and have kept up with what I have learned and they want to pass it on to their families as well. I know that my children enroll their kids in Tlingit language and dance classes, and perhaps teach them to make their regalia. My kids want to know both sides of their cultural identities and to pass it on to the next generation, and they are always asking questions about their heritage.

I hope that this thesis finds its way to other survivors and descendants like my family and me, and encourages them to go back to their roots and understand our history. All of us should be proud of our heritage. We cannot forget who we are or forget where we come from.

## **Chapter Six: Implementation of Unangan History in Schools**

When I first began this research on the Unangax and their internment during WWII, this thesis was motivated by self-interest. Then I visited a few bookstores, to see if any books mentioned the Aleutian Islands invasion by the Japanese during WWII or the internment of the Unangax. I found only a sentence or two about the Aleutian Islands, but not the Unangax internment. Although I made inquiries to find someone with any knowledge of these occurrences, I discovered that hardly anyone knew about these historical events.

I questioned why is this part of history is not taught in more schools. It is not taught in Southeast Alaska schools, but it is taught in schools in the Aleutian Islands. There are a few schools in the lower forty-eight that do teach the local history of their area, and schools should teach the whole history of its local area.

Here are a few recommendations in how to get schools to teach about Unangan history:

- Organize clubs within the schools to explore this history
- Use Johnson O'Malley Programs to implement Unangan history courses in the school curriculum
- Encourage students to share activities and stories at Show and Tell.
- Invite elders and other knowledgeable people to schools to share their stories.
- Books

When I attended Haskell Indian Nations University, there were clubs that students could join. A few Alaskan students started a club for those students who were from Alaska. It was a place and a time they could come together because they all had something in common. They could talk about home and how different it was for them in the lower forty-eight. The club decided to make traditional regalia; most were Tlingit, although there were a couple of Yupik dancers within the club. While making regalia, the club began to learn and practice Tlingit dances. After the regalia were completed, the club decided to go to pow-wows, schools in the local area, and went to the Veteran's Administration, to perform dances. Then after the dances

were done, the floor was opened up for questions about our cultures. It was very informative for the audiences; we got a lot of questions and comments from them. This experience gave me an idea that clubs or organizations to let other people know about the Unangan culture and its history during orientation week at universities, to gain the attention of the students as well as the professors to show them that this history should be taught to students.

While I was in junior high and high school, I needed extra help with my homework; I remember that there was a program to give helping hand Alaska Native students called the Johnson O'Malley (JOM). This program is nationwide, broken down into regions (See Appendix O).

JOM was created as a nonprofit, educational organization for the following reasons:

- To create an effective forum for discussion of educational and related matters of mutual concern among the members of the educational community.
- To mutually develop standards of educational excellence for Indian students served by the educational programs within the United States.
- To maintain appropriate lines of communication and collaborative efforts with other public, private, tribal and federal educators and educational programs.
- To maintain formal liaisons with Tribal, State and Federal governmental agencies and other educational organizations, including but not limited to National Congress of American Indians, National Indian Education Association and other alliance organizations.
- To advocate for Johnson-O'Malley Programs and the rights of Indian children from 3 years old through twelfth grade (National Johnson O' Malley , 2011).

Throughout the United States, the JOM programs have initiated cultural, language and Native American Indian history classes within the public schools. Here are some ideas that could help teach history classes or other classes of interest:

If a school district does not have Native history classes, try to locate a program within your state that has a program in existence similar to the one you would like to start. Or contact

your representative on the NJOMA Board to find out if there is such a program. If you cannot find a program that will set a precedent then design your plan of action which would include who would teach this class, what books or materials you want to use, how your program and or community could assist in classroom presentation. Next, set up a meeting with the school superintendent and then the school board and make a presentation of how this could work within your schools.

Some schools invite people of various occupations to come into the class room and discuss what they do for a living. If an opportunity arises, go into a school system and introduce story time where one can tell of one's cultural history. Students may become interested to learn of other cultures through this process.

Another method of introducing the Unangax into the school system includes using poems, as Karen Hesse did in *Aleutian Sparrow*. Hesse gives people of all ages a sense of what the Unangax went through during WWII. It is also feasible to make fun activity books for children using some history of the Unangax. The Aleutian World War II National Historical Area also utilizes the history of the Unangax through an annual calendar that they produce and sell.

This thesis has taken me back to my roots. I know my family appreciates the time and effort that I have taken to research this history that needs to be told, not only for me and my family, but for others who do not know about this history. Some people of Unangan descent do not know about this history, as I have discovered through the internet. I have tried to let others know about this history that has been discarded. This history needs to be taught in schools, so the younger generation will understand why a few Unangan elders withheld their experiences in the internment camps, including my own mother; she lost her parents due to the internment.

In conclusion, my methodology was interdisciplinary and as the research progressed, it was determined the nature of Unangan internment indicated colonialism. Like many other indigenous people, the Unangax were marginalized as a society, and suffered genocidal affects through removal from their homes, separation through their families, and the poor condition of the internment camps. Furthermore, immediate corrective efforts were poor in design and implementation, although the Unangax provided services during the war. Later repatriations were not enough for the Unangax for the experiences they endured during and after the evacuation.

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## **Appendix A**

### ADULT INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

*The Legacy of Unjust and Illegal Treatment of Unangan During World War II and its Place in Unangan History*

### INTRODUCTION

The Department of *Global Indigenous Nations Studies* at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the Aleut attitudes to the relocation during WWII.

### PROCEDURES

The interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon location and time. I will ask you to speak about your experience as an internee during World War II. Although I will initiate the discussion with a series of questions, the dialogue will be open and you are free to comment on anything that seems significant to you. This interview will be audio taped and may last up to 90 minutes long. You are free to take a break during the interview or discontinue the interview at any point. After the interviews are transcribed, I will write summary description of the material you presented and return it to you for verification. Then I will perform analysis to look for a common theme. The results will be included in the final draft of my thesis. If you wish, I will

send you a copy of my final work upon completion. I will keep the audio recordings in a secure location and my work will be password protected on my computer.

#### RISKS

Because of the usually private nature of these experiences you may feel psychological discomfort. Strong emotions and memories may surface that contribute to your discomfort. You are free to take a break during the interview or discontinue the interview at any point.

#### BENEFITS

I realize that this study is of a research nature and may offer no direct benefit to me. The interview material will be used to increase the understanding of the experiences, attitudes and to raise awareness of the impact of the internees during WWII.

#### PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless required by law or you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

#### REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

## CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Carlene Arnold 13855 W 67<sup>th</sup> Street, Shawnee, KS 66216

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

## PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email mdenning@ku.edu. I agree to take part in this study as a research participant.

---

Type/Print Participant's Name

---

Date

---

Participant's Signature

## Researcher Contact Information

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## Appendix B

### Interview Questions

1. What is your name? Do you have any other names?
2. What were your parents' names?
3. When and where were you born?
4. Which island were you living on at the time of the internment?
5. To which internment camp did you go to?
6. How many family members went with you?
7. What were the reasons they gave you for why you had to leave?
8. From whom did those reasons come?
9. Where you ever told that the Japanese were going to attack the islands?
10. How many lived in your village? Were they all natives?
11. How many people lived in your villages that you knew about?
12. How were the villages governed? Was there a chief, a council, or some other local government?
13. What Unangan traditional ways were practiced prior to WWII?
14. How did the internment affect the food you ate, I mean when you were there at the camp?
15. Was there a change in attitude about yourselves as Unangan because of the internment?
16. Prior to WWII, how many of the villagers spoke the Unangan language? How many speak the language now?
17. Did you know that some Unangan were taken as POWs before you relocated? Did you know any of them?
18. Who did the officials that were approached about the evacuation? Was it a chief, the council, or did they go to individual houses?
19. Did the children continue their school education before, during and after the internment?
20. Were the children still taught cultural values or traditions before, during and after the internment?
21. Do you think your community structure survived during the internment?
22. How did you adapt to your new environment in camps with regards to your everyday routine, such as making clothing, fishing & hunting, etc?
23. Were there any other churches or religions other than the Russian Orthodox Church?

24. During the period of internment, do you know if the Aleut held legal rights as an indigenous nation, as a citizen of the US or both?
25. How and when did you learn about the legal rights that were denied to you while you were interned? What were the different ways that you continued to learn about your rights?
26. Do you think that the history of the internment should be taught in classrooms? Do you think that it should be taught to the Unangax, non-Unangan or everyone?
27. What are the most important things about the internment that should be taught?
28. How do you think you were treated? That is, did you feel like a US citizen, a ward, or a child?
29. Did you feel that, after your return home having been outside the villages and the camps, that you realized that other people had been treated much better than you were by the government?
30. Do you think that the government should have compensated you for use of your homes?
31. Did you ever feel endangered by either the Japanese or the Americans before the internment?
32. Do you think that you would have stayed at your village, if given a choice?
33. Did you ever go sealing during the internment? Did you know people who did?
34. Do you think that the government should have also given men back pay for working the sealing operation?
35. How did you feel when the Coast Guard fingerprinted you and told you it was for security reasons? Do you believe that is the actual reason for being fingerprinted?
36. Were there things that were promised by the government to aid you at all in fixing the camp or gear for hunting and fishing after returned? Did you receive any assistance?
37. With the income that you earned, were you able to buy what you wanted or were they denied?
38. Did you ever keep a diary or write anything down about any events that took place?
39. Do you teach your children, grandchildren, or great-children about the internment?
40. How did the government treat you before the war?
41. Were you ever made to feel ashamed for what happened?
42. Did you ever have any health problems because of the internment?

43. Is there anything more that you could tell me about the health problems related to the internment that hasn't been said before?
44. Is there something about this event that nobody has asked, and that you would like to say?

## Appendix C

The following personal interviews were audio recorded on:

George Gordaoff	September 2, 2010	Dutch Harbor, Alaska
Alice Petrivelli	September 7, 2010	Anchorage, Alaska
Mary Diakanoff	September 8, 2010	Juneau, Alaska

The reason that I have chosen these people is that they are former residents and internee survivors of the villages of Biorka, Kashega, and Atka who were not returned to their villages. Therefore, the questions pertain to where they were at the time of the Japanese invasion, and the camps where they were interned in Southeast Alaska. In addition, I have inquired about their experiences in the camps and their return back to the Aleutian Islands.

Although I had a set of prepared questions, I also asked questions outside the set when they were appropriate. The interviewees were very patient and cooperative. There may be some misspelling of words or names, as I am learning new words and pronunciations of them as well. The interviews were transcribed as they were recorded and have not been edited.

## Appendix D

### Interview with George Gordaoff on 09/02/2010 in Dutch Harbor

CA: What is your name?

GG: **George Gordaoff.**

CA: Do you have any other names?

GG: **Na, No.**

CA: What were your parents' names?

GG: **Huh Alex Gordaoff and Lucy Gordaoff.**

CA: Were they known by other names?

GG: **I don't think so.**

CA: When and where were you born?

GG: **I was born in Unalaska, in huh; see 12-3-25.**

CA: Which island were you living on at the time of the internment?

GG: **Huh, Unalaska Island.**

CA: To which internment camp did you go to?

GG: **From the, I just went to huh, Wrangell Institute, and huh from there, they my group went to, huh Burnett Inlet.**

CA: Burnett Inlet, okay.

CA: How many family members went with you? Who were they?

GG: **Huh, that was my aunts, cousins, huh went to huh, some went to Burnett Inlet and some went to Wards Cove in Ketchikan.**

CA: What were the reasons they gave you for why you had to leave?

GG: **Supposed to be for our own safety and no, no one that I know of volunteered to leave, they took us out.**

CA: So they forced you guys to leave.

GG: **Yeah, more or less, I mean, they weren't forced, but they were told to move, I wonder sometime today wondered what would they did if they refused to go, but nobody refused, they were all shocked but they finally they made it okay.**

CA: From whom did those reasons come? And do you know which department?

GG: **All I know is military.**

CA: Were you ever told that the Japanese were going to attack the islands?

GG: **Huh, in around about way, they used the words. But it was pretty much huh understood.**

CA: How many people lived in your village? Were they all natives?

GG: **Yeah, there is about 31 people, and about 21 households, or excuse me, seven, seven households.**

CA: Seven households, Were they all natives?

GG: **Yeah.**

CA: How many people lived in other villages that you knew about?

GG: **I wouldn't know because, I didn't know what, who was there.**

CA: How were the villages governed? Was there a chief, a council, or some other local government?

GG: **Yeah, ah Chief huh they huh, huh, it was chief, huh status, yeah, no council.**

CA: Was is it just one chief or were there?

GG: **Three of em most cases, yeah.**

CA: What Unangan traditional ways were practiced prior to WWII?

GG: **Yeah there, there, was huh known as Unangan before the war, huh.**

CA: So were there traditional ways that were practiced?

GG: **Huh, yeah huh, more religious, and huh yeah, there were different huh traditions you know within, but there weren't no huh, you might call huh, all the little, it was huh, once the word was set, there whatever, it was pretty much huh way.**

CA: Did they change after people were allowed to return to the Aleutians? And if so how?

GG: **Yeah, the government huh regulated that, and huh, they were late getting back because some of them took two years to go back because of the government.**

CA: How did the internment affect the food you ate? When you returned were you eating less traditional foods?

GG: **Huh, That is hard one for me to answer; because I didn't come back with them right away. I Stayed, stayed, back, huh, I'm sure they did. Huh, Cause all the during the time were down there, they mention huh use of tradition food. It huh, it uh worked for em, I mean, huh, yeah they, they got back to that pretty fast.**

CA: You said you that you returned later. How come you returned later?

GG: **Huh, when I got, well I didn't actually return I stayed back, I originally, huh we got discharged here in Anchorage, and we had a fare to go back, and I didn't use mine I stayed, cause there was work there. And I worked uh oh three or four months and finally quit and worked elsewhere.**

CA: Where did you work at? Was it at it Ketchikan area?

GG: **Out in the base.**

CA: On a base, which base?

GG: **Elmendorf. Then huh, later went to Kashega, or not Kashega, Cordova, I pretty much stayed there.**

CA: Was there a change in attitude about yourselves as Unangan because of the internment?

GG: **Huh, yeah when I didn't go back huh, a lot of the people huh, say huh disowned me, I guess, pretty much, and huh, see from about 13, I was only, huh, 16 and huh, they expect me to answer all these things I didn't really take in consideration, huh, cause I huh, huh stayed back because I didn't have a place to stay, and also huh, I didn't have no stable income, and huh I had a, I mean, I had a do the stable income myself, in at that time, there was nothing up there, was no crab season, or nothing, very little work, city didn't have much work, foreign boats that came in, little bit of long shoring. That's just about it.**

CA: So you returned to Unalaska?

GG: **No, I stayed, huh, down south huh like at Cordova, I stayed there 20 some years. Before I moved.**

CA: Prior to WWII, how many of the villagers spoke the Unangan language? How many speak the language now?

GG: **About half, I guess.**

CA: Half, half, prior.

GG: **Yeah, I had a hard time myself too, because I never stayed there with the language, I still can't.**

CA: So do you know how many still speak the language now?

GG: **I think at one time, huh, through other sources, I think that there was over 500 and some people,**

CA: That's quite a bit, yeah.

GG: That's quite a bit. It whittled down to 200 and some now. I often wondered huh, what happened to the money, I mean, they weren't there to receive it, who got it? The money from? From the government, from the reparations. They got huh, I don't remember how much? But they got huh x amount of dollars, to be distributed, and as people died, what did they do with the shares? I mean you know huh, huh, I got one portion, I got my cousins, well everything, BIA I got his shares in the corporation, all the BIA gifts, or whatever I think it was 6000, and a second issue, they had two issues, I received my cousins with the Aleut Corporation, which I own 100 shares in there now, and then recently, my adopted brother, I got his shares now so I got 200 shares, in the corporation, it's not that much, its huh very small amount but I didn't care I mean, you know, whatever they decided I went along with huh, so that's where I am at right now, between a stone and hard rock or something.

CA: Did you know that some Unangan were taken as POWs before you relocated?

GG: Huh, yes, Attu.

CA: So you knew before you left for Southeast?

GG: Huh, about the same time we left, I think, pretty close. I don't remember the dates, cause I never.

CA: Did you know any of them?

GG: Huh yeah, some, and huh they came back after the war. Took a little while, about half of them and the other half of died, various diseases, and mistreatment, you hear two sides of the story, once, *Vacuum noise, shut off turned off recorder. Turned on recorder.*

**GG: I huh, well kinda went back and forth huh, worked here and there, worked wherever I could work, those days work was pretty easy to get, and didn't worry too much about age, huh as long as I could do the work, and that the way it was, I worked where I could. did alright, I took care for myself, huh, then huh, Later years huh well I got into the service, of age then, I got in a year early, but huh it's the way it went, then, uh I huh stayed in the service, huh three years, when I got out, huh that's when I went to work, got stuck around there, for work, cause, there was no work in Unalaska, cuz the crab wasn't even up yet, it was alright I but I had too much itching feet, to keep moving, I ended up in Cordova.**

**CA: Who did the officials that were approached about the evacuation? Was it the chief, the council, or did they come to individual houses?**

**GG: Well, huh, needless to say, Cordov or huh Cordova, or huh Kashega, some of the people went to the Pribilof Islands to work, so I was kinda of left in charge of the village, and I guess I was the chief, and huh they come in one morning, pretty early, come to shore with the dory, and huh they told ensign was the captain on the boat, told me then want us to pack, just we could get into one suitcase and come aboard, they were going to take us to Chernofski, and I asked him why, were evacuating, well, it was a brand new word for me, so I talked with them, didn't excited, I and huh they were going to take us over there to wait for huh another bunch of people to come, well mostly out of Chernofski, and huh, so we spent about ten days I guess days on this boat, huh waiting to go, which was nice, it was nice staterooms, dining room, real passenger boat.**

**CA: So did they approach everybody in the village or did you tell?**

GG: I told the people, and the guy was with me, we both told them actually, and then huh they kept asking when they going to get back, and they wouldn't answer, or they didn't know, two years, maybe three years, whatever, so I told them huh, well you better kill your pets, because we didn't want to come back to a wild animal kinda, so they did, we boarded all the windows we can, didn't have the material, and the church of course, and that was it, then we boarded dory, we went out to the cruiser, actually it was the *California* herring boat, nice boat, big boat, so they took us to huh Chernofski, and they put us up in a tent, on the beach, a whole gang of us, but it wasn't satisfactory cuz the tundra was you know ah wet, it had a canvas floor but it start seeping through, getting puddles all over the place so.

CA: What time of year was that?

GG: It was spring of the year, yeah, and so I guess I was a my part, I don't know but, anyhow I got a hold of the captain got to know him, told him and I told him what was happening, and he said okay, we will find you a place, and says if you don't see me in a half hour and come looking for me, so I did, and that is when they moved us aboard this Alaska steam ship, huh *Columbia*, one of the bigger ones, nice, faster, and huh then we started after we waited for about ten days, or whatever, finally got the Nikolski people rounded up, and brought to huh Chernofski, and then we brought them on the boat, then we started to move, stopped in Unalaska of course, Akutan, picked those people up, and we were headed south, nobody knew where we were going. So finally huh, they huh they got to Wrangell Institute or Wrangell, and huh they had a big pow wow, there, the boat crew, and uh the bosses, and the village bosses, and the Tlingit people you know, so we hashed it out, and the next I know

they put us on trucks and hauled us out to a school, Wrangell Institute, it was about five miles out of town, barged all our luggage, and they towed it all out, they had a little boat that towed out there, and that was it, and put a shore, the school wasn't operating at the time and huh we had a hard time getting groceries, there was no food left, I mean except a few cans, there was no food left to you know cook, so we scrounged around, me and another guy, find whatever we can, and try to make a meal out of it, Tlingit people gave us some dogs fish, you know, fix that the best way we can. And that the way it was, kinda of beg and steal sort a situation.

CA: They have tents set up for you or did you stay in a,

GG: No, we huh, yeah they got set em up but we got them a little bit later, cuz were running out of room, all the strays were coming in you know, so huh, we huh got ourselves together and they are going to send a bunch to Burnett Inlet. It's a cannery, and the other one to huh three Cs camp in Wards Lake in Ketchikan, so I decide to go to huh Burnett Inlet, in last minute, they said I don't have to go, I can stay in Wrangell and stay they need me to finish clean up and cook and stuff, so I did that and huh, later it Wards Lake, that I was already to go to Wards Lake, and everything else, they stopped that at last minute, principal said you're going to Juneau, go to school, I said fine. So I got huh they gave me a job in the hospital, a kind of split shift deal; where I could study and stuff, it helped some.

CA: At Juneau or there at Wrangell?

GG: Yeah at Juneau, They introduced me to the grade school principal, him and I got along real good, his wife, and huh he himself helped me with some of the work, later

**she did, and I was there till the first of the year, I went into the service, there was no more Juneau.**

CA: Did the children continue their school education before, during and after the internment?  
What was that again, did the children continue their school education before, during and after?

GG: **Oh yeah, high school huh went on, and huh that is why they had to get me out I was huh I was too old, I guess or either I have to study, or get off the premise , the principal knew that, and huh that why he was so anxious to get me off to work, it huh worked okay, only thing I didn't get along with the second nurse, they had no doctor there, he was up town doctor, contract doctor, and the second nurse, Mrs. Nelson, I never forgot that, her and I didn't get along, and that is why I joined the service to get away from her.**

CA: Were the children still taught cultural values or traditions before, during and after the internment?

GG: **Hum, yeah, huh, it huh, lessened the load in the camps and also sickness and huh those that went to school in Wrangell Institute, got care, and the ones that didn't go, some of em passed away. But it huh went on and huh from huh Juneau like I say, to the service and send me to Excursion Inlet it was a army camp, and huh got a little training, not much, we worked with the long shore man you know, and that stuff it was a pretty good go and finally huh they send us to Whittier, and huh from Whittier huh we huh went to huh Attu, to finish out the war. Really and huh well there was no more official fighting, but there was a lot of dead bodies so I don't know, we had to find them and bury them, bury the Japanese or, both, yeah it**

wasn't official burial, it just had to get rid of them, because they were carrying too much disease, and huh maybe found one or two a day, and we bury them and move on and stuff from Whittier they brought us back to Anchorage, and our company is doing you could think of and military so they asked for some volunteers to huh, huh on different, different, duties you know, and I put in for fireplace, a fireman, but I was thinking, huh you firing a boiler you know, it turned out to be a real fire, I didn't care for it when I first got in, but the more I learned about it, the better I liked it, so I stayed with that for 18 months, then they took us huh send us to Attu, that is when I went to Attu to clean up, and till the first of the year, guess we went all the way to Oklahoma, and Mississippi for real training down there, it was kind of disgusting in away because we were all hept up to really go down and lick the Japanese you know and huh on Attu or Kuriles Island, same thing and huh and by the time we are ready to go, they, they gave up, so there was no more fight, and not supposed to be anyhow.

CA: So did you see a lot of damage at Attu when you?

GG: Well there, actually except for the village, there was nothing to be damaged there, because the Japanese never really built anything there, but huh the village was the wrecked too and huh then this one took this bunch to huh, Japan, they were there a couple years three, maybe, and they finally brought them back, huh some were injured, some were okay, others passed away, you know from climate, change whole thing.

CA: Did you get an opportunity to talk to anybody that had returned from there?

**GG: Yes, I knew this one gal, I got to know her, she come back huh, but she was tortured, they huh, burned cigarettes all over her body and stuff like that, how old was she? And huh, I imagine she is dead by now, quite awhile ago, they had a little boy, And huh, that's how it went. One thing after another, they huh, the ones that came back, were sent to their village, Atka, well Attu, theres no village left so they sent them to Atka, villages there, they were related anyhow, and huh, that's how it went, and huh, later now they are scattered, there some huh different places, some Atka, some Unalaska, and Akutan, and all those places, they kind of divide themselves all over those are related they moved along, and far as I know that is the way it is now.**

**CA: So did the Japanese bring them back or did the United States bring em?**

**GG: Japanese brought them back yeah.**

**CA: Do you think your community structure survived during the internment?**

**GG: Community structure, huh, well, yeah I think so huh had to huh in ordered had to come back anyhow, huh but a lot of em I guess you had to learned the Japanese ways, you know, which is huh normal enough, and huh they some were treated pretty, pretty nice, I guess they cooperated better than the others I guess, so they were treated pretty good, but those that kind of stubborn, are the ones huh got punished.**

**CA: So they were treated as POWs then?**

**GG: Yeah, ah ha yep Japanese POWs, so anyhow they come back and relocated themselves, and that's the way it's been pretty much, those who came to Atka most**

**of them died, and huh well they, they had no base sort of speak, they kind a went there and kind joined the crowd, and lived the they can.**

CA: How did you adapt to your new environment in camps with regard to your everyday routine, such as making clothing, fishing & hunting, etc.?

GG: **Um I think that it was a daily huh ritual thing because there was no way they could do anything, huh I think one them mentioned one time they worked in a factory or something clothes factory.**

CA: What kind of factory?

GG: **Clothing factory I guess, they were able to make their own clothes pretty much.**

CA: Were there any other churches or religions other than Russian Orthodox Church?

GG: **I don't know, I don't think so huh at that time it just Russian Orthodox.**

CA: During the period of internment, do you know if the Aleut held legal rights as an indigenous nation, as citizens of the US or both?

GG: **Ah they never huh, changed their citizenship, knowhow and huh and huh it's all the United States and the Japanese recognized that.**

CA: They recognized them as United States citizens with the government.

GG: **Yeah that was huh er you say a reason I guess that were they were America citizens, so they huh got a little better treatment wouldn't have never gotten otherwise.**

CA: From Japanese.

GG: **Yeah so they were treated a little bit better. Yeah, they huh I mean the Japanese recognized them as United States citizens treat them accordingly, cuz war time treatment, but still huh, huh a lot those that weren't I think were killed, you know by hand.**

CA: They were treated equally; I mean there was non-Unangan that were taken over there as well so they were treated the same?

GG: **Pretty much, I far as I know, course I wasn't there, so I really don't know what happened, except, I've heard some of them mention how some were treated good, the others said they weren't so that kind of caliber I think.**

CA: How and when did you learn about the legal rights that were denied to you while you were interned?

GG: **Huh, some of the guys huh on from Unalaska, they're dead now too, huh, huh got a hold of their Senator whose was Ted Stevens and huh others and started this question thing, and the more they got into it, they more they found out that they were you know, huh American citizens, and huh it was a quite a stir up there, about that time that the people were American citizens, before they didn't give it much thought, because huh we weren't huh classified at that time as American citizens, I don't know what the hell they thought we were but?**

CA: You were saying that you were classified as United States citizen, were you classified as a ward, or?

GG: **Huh, far as I know it was American. But huh, other than that, huh, I wasn't huh that alerted in my own life time that huh this is was solemn truth, I mean I am sure it was huh, well you take 13- 14 how much you going to know you know, listen to the elders, and see what they were saying.**

CA: What were the different ways that you continued to learn about your rights like when you left the camps, did you learn that other people, they had more freedom?

GG: Yeah, pretty much by hand or mouth, I guess you would say, huh, last time, like myself particularly, I was never, never, went to school, you know, so It took me a little bit grasp, whatever was going on, and huh so that's in my life that's the way it went, wasn't huh you know, ready stamped situation, you had a kind a go along and huh see what they were doing to us, and for some the smarter kids were able to huh put a what you call a name on it I guess and huh like I say, went to their congressman, and so forth that when the ball start to roll. They got huh, what they get out it anyway how they got some monies, with the treatment and all that stuff, and that was it, huh after the treatment, was nothing different, I mean huh so they huh like I say the younger people, had some schooling research some kind of answer, but it took a while, so anyhow, that's all I know about the thing, is theres a lot o hear say, and not much huh truth, was the truth but, they shut it down, cuz the Japanese didn't want to be blamed for everything you know, so it was that way, it was kind of a thing, but by that time I was in Kashega. So I wasn't much help for anybody, kind of stuck there, and like I say, still huh in the kid stayed 13 maybe 12, and I didn't put the whole thing together myself for quite awhile, then if finally dawned on me this what happened to it and then it started to coming together well, that's the way it was.

CA: Do you think that the history of the internment should be taught in classrooms?

GG: Ah, yes huh, because that was another problem the government shut it off, you know you couldn't even mention class, other things huh, but huh they huh they finally got through and started this world war reparation monies, huh it took a little while to get it sorted out and distributed.

CA: So do you think that it should be taught to Unangan, non-Unangan, or everyone?

GG: **Oh, yeah definitely, yeah, that our the problem is our the white half huh didn't know about it, and huh the some of those, were told, wasn't accurate they were know about it, were it was never huh truth, but they finally did straighten it out and got the truth out of it as nearly as they can, then things went a little better.**

CA: What are the most important things about the internment that should be taught?

GG: **Well the whole thing, huh suppose it drags in the whole WWII, you know but huh that was the base of it, up here we huh we struggle as we always did, and the government knew or thought that the Japanese were going to, especially after Attu, they were thought they were going come up the chain, and so they had to get us out of the way, so we won't going to get killed or hurt. But huh, it didn't exactly happened that way, the Japanese didn't move after that, but huh so they kind huh you say dead meat I guess, then huh we went down there and kicked them of the island, got rid of em, and huh then things settled down, but they never brought us back, they left us I guess, expect to be back, I guess, that the way it was, they stayed down there 2 years 3 years most of em come back, I think the Pribilovians, the Pribilof people, got the worse beating out of the bunch, cuz they were still under government huh control, and like they sealing time comes you know pick a bunch of them to go back and if you don't go they threatened vise if you don't go back, you might never go back. You know that kind of stuff.**

CA: Were they were returned after the sealing was over or did they stay out on the islands?

GG: **Huh, some of did, huh the officials I think stayed and then the rest of the people went back there.**

CA: Back to the camps ah ha. Did they want to go back to the camps?

GG: **Yeah, well they wanted the other half to go the other way. But that isn't the way the government works. So huh did you ever see the film huh, huh what is it?**

CA: *The Aleut Story.*

GG: **Yeah, huh the one before that huh.**

CA: *The Aleut Evacuation*, yeah, yes I did,

GG: **That shows huh tells you more than the second one, the second one it's kind of a repetition of the first one, but huh with all that the guy paid attention and they were I would say desperate to go back, because they wanted to get out from under the govt clutch and huh and do their own thing was to which they finally did. So huh that's about all I know about the whole thing, and some of it might not be exactly true, but that's the way I understood it ,huh so the govt huh didn't play fair either in some parts of it.**

CA: How do you think you were treated? That is, did you feel like a US citizen, a ward or did you feel like a child?

GG: **Huh, myself, I know I known definitely the other ones were knew they were treated like a child, and in my own thought I was pretty much free, I went and did what I wanted to, and especially when I went to Juneau and go then to school there, but school didn't do much for me, but huh I huh had myself, I wasn't huh thinking like most of them you know and huh as war ended, and got out of the service, the whole picture changed on me, and huh which was they right they huh it they took us back to where being okay, this is when village, huh trade thing, comes huh really held out**

**for us, they huh so much stock and you know and let us do our own thing, which was okay it was better actually, what they wanted to do for us.**

CA: While you were in the service, did they allow, did they uh, with the Unangax who were in the service, did they give you furlough to go to the sealing operation?

GG: **Huh, yeah the sealing was a different a thing, they like that was all Pribilof govt huh, thing we weren't allowed to go, huh so that was kind of a set setback, and huh but they all went so there was no problem, by that time, so they found some more evidence, and whatever that you know people taken them back where they came from, regardless, which they did some of them themselves huh moved on to different huh situation, some us stayed in Juneau, Ketchikan, all over down there, and never went back, they got married and raised families.**

CA: Did you feel that, after your return home having been outside the villages and the camps that you realized that other people had been treated much better than you're were by the government?

GG: **Hum, I know they were, but I can't say that, because I didn't got separated, from em, yeah some of huh had a hard time, huh like my aunts they trying to get housing, and you know, house were torn down and huh it huh finally went through.**

CA: Do you think that the government should have compensated you for use of your homes?

GG: **Well that's just it, I didn't have a home and huh I was just went along let things happen, well I was kind of interested to, this case here, my huh adopted brother who had passed away now, and huh the reason finally gave me his share, and he also had a house here through BIA, which is huh non-title home I say you call it, I was wondering if I should apply for that, or what, it's got to be rebuilt, it's not livable,**

**but the ground is there, and huh I don't know, I don't what I want to do with it.**

**Cuz, I could do it, other than age, if I was younger, I'd jump on it, and fix it up**

**anyhow, but I could still fix it, but huh as huh my age and everything I don't work**

**like I used to, I don't work at all, so it's pretty hard everything I do, I have to hire**

**out, and which I don't have the money. So that's it. What else you got.**

CA: Did you ever feel endangered by either the Japanese or the Americans before the internment?

GG: No, neither one.

CA: Do you think that you would have stayed at your village, if given a choice?

GG: **I wondered about that, there was so much work, you know that's between Dutch Harbor and well, Attu, huh Attu you had to work to keep going, it was good money in it, then huh that's what I probably would have done, I was already working anyhow.**

CA: Were you working, you weren't working for the government, you were working for?

GG: **A private contractor, come up here for work for the government.**

CA: We work for so it was better pay than the government.

GG: **Oh yeah, well although, I don't know, the government paid pretty good, and huh they ran the boat, tugs and stuff, and huh it wasn't no great big pay, but it was you had retirement, you had huh different benefits, so it equaled out pretty good and huh, and huh you got the boat according to your own experience, more you know, the bigger the boat you got, the less you know the smaller boat, I got up to power scowls, and net situation, so huh that's it, I was kind of huh cooling downer or finished end then those ship back and forth Kodiak, and all over, and they were**

**picking up all the surplus places, taking them to Dutch or Kodiak, and huh Seward, and selling them, boats, you name it whatever, lot of people got good buys too.**

CA: Did you ever go sealing during the internment?

GG: **No I didn't,**

CA: Did you know people who did?

GG: **Well the residents.**

CA: Do you think that the government should have also given men back pay for working the sealing operation?

GG: **Yes they should have.**

CA: Especially during the war time.

GG: **Yeah, yeah they should have reimbursed these guys but they did get some compensation. Yeah, well, it was 600 or 1200, or whatever, Because they were in the war thing, they had a little trouble with St. Paul people, and the local Aleutian Island people, cuz, they said, we weren't treated bad in all that, but they shut them up right away, if one gets it, they all have to get it so they got that settled.**

CA: How did you feel when the Coast Guard fingerprinted you and told you it was for security reasons?

GG: **Ah no, but I did get fingerprints to upgrade my license, different times, but huh other than that, there was nothing threatening I guess.**

CA: Do you believe that is the actual reason for being fingerprinted?

GG: **Yeah, huh for Identification I think mostly, yeah**

CA: Were there things that were promised by the government to aid you at all in fixing the camp or gear for hunting and fishing after returned?

GG: **Yeah, there was a lot of corruptancy on that part, huh that is why the villages were never rebuilt because the govt didn't want to spend money on them, they wouldn't give them material to upgrade their houses, or anything like that, they did little bit in Unalaska but, it was all wet lumber, but that is the way it was, it's kind hard to remember, you know 60 some years ago, it faded away from me, and huh I know some people have different answers for same question, because of that, but huh, I always try to be truthful, about it, cause it won't benefit me now anyhow, so stay with this.**

CA: With the income that you earned, were you able to buy what you wanted? Were you ever denied the right to buy what you wanted?

GG: **No, I wasn't denied, to buy what I wanted. But it's like now, there's never enough to do some good.**

CA: Did you ever keep a diary or write anything down about any events that took place?

GG: **No.**

CA: Do you teach your children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren about the internment?

GG: **Yeah they know about it now, she is the one.**

CA: How did the government treat you before the war?

GG: **Huh, before the war, we weren't even existing, I don't think, huh, it took the govt to recognize who we were, and huh, it wasn't huh a dirty thing they were doing evacuating us, try to look at it well from being, and huh cuz they were afraid that the Japanese could come in, and demolish all us, just like did at Attu, so we were kind a be careful of that.**

CA: Were you ever made to feel ashamed for what happened?

GG: No

CA: Did you ever have any health problems because to the internment? From?

GG: **They got the villages, got some United States help, like huh Burnett Inlet, old cannery, and later they brought in some new wood, to repair some of the villages, another thing, huh that was rubbing side, was a the Pribilof people you know, couldn't do anything without the govt telling them, whereas, we were free to do what we wanted to do, huh pretty much huh, we didn't have to go to camp, somewhere else, but they huh gave them some lumber, to do their own thing, and which they did, they petitioned off some of the buildings, some of the buildings there were still good, they but not livable, they saved the lumber off that, to make what was livable better, whereas the govt they didn't or the Pribilovians they didn't do that.**

CA: So between the Pribilovians and you guys at the other camps were there different departments then in charge between the two?

GG: **No huh see how did they do that, the one sector took, the men and fishermen I guess they call them into one group, and they took the other group into the other group, there were two groups, huh, civilians and civilians, and huh workers I guess you could call em, they were separated by two huh same govt, two entities, yeah but they finally got over that, now the Pribilovians are on their own, they don't have to go to the government.**

CA: Is there anything more that you could tell me about the health problems related to the internment that hasn't been said before?

GG: **I think that you covered it pretty good all the way through**

CA: Is there something about this event that nobody has asked, and that you would like to say?

GG: **Ah it's been covered somewhere along the way, maybe wrong places, I don't know, but huh they finally got some freedom of speech huh act, that they were able to tell their own story, individual stories, and huh that helped I think, but when it started out, it was one band situation and huh its washed itself out pretty good.** *Turned off recorder, interview over.*

## Appendix E

### Interview with Alice Petrivelli on 09/07/2010 in Anchorage

CA: What is your name?

AP: **Alice Petrevilli.**

CA: Do you have any other names?

AP: **Alice Snigaroff, my maiden name was Snigaroff, I'm from Atka.**

CA: What were your parents' names?

AP: **My father was Cedar Snigaroff, my mother was Agnes.**

CA: Were they known by other names?

AP: **I don't think so, they always called my father Tatta, he was kind of a dignified man, so he was not daddy, he was always Tatta, you know, in Aleut, everybody called him Tatta. my mom died when I was five years old, so my father raised me, my brother Puda, and my sister Vera, the same year my mother passed, my younger brothers, my oldest brother was Puda, then I had a brother John, I never met him, he passed before I was born, then my sister Vera, then me, then I had two younger brothers George and Gabriel, in the same year I lost my mother, I lost my two younger brothers.**

CA: When and where were you born?

AP: **Atka, Alaska when I was born November 18, 1929, but all the time, I thought mine was 19<sup>th</sup>, I didn't realize on the Russian calendar, you had the name date, Alexandra, that's my birth name Alexandra and huh all those years celebrating my names day, on the 19<sup>th</sup> I didn't know I was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> until I got my birth certificate, and I thought Tatta, was just Alice, you know, I thought he was mad at**

**me when he called me Alexandra, that I didn't know that was my real name. But all my legal papers say Alice.**

CA: Which island were you living on at the time of the internment?

**AP: Atka.**

CA: To which internment camp did you go to?

**AP: Killisnoo.**

CA: How many family members went with you?

**AP: My father Cedar, my brother Puda, his wife Elizabeth, my sister and I there was five of us.**

CA: What were the reasons they gave you for why you had to leave?

**AP: Cause they burnt our village, I mean, there is a story before that, when the war started, the Magee's, were are our teacher and I guess at that time, they decided that in order for us to be safe from the Japanese, they would move us, so now remember I was 12, nobody talked to me, I learned later, that they had, I know that they had a meeting when the men came back from trapping, I guess you know in those days, men when out and trapped, there was no men in the village during the winter, when the men trapped, and the men came back sometime in April, they had community meeting, and my father came back and told us they're going to move us, so they told us to pack, and be ready when they told us, you know when the ship is coming, this was in April, didn't hear anything in May, then in June, huh, when they bombed Dutch Harbor, huh, that's when the PBYs there was about 13 PBYs that came to Atka, and they set up kind of a fueling and for replenishing their bombs and shells, and then after certain days, God, I can't remember the dates, but**

they told us to out of the houses, need had to go to the camps, we camped in the summertime anyways, so we knew we had to go to the camps, so we went to the camps then one day, huh my father and them decided to go when we were running out of supplies, so they were going into the village, they left huh old man Mercian, and Mrs. Mercian, and as adults, rest of my uncle Bill's family adults, me, the Golleys were all in one camp, and they came back, when they left we heard this Japanese, I mean we didn't know it would, we heard this plane coming on the west side, where the American planes came they came in the east point, north east point, and this plane came, and the amalee the west side, so we used to run up this hill and wave to the bombers when they left on the bombing missions, that we ran up the hill and all of the sudden we saw the red sign, on the plane and we running down the hill, and we got back to the tent, and Mrs. Mercian, was mending socks, we said in Aleut, upunie, upunie, Japanese, Japanese the Japanese planes, so she said hide, and they told us to hide somewhere, you know, and without thinking, huh my sister and I hid under the table, and the cook tent, this is a white tent against green and we hid under the table, and when my dad, uncle Bill, and them got to the village, they wouldn't let them come ashore, to get supplies, or they got there, they chased them into the hills, in case the Japanese bombed then, but when they saw all these planes, and the harbor and turned and went back, and it was the same night the Navy burned the village, they didn't tell us they were going to burn it, but they left my father's house, they left the Golley's house, and the Dirks house, they learned later, they did that cuz they had complete indoor plumbing, you know, running hot, cold water, indoor toilet, that was the beginning of my life, huh I think that left Atka 12<sup>th</sup>

of June, huh only reason, we knew, they want, that same day huh some of the planes came back, one and we watched as they come, I told you up the hill, and we watch, we saw one plane go down, in the harbor of the village, and another one by on the long beach side, and that evening when we saw fire burning we thought they were burning the plane, then all of the sudden my uncle Andrew, he was in the camp further out, came to our camp, remember these men worked on huh boats, so they know the Morse code, with what the Navy was doing, that they were sending out signals, light, and so Uncle Andrew, said, he thought they wanted us to come to the ship, but it was 10, 11 at night, completely dark, so uncle Bill, since he was the chief he sent his younger brother and huh Julian Golley, to the other camps that couldn't see the signal, as it was, they still left 24 people behind. But we got to the ship, huh we went the wrong ship, huh, not the one that Mrs. Magee the teachers weren't later that day, after the Japanese plane came in, another ship came in, carrying fuel, and bombs and shells, for the planes, what the Japanese didn't know was a lot of those planes couldn't go anywhere, cause they didn't have any fuel, so that's what saved them, anyway we got on the wrong ship, they wouldn't let them, my uncles Bill, go to tried to get more people besides all goes together shot holes in them and sunk them. *Phone ringing, turned off recorder. Turned on recorder.* Well that's how it began we from Atka, we went to Nikolski, from Nikolski, to Dutch, where we met up with huh with the Pribilofs people, and they were on *Delarof* and seems like everything happened, happened at night, they loaded us up on a *Delarof*, but night time, then we were on ship maybe week, two weeks, I know we got to Killisnoo 24<sup>th</sup> of June.

CA: Which camp did they arrive at first in Southeast?

**AP: Funter Bay, yeah we unloaded St. Paul and St. George people there. Then from there we went to a Killisnoo.**

CA: How far away was your camp from your village?

**AP: I don't know, 2000 miles maybe,**

CA: The fish camp.

**AP: Oh fish camp, in those days, it's about a quarter mile, but we were staying at different camp, my uncle's camp, so you could look and see the village, it's about 20 minutes, huh in old dories, they used to go putt, putt, putt and so it's a quarter mile from the village but you could see into the village.**

CA: From whom did those reasons come? Was it from the Navy? Was it from the Army? Or do you know which department told you huh?

**AP: I have no idea, but I know that huh the Magee's, they were going leave the people behind, after they leave the village, burnt the village, they said, huh they weren't going to go until they took us, so they took us, I guess they called a Dutch Harbor, and after Graff, I don't remember his rank, he said leave them there, so they called Buckner up here, and they said take them, so they took us.**

CA: Were you ever told that the Japanese were going to attack the islands before that happened?

**AP: Well after they attacked Attu, it was assumption that they would attack, yeah but officially, remember, I'm only twelve, nobody told me anything.**

CA: How many lived in your village?

**AP: At that time, eighty-five**

CA: And were they all natives?

**AP: Yes, except two, ah Mr. and Mrs. Magee the teachers**

CA: How many people lived in your villages that you knew about?

**AP: Gee, I think there was over 800 total that was Atka, Nikolski, Unalaska, and Akutan.**

CA: Did you know all people the villages?

**AP: No, I knew some people in Unalaska, cause when momma was alive; we used to go to ah Unalaska. I knew the whole family, and the Kashevarofs that's about it, but my father went there so he knew almost everybody there, my brother and my father, my brother was eight years older than me, so he knew them, and my sister had been there just before the war, to have her tonsils out, so she knew the Taylors, and all of them.**

CA: How were the villages governed? Was there a chief, a council, or some other local government?

**AP: I'll talk about Atka cuz, I won't talk about other villages, I'll only talk about Atka, we had a chief, if it was until 1938 or around there when they formed the IRAs, then they got elected, in there was a council that huh set the rules and etc you know to orderly keep the people in place, there was always elder, a church reader, and then three other elders and maybe one young person that was it.**

CA: Forgive me if I miss pronounce this, Unangan. Unangan, What Unangan traditional ways were practiced prior to WWII?

**AP: Everything, you know, Aleut was my first language, it always was, you know, English was my second language, we lived completely on subsistence, we didn't have**

electricity, we didn't have hum, only we reheated the houses with through coal and wood that we gathered, you know, the wood we gathered, the coal, like my father would get a half a ton of coal shipped in every year, then we would go around the island and gather wood, and use kerosene lamps and Coleman lamps.

CA: And you, huh, hunted and fished off ah,

AP: Yeah, huh, summertime, we started gathering, you know, on south side, for cod, halibut, and etc, and then on north side, for salmon, we have red, we have pink, we have huh chum last, silver, then in winter, fall, and

CA: So you picked berries too?

AP: Ah King salmon, oh yeah we have moss berries, we don't have, for some reason we Atka doesn't have blue berries, like Unalaska, Unalaska has tons, yeah,

CA: What about the traditional medicines?

AP: That I am not sure of, I know they use some kind of leaves, huh and so forth, they gather them you know, the women gather them, and they make some cough syrup, and some huh salves, and etc. but I can't tell you about it, but I know that were some people capable of healing huh people through their hands, like Annie Golley, we call her honorable Big Annie, yeah, my sister was really sick in huh Killisnoo, we didn't even have aspirin, they dropped us off at Killisnoo, they gave us a week supply of food, we didn't, the captain gave us mattresses and pillow and blanket for each person, she used her hands, certain ways to heal my sister when she had pneumonia.

CA: Did it help?

**AP:** Oh yeah, my sister was alive, alive, ah ha, that's good, I know old man, what was his name, we call him Alaheaho when I was sick as a child, he came to the house, he put his hands on my chest and on my back and so forth, made me well, that's good, I have a sister-in-law that does that, ah ha.

**CA:** Did they change after people were allowed to return to the Aleutians?

**AP:** Yeah.

**CA:** How so?

**AP:** Ah It introduced us to the outside influence, in the village, we lived a typical subsistence lifestyle, everybody worked together and so forth, and after the war, the prices of the foxes, you know, foxes was our main cash economy before the war, the Russians flooded the market with foxes, so the men started working on different jobs outside of the village, the women had to stay home and run the village, that was a big change, and the south east, back home they only had dances, when there was special occasions, and then we were in Southeast, they had dances every Saturday night, and that really upset the elders, cause we went to church Saturday nights, but there was a conflict, it was never the same, everything changed, I didn't go back, home when my father, my sister, and my brother, went home in April of 1945, cause I was at Haskell, not Haskell, Wrangell Institute, I didn't get to home until 1948 for about four weeks, when I got caught *North Star*, they left us off at Atka, delivered the students up north, and came back, picked us up, so about three to four weeks I got to spend in Atka, and I went back then I graduated from Haskell in 51, until August of 51, when I start working at Mt. Edgecumbe,

**CA:** You worked at Mt. Edgecumbe?

**AP:** Oh, yeah, at the hospital.

CA: How did the internment affect the food you ate?

**AP:** Oh, it was strange, number one, we didn't have guns, number two, we didn't have fishing gear, so we were entirely depended on huh if it wasn't for the Angoon people, we wouldn't haven't, haven't anything to eat, cuz when they had canneries in those days, at Hood Bay, when they found out about us, they dropped salmon every day, then when there was jobs available in Chatham, you know where Chatham is, Atka people worked there, and some men worked on the fishing boats, and that's how we got the money, but in order to buy groceries, we had walked over to Angoon, get when we got there, they gave us lumber, said to build a skiff so Mr. Golley and Mr. Fenis build a skiff, and we were able to go, we rode from Killisnoo to Angoon, got our supplies and so forth, you might have money, but nowhere to spend it. This was abandoned place, you know so we had to go to Angoon buy our supplies that we needed if they had it,

CA: So huh when you returned were you eating less traditional foods or did huh everybody?

**AP:** I think they went back to original foods, they still eating original foods,

CA: That's pretty good.

CA: Was there a change in attitude about yourselves as Unangan because of the internment?

**AP:** Well, came exposed to different influences that we didn't have before, whereas, you've heard Hilary Clinton say, it takes a village to raise a child, that's the way is was in Atka, until after the war, then huh different things happened, and when I lived there in 80s, one little kid was throwing rocks, I says you better stop doing that, I says, I tell my mother, and she'll sue you, that's what television has done,

**little kids just five, six years old, threatened to sue me, cause I told him to stop throwing rocks, you know, so it took a long time from 40s to the 80s, to make that change, and I didn't live in Atka, so I don't know how it affect, with me, I didn't really live in the village until 81 to 85, when my husband completely retired, excuse me.**

CA: Prior to WWII, how many of the villagers spoke the Unangan language?

**AP: I think every village did.**

CA: How many speak the language now?

**AP: I have no idea, I know Atka, even in Atka, they had to introduce in classes in *Nevo*, today there is only two huh dialects exist, Eastern and the Western. And Atka is the only speaks the Western, the rest of the villages speak Eastern, with little few variations, you know I can understand St. Paul and St. George, because I went to school with them and they they talked their language, that's where I picked up the Eastern dialect you know, but sometimes it kind of hard to understand, unless you know the both dialects,**

CA: Yeah, earlier, you had mentioned that you could tell where they were from because of their dialect.

**AP: You see Nikolski has the fastest, although, they are Eastern dialect, boy when they take off, they take off fast, whereas St. Paul, they are more mellow, and then St. Joe or St. Paul, it's a little more slow down, you know, ah faster, thing but if you take Unalaska people and huh who do you speak and St. Paul, the slight variation and their pronunciation and the tone of their sounds.**

CA: Did you know that some Unangan were taken as POWs before you relocated?

**AP:** We knew something happened. Cause hah every day, morning and night, Atka would give the weather report, and in those days contact we had cuz we had supply would come in twice a year and maybe a Coast Guard ship two times a year, so the way communicating with the radio and when Mr. Magee didn't hear from Attu, we knew something was wrong, but we didn't know what, it was later we learned that Japanese occupied huh when they bombed Dutch Harbor that's when they found out that Japanese had occupied Attu and Kiska.

**CA:** Did you know any of the people that were taken?

**AP:** My two cousins, Olena Golodoff she was my mother's niece you know my cousin and Parascovia her sister,

**CA:** Were they returned? Or did they?

**AP:** Yes, Ah ha, Yeah.

**CA:** Did you get a chance to talk to them after?

**AP:** I did, when I was working huh I went home in 51, I talked to em, but we were kind of estranged there cause I haven't seen Olena or Parri since I was huh 8 or 9 so I had to get reacquainted but when my cousin Olena was dying, up here, she told me all kinds of things and so did Parri, and that's when I learned the Japanese, the way the Japanese treated them, and if you ever read the book Last Letters from Attu, the witnesses, Ms. Jones said, they were mistreated, they were given a cup of rice a day, to eat and they forced them into work the clay, and what they did, they experimented with them,

**CA:** They did,

**AP: Oh yeah medicine yeah, nobody ever mentions it, but that's what happened, lot of things happened, that nobody says anything about.**

CA: Who did the officials that were approached about the evacuation? Meaning who did they approach was it the whole village, did they approach the chief, and the chief pass it on to the people?

**AP: Usually it was the chief that they told the chief and the chief would tell the people, okay, now remember I was twelve and nobody told me anything.**

CA: Did the children continue their school education before, during and after the internment?

**AP: Yeah, we had Mrs. Magee. She huh somehow they acquired some books, there again Angoon, lend us some books, so we had regular classes though not, you know, really too many classes, but they kept in school eight hours a day. From eight in the morning until four, I guess to keep us occupied, I don't know.**

CA: Were the children still taught cultural values or traditions before, during and after the internment?

**AP: It wasn't taught, they lived it, they saw how the people lived and followed it, you know through observation, one thing I realize, huh in my village, it was your taught through by observation, your never told you're wrong, like my father showed me how to do something, then when I did, it didn't turn out, then he would tell, think about it, what did you do, that I didn't do, so you have to think about what the process again, and see where you made your mistakes, and I think it is a wonderful way to teach, yeah,**

CA: My dad did the same,

**AP: Oh yeah,**

CA: Yeah he made me think about what we did or didn't do.

**AP: Cause you remember, you know they tell what you did wrong, they make you discover, realize the mistake you made and that way you don't forget.**

CA: Do you think your community structure survived during the internment?

**AP: Repeat that.**

CA: Do you think that your community structure survived during the internment?

**AP: It changed some, because we couldn't go back to completely subsistence lifestyle, we had, it was the beginning the cash economy for the village, I'm talking about Atka, I can't talk about the other villages, but for Atka, remember I told you after the war, the men worked on the ships, that were going supply ships, that were going back and forth as far down south as San Francisco up to Nome, Barrow and etc.**

CA: Did the women have a big part in the community structure?

**AP: Not at that time, it mostly from my observations, but remember, they must have, because every winter when the men left, the women ran the village so they had and after the war, all the men were out working, the women ran the village, and they all survived, so they did a good job, raising their kids, and running the village, learned to hunt and fish, and they took care of everything subsistence, you know, because there was no men gather food, so the women did it.**

CA: How did you adapt to your new environment in camps with regard to your everyday routine, such as making clothing, fishing and hunting, etc.?

**AP: Ah gees, a lot of things I forgot, I remember when huh, Mrs. Magee didn't help, so much, but when we got the new teachers, Mr. and Mrs. Kahklen, Joseph and Vivian Kahklen, I think that they were the ones really helped us, cause she acquired some**

**material, and we could make dresses, and we got Sears catalog, and ordered clothes, like we did in the village, we only we didn't have clothes, shops, so we had to order everything through catalog, so we continued that at camp, and they started huh a little store, you know we couldn't have fresh meat. Corn beef and Spam was our main diet.**

CA: How was the water there?

**AP: At Killisnoo, it was terrible, we wondering why some many people were dying, it was stagnant water, and they told us to boil it, I mean, we boiled it when it you know, it was there, but little kids playing outside, they unfortunately, for the community of the women in they put a faucet out there, and the kids drank, that's why we lost some many elders and Atka, we started out with 85 Unangan, 17 of them died in camp, it was mostly lack of medicine, and a lot of health care, and the bad water, starvation.**

CA: Were there any other churches or religions other than Russian Orthodox Church?

**AP: We were always Orthodox and Angoon had a little chapel, and they loaned us some icons, and some people, even if you go to camp, you always carried your icons, so we had a traveling icons. *Someone showed up, turned off recorder.***

CA: During the period of internment, do you know if the Aleut held any legal rights as an indigenous nation, as citizens of the US or both?

**AP: Well, we thought we were citizens, but some people turned us different, huh differently, you know, huh, like even after the war, when I was coming down to Seattle, I had to get my birth certificate, to prove I was a citizen of US to get into Seattle cause I was a Native, that's when I discovered my birthday was November**

**18 instead of 19th, and then they had to have Social Security to work you know, my father and them, they had to prove they were American citizens, and in those days they called Alaska Native Service, and they had the rolls, so they certified that we were citizens although we didn't vote or nothing, yeah.**

CA: How and when did you learn about the legal rights that were denied to you while you were interned?

AP: **I don't know, I know the Tlingits, I mean, you know, the brotherhood? Atka had a Atka Brotherhood, but it was mostly religious, you know, cause they're the ones sisterhood and brotherhood supported the church, they when they came back from trapping, they first money they gave was to the church and everything and the women took care of the church and everything, crochet and sold their baskets, and part of the money they get went to church, it was the main role, where in Southeast we learned that the brotherhood could do a lot more, so from there they we learned that you could fight for your rights through the organization, the one thing my uncle Billy was chief at the time said the mistake he made was he didn't join the brotherhood Angoon Native Alaska Native Brotherhood, when we were down there, see I learned all this later on, I didn't know that at the time, like I said, in those days, children were protected, they weren't used to hearing all these things that you hear things today, at twelve I was as innocent as a eight, nine old child, today at twelve years old, they know everything there is to know, and that it saddens me. Because you are stealing the innocent years of the child through television and everything.**

CA: Do you think that the history of the internment should be taught in classrooms?

**AP: I think so, but they do it once a year here, cuz they ask me to go to the schools and talk about the Aleut culture and the internment and huh since they have their own school groups, I think they should really do it, you know, and APIA does a lot try to educate people about it, cuz it is a part of the US history, good or bad.**

CA: Do you get a lot of huh questions when you go there from the students when you go and speak to them?

**AP: Some of em and some of them are really resentful cause of one guy, problem to, senior, junior, he said, his father was admiral in the Navy he wouldn't do such a thing, yes, they burnt my village, why would I lie about it? They get really offensive about the some of the things I say, cause they don't think it's possible, for a huh the US govt to treat the people the way they did.**

CA: So what age were the, huh did you go to the schools, I mean huh.

**AP: They start from huh fifth grade all the way to senior, then sometimes I go colleges and talk about it, so I do, but lately, I just don't want to, I'm tired, somebody else has to take over. I've done enough.**

CA: Do you think that it should be taught to Unangan, non-Unangan, or everyone?

**AP: Yes, it's part of our history, good or bad, I, everybody deserves to know the truth good or bad, cause America it's a wonderful country, but they're not perfect, they done a lot of wrong things, but then again, you can't be a victim all your life, I mean, I was in this, I was asked to speak to a group, huh healing, in Portland, there was about gee about 500 to different Indian tribes there, and this one man stood up and says he had holes in his heart through the injustices done to the people, and then, it I was second person to talk and I said, I don't agree with the gentleman, I**

**said, he may have scars in his heart, I said, how can you have holes in his heart, since you have to forgive, since why burden the future generations, with the past injustices, cause it's not right, you can't, you don't have a right to pass on the injustices to your future generation, otherwise they are never going to be well, forgive, know the history but let the bitterness and resentment go, cause its damaging to our young people, you know,**

CA: I agree with you.

**AP: So, once in a while I do say something clever. But you have to observe watch people how they act, you know, that's one thing; by being in business, if you're going to be successful, you have to learn the body language. It's very important, you look people in the eye, mouth says one thing, the eyes say another.**

CA: What are the most important things about the internment that should be taught?

**AP: That if you have the determination and will you'll be able to survive any situation and you have to accept, the different things and that's you can't be narrow minded okay,**

CA: That's very good,

**AP: You have to learn new things, how to do things new way. So first time I went to Wrangell Institute, I was youngest of, naturally I was spoiled, you know, went to Wrangell Institute, that's when I realized absolutely nobody in the placed cared how I felt what I wanted, was all by myself, and I had to survive. I had never met Eskimo nor Athabaskan, I knew the Tlingits, so I had to learn to get along with all different kinds of people.**

CA: How big was Wrangell Institute?

**AP:** Oh I'd say about huh, I don't know, about between 250 and 350. You know, there's some boys dorm, we went to eighth grade all the way to senior high school, but then I didn't can't give you accurate numbers okay.

**CA:** How do you think you were treated? In respects, did you feel like a US citizen, a ward or a child?

**AP:** Well, in my case, cause I was a child, I was treated like a child, I mean, at twelve I was, ah see there was a big difference, between the Pribilovian people and Atka people, they took us to Killisnoo, left us there, forgot about us, we were on our own. So we had to survive, and we learned to get along with the Tlingits, made friends with them, they went fishing, all the men went fishing, they worked construction and then huh, what else, third thing, fishing, construction, huh, doing, doing things for other Pribilovians were confined in their area, cuz they were needed for sealing, my last year, 1944, the year I went to Wrangell Institute, my father was up, went to the Pribilofs to go sealing, cause they didn't have enough men to go, that's when my brother signed the papers for me to go to Wrangell Institute, so all the years I was in Wrangell Institute, my brother was my guardian and not my father, my brother, asked me if I wanted to go, cause Mrs. Kahklen told us about the school, and I said yes, I would like to get more education, so I owe a lot to Mrs. Kahklen, you know, Mr. Kahklen, she was a Demmert, from huh Klawock and he was up from Klukwan.

**CA:** Did you feel that, after your return home having been outside the villages and the camps, that you realized that other people had been treated much better than your were by the government?

**AP:** Not until later, I mean, like the Japanese get all the publicity, but they had descent houses, they had three meals a day, we have to scrounge for our food, we lived in run down housing at winter time, one time my father found a lean to, found an old stove, part drum, part stove, made us a stove, so we could heat the place, but sometimes we didn't get to warm, in those days, we even hard to even get butter, coffee, sugar, so once a week, we got a brick of white huh thing that looked like lard, then we had to mix color in it to make it look like yellow and my father had build a little, kind of a pantry, kept all of our cooking stuff in there, my sister got that those mixing bowls, plate, you know started mixing the butter, the bottom just fell out,

**CA:** Oh no.

**AP:** But I mean, it wasn't funny at the time cause we didn't have butter to eat the rest of the week, you look back and it is funny, you know, and if you want to take a shower, you had to get kettles of water, you had a tub, and you had to do like huh thing, until they build a steam bath, take a steam bath cause nobody had running water they was two outdoor toilets in Killisnoo that everybody used.

**CA:** Do you think that the government should have compensated you for use of your homes? If you did receive compensation, do you think that it was too low for all that you endured during your stay in the camps?

**AP:** Well the way we figured it out, our when, did you heard of the World War II Reparation Act right?

**CA:** Right.

**AP:** Did you read it, you need to read it.

**CA:** I glanced through it,

**AP:** The mostly in Atka, I'll talk about Atka, most important thing, was the they build the church, 1945 they used green lumber, so our church was falling down, so when we started the Reparation Act actually Vera Skaflestad have started it, then Patrick Pletnikoff did it, and then Gregg Brelsford, they were the ones that really started it, and then Steven was really lucky that we joined the Japanese, when they were doing the Reparation, that's how we got in, I don't think we would have got anything, unless we piggybacked on the Japanese Act, but there was more votes there, everything is political, I remember that, so that is how we got our reparation we got for churches, then we figured out in those days, Atka people were making about a 3000 or 4000 dollars a year, three years, Atkans were down there, we figured 12,000 for that time period was sufficient as long as they cleaned up the debris they left behind in the village, and that we would get an apology, that it would be in the history books, we would be satisfied with 12,000 and we got huh a trust to you know preserve the language, culture and tradition.

**CA:** So huh, after you returned, you weren't allow to go back to Atka, correct?

**AP:** No, I went to Wrangell,

**CA:** You went back to Wrangell.

**AP:** I was in Wrangell, when they, see I went to Wrangell in 44, and my folks, went back in April of 45; they went a year after the Pribilovians did. Yeah,

**CA:** Where'd did they go?

**AP:** They stayed in Killisnoo,

**CA:** From Killisnoo were they allowed to back to Atka?

**AP:** Yes, everybody was there, it wasn't like the Pribilovians we had different set of rules, Fish and Wildlife took care of the Pribilofs, Alaska Native Service took care of the rest of the villages, we were left on our own, we had to survive whichever way we could, okay, less restrictions, cause they could leave and come when we wanted to, but lot of people stayed behind though, cuz they were in the military or you know going to school, so.

CA: Did you ever feel endangered by either the Japanese or the Americans before the internment?

**AP:** I wasn't afraid of anything, huh now remember this is a twelve year talking, I wasn't afraid anybody, except my father, God, my god mother, and my brother, that was it, I learned fear through what happened to me, it wasn't it was like a movie, you know when you look back on it, you go through the event just like a movie, you never ever forget it, you don't realize your suffering, until later, long time afterwards, so I understand when they say post dramatic, trauma, I know what they mean, in those days, such a thing didn't exist, people had to handle everything could by them self, okay, I think that's why people turned to alcohol.

CA: Do you think that you would have stayed at your village, if given a choice?

**AP:** Of course, they had everything we needed.

CA: Did you ever go sealing during the internment, I guess it doesn't pertain to you?

**AP:** No, my father did.

CA: Do you think that the government should have also given men back pay for working the sealing operation?

**AP:** Yeah I think they should have, cause it's only fair, I mean were human beings, you never take dignity from people, you might not like them, they might be bum on the fourth street, but like my father explained to me, you don't know who they are, they could be God, acting to see how you react to them, so I always treat people with dignity, it's just terrible, like watch the Judge Judy sometimes, she's the most wicked women I know, and people like her, cause she just tears into people, screams and yell at them and I don't think that's the way you treat people yeah.

**CA:** How did you feel when the Coast Guard fingerprinted you and told you it was for security reasons?

**AP:** I wasn't fingerprinted, my father was, they understood, that it was, especially we had a Dirks, you know, it was a German name uncle Bill said, father, he said he had blue eyes, so we understood why, you know, if you understand things, you don't resent them, you know, I don't why the people holler about Arizona, you know, it's why should the illegal live over here, if they're not paying taxes, and taking away from people that do, it doesn't take much to show your birth certificate, you carry it in your pocket, what's wrong with that, yeah, well maybe I'm different, I don't know, well maybe I'm too old for this world

**CA:** Were there things that were promised by the government to aid you at all in fixing the camp or gear for hunting and fishing after returned?

**AP:** They never promised Atka people anything, you had to huh, when Atka people went back, they had everything they need, they had stoves, they had the boats, they had fishing gear, they had the guns, cause they worked, like they worked construction, my brother was almost killed, on ah they call it Japonski Island, a premature

**explosion, he was disabled for the rest of the summer, while my dad was in Pribilofs, and he never got paid for it, it almost killed him, and never got paid, so I guess that this was my experience, I had to take care of him, I don't know where my sister was.**

CA: With the income that you earned, were you able to buy what you wanted? Were you ever denied the right to buy what you wanted?

AP: **Yeah, we did, Killisnoo, again, I am talking about Killisnoo, everything I am saying is about Killisnoo, yeah they made good money, but trouble is, huh there was no place, like if I wanted to buy clothes, had to order, and I got to work at Tenakee Springs, and I made 300 you know that's pretty good, so I went home, we had work almost 24 hours a day, cause we were fishing, and there was no help, so my cousin Clara, was 17 huh, I as 13 my sister was 15, she was 17, the three of us were the same height same, same we looked, they taugt we were triplets, they thought I was 17, so they let me work, and so I earned 300 dollars, I went home before my father did, in those days, I really I still do, I wanted shoes, and so I ordered 10 pairs shoes, I when I came, he made me give them away all of em, except one pair, I had to give away the shoes to everybody, and the village didn't have shoes, so that taugt me a lesson, there was money, but no place buy, remember rationing, WWII, you couldn't buy camera you couldn't buy films, it was hard to get shells, guns and so forth.**

CA: So you weren't denied huh any right to buy what you wanted?

AP: **No, because, it was only because it was shortage, remember we were on tiny little island, no store no nothing, yeah.**

CA: Did you ever keep a diary or write anything down about any events that took place?

**AP:** Nope.

**CA:** Do you teach your children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren about the internment?

**AP:** Ah the first time, like you watched the film, right? Yeah, when you heard, me say, that was my daughter didn't believe this happened, because it wasn't in history books, so I never talked about it after I told her she didn't believe me, my husband didn't even know about this until we started when we started doing the WWII film, didn't know that I was in ah evacuee camp, cause people made fun of you, you didn't have all you had was the clothes on your back, and you felt guilty, you were ashamed of what happened to you, I mean, me being twelve years old, I didn't realize it wasn't not my fault, somehow they made you feel like it was your fault, you were in this situation, so nobody talk about it, or I didn't, I know that Mary Bs didn't, cause absolutely nobody believed that it happened.

**CA:** I didn't know it happened, I was, my mom didn't say anything, she was only four when that happened, so I you know I didn't know anything about it.

**CA:** How did the government treat you before the war?

**AP:** They had the BIA school, in Atka, other than that, we were free, like I said, my dad, had a lease huh island Talgaga huh that's where his money came from, he make 10,000 a year, selling foxes, so, we were okay, we didn't have electricity but we had everything we needed and we had to live on salted fish, dried stuff like that, the men were gone, you know, but we ate right off the land, mostly from the water, reindeer, yeah, so didn't know what we was missing, I was secure and happy.

**CA:** Were you ever made to feel ashamed for what happened? I guess you already answered that.

**AP: Yeah, I already did.**

CA: Did you ever have any health problems because to the internment?

**AP: I 'm lucky, my sister had a lot, she had cancer, and etc, earaches,**

CA: Is there anything more that you could tell me about the health problems related to the internment that hasn't been said before?

**AP: Probably not.**

CA: Is there something about this event that nobody has asked, and that you would like to say?

**AP: That the Japanese bombed Atka, and it's never mentioned, the day after we left, remember I told you that were 24 people left behind before they were picked up by the PBYS two PBYS the Japanese came back and bombed Atka, and my they shot the roof you know machined gun of my dad's house, cause it was a tall big house, you know and they shot at the toilets, school yard, you know, I mean, you look back on it, it's doesn't seem real, some of its funny, because, but at the time it was happening, it was tragic, you know, but you can laugh, you have to laugh at things, otherwise it will eats at you, you have to find a funny aspect in everything that happens. *Turned off recorder, end of interview.***

## Appendix F

### Interview with Mary Diakanoff on 09/08/2010 in Juneau, Alaska

CA: What is your name?

**MD: My name is Mary Diakanoff.**

CA: Do you have any other names?

**MD: My Maiden was Moller.**

CA: What were your parents' names?

**MD: Carl Moller and Alice Denisoff-Moller.**

CA: When and where were you born?

**MD: I was born in Kashega, AK November 7, 1930.**

CA: Which island were you living on at the time of the internment?

**MD: Unalaska.**

CA: To which internment camp did you go to?

**MD: Burnett Inlet.**

CA: How many family members went with you?

**MD: My mom and us four kids, so that was five.**

CA: What were the reasons they gave you for why you had to leave?

**MD: No, I was around eleven; I guess I wasn't too interested.**

CA: From whom did those reasons come?

**MD: I don't know. It was such a mess, because, so many different people were involved, so many government branches and so forth, apparently were involved, and so.**

CA: Were you ever told that the Japanese were going to attack the islands?

**MD: This was after the Japanese had bombed Dutch Harbor, and they killed, I think it was 27 that were asleep in the barracks, and they, they, didn't demolish the hospital,**

**but they bomb fell in front of the hospital, and it pulled the wall off and bunks, beds were hanging out, and then before, before they got to vicious we had to climb on back on the of the Army truck and go up in the valley, I used wonder how safe we were on top of the hill, but my son told me the Japs wouldn't waste a bomb on a few people scattered above, that's why they thought it was safe, and then later they built that bomb shelter, it wasn't far from our house, so we were watching them when they working on it, my siblings and I. Let's see what else happened.**

CA: How many lived in your village? Were they all natives?

**MD: You mean in Kashega?**

CA: Yeah.

**MD: Yeah, except the store keeper, they used to have school teachers, but the school was closed, and there was also, Art Harris he was the sheep herder he lived across the creek.**

CA: So, how many were there, about, how many people?

**MD: I don't know, all told, not too many.**

CA: How many people lived in your villages that you knew about?

**MD: I didn't know.**

CA: How were the villages governed? Was there a chief, a council, or some other local government?

**MD: They had a chief; my grandpa was the chief, at that time.**

CA: And who was he?

**MD: But he died before the evacuation, his name was John Denisoff.**

CA: What Unangan traditional ways were practiced prior to WWII?

**MD:** We took steam baths, what else did we do? Anytime we had a party we had fish pie, even if we had baked ham and potatoes we still had to have Russian pie,

CA: And I seen that the you guys had a made baskets.

**MD:** Yeah they made baskets, I never did, but my mom knew how to make them, she wasn't real expert but a lot of people were good at it.

CA: Did they change after people were allowed to return to the Aleutians, the traditional ways?

**MD:** Well they tried to get back, to how it was, but was the main thing they were so upset about. Were their houses, were the Army men, never kept out of the houses and they made wreck things, and made messes, in them, it was hard for the people, and but it wasn't my problem, cause my dad stayed there, cause he wasn't Native, but.

CA: How did that make you guys feel, when your dad wasn't be able to go with you guys?

**MD:** I didn't wanna to go, but my mom did was afraid, so my dad just had my cat, the two of em had to stay.

CA: How did the internment affect the food you ate, I mean when you were there at the camp?

**MD:** When were at the camps, were portioned out so much food, little bit of flour, little bit sugar stuff like that, and that horrible lunch meat that was in those large cans, and my dad would send my mom money, and so she would order food from Wrangell, it wasn't the best food they were you giving out, and had to go to the warehouse and line up, it was demoralizing.

CA: Was there a change in attitude about yourselves as Unangan because of the internment?

**MD:** Not me, I don't think. My dad always told me to be proud of what I was, what I am so, I didn't, I don't remember changing.

CA: Prior to WWII, how many of the villagers spoke the Unangan language?

MD: **Well must be all of em.**

CA: How many speak the language now?

MD: **Very few, and they don't speak really well, but my grandpa and great-grandma they only spoke Aleut and I spoke English, but I always understood em, because my mom always spoke Aleut to us, and I try to get some of the words out, but if you don't practice, doesn't sound quite right,**

CA: But you could still understand it, that's nice.

MD: **Yep.**

CA: Did you know that some Unangan were taken as POWs before you relocated?

MD: **No, I didn't.**

CA: Did you know any of em?

MD: **Oh do you mean the ones in Attu? I think, I don't remember if I knew it then or after, but I know that the male teacher was killed, some of the men I think were killed, and then ah his wife and the rest of them were taken to Japan, and Steve Hodikoff was a survivor and there was another man that used to cut hair, and he would start shaking if you asked him about it. So they had a horrible time there.**

CA: Did you get a chance to talk with any of them?

MD: **No. He would come to the house and cut my husband's hair, but if you even mentioned him being a captive, he would start shaking.**

CA: Who did the officials that were approached about the evacuation?

MD: **They had a meeting; I think, I didn't go, but I think my mom went and she came home and said we have to leave.**

CA: Did they tell you what to bring?

**MD: I don't know.**

CA: Did the children continue their school education before, during and after the internment?

**MD: We went a half a year, and then I was in the sixth grade, and we went a half a year, and then they used the school house was used for the hospital supplies, so they closed the school down. So we just went, how much is a half a year, four and half months? and then we were taken to Wrangell, and that was fun, cause all the Kashega people were there, and they were living in tents, it was like camp, it was you know, we were so happy to get off the boat, and see people we knew, but there wasn't room for us, so we had stayed in the dorm, which was kind of awkward, cause they didn't have rooms, it was like a big open dormitory, but we didn't stay there to long, they took us to Burnett Inlet. It's about four hours on the little boat, institute four I think it was, it was the school boat.**

CA: Were the children still taught cultural values or traditions before, during and after the internment?

**MD: We'll see Unalaska was a little different than most of villages, because it was integrated; there was a lot of, it had a hospital, it had probably had six rooms, patient rooms, the nurse stayed upstairs, and then they had the jail, the commissioner office, and we also had the Jessie Lee Home, which is an orphanage and then they had the Methodist Church, so it was, we were not just a village, to me it was like the capital of the Aleutians, cause it had all those things, people had to come see the doctor, and if they got in trouble, they had to come for court.**

CA: So, but were the children still taught cultural values, and traditions?

**MD: Nobody, none of the kids spoke Aleut, at that time; the older ones might, but, none the ones that I was around.**

CA: Do you think your community structure survived during the internment?

**MD: Community what?**

CA: Structure.

**MD: Yeah, it actually it was a city, it was organized and everyone, all the adults signed in with the city before the evacuation and they had the school, it went up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, had 3 classrooms and then one of the teachers had one room to live in.**

CA: How did you adapt to your new environment in camps with regards to your everyday routine, such as making clothing, fishing & hunting, etc.?

**MD: Well, I don't I don't, know, I mostly played, but the men eventually had boats and they went fishing, had to go out, out of the inlet, or around there, I don't know how they fished, but they went on fishing, some of them went on fishing boats and worked, some of them went to town and worked in the cannery some of the people and then in the summer, a lot of the times it was mostly older people and kids that were left behind they went to Wrangell to work a lot of em. So I don't think Burnett was a bad as Funter Bay, simply because, they were used of being around other people besides Unangan, and so I think they demanded and got the lumber to build some houses, which Funter Bay didn't have didn't seem according to what I've heard, anything to build with or anything else,**

CA: So Burnett Inlet did get boards, you're talking about they did get lumber and stuff?

**MD: Yeah, to build some little houses, they built houses, First of all, when we first got there, everyone was in the bunkhouse, this was a cannery, so they had bunkhouse,**

**usually it was one family in each one room cause theres nothing there to, and then they started looking around, my mom and an elderly lady from back home, they got a house that was the cannery cookhouse, so it had a big stove and had two little bedrooms it was just a cabin, but it was better than being in the bunkhouse.**

CA: Were there any other churches or religions other than Russian Orthodox Church?

**MD: Not at Burnett, no, at Unalaska there was there was the Methodist Church. They were part of the orphanage.**

CA: But most were most of the people Russian Orthodox?

**MD: Yeah.**

CA: During the period of internment, do you know if the Aleut held legal rights as an indigenous nation, as citizens of the US or both?

**MD: Just act like they did at home.**

CA: How and when did you learn about the legal rights that were denied to you while you were interned? What were the different ways that you continued to learn about your rights?

**MD: I just used to write my dad and say dear daddy please send me five dollars, and I don't know anything about the rights, because you know I was a kid.**

CA: Do you think that the history of the internment should be taught in classrooms? Do you think that it should be taught to Unangan, non-, or everyone?

**MD: The history of Germans.**

CA: No, oh, the history of the internment should be taught in classrooms to Unangan, non-Unangan or everyone?

**MD: I should, it should it would be part of history, because it's the only place on the continent that was bombed.**

CA: So you agree it should be taught, yeah, that's good.

**MD: I think so, because otherwise they don't know, like Alice's daughter, she didn't know, she didn't believe her mom.**

CA: What are the most important things about the internment that should be taught?

**MD: Well, that it just that it happened and that, we weren't given a choice, they just pulled us out there, like, like, someone said, like we were just, slaves or animals. You know, I don't know if my mom would have had a choice, but she was scared, so she wanted to go.**

CA: How do you think you were treated? That is, did you feel like a US citizen, a ward or a child?

**MD: I really don't know how that would be, they used to have meetings, and then after they had a town meeting, then they would decide, if they should I don't know for sure, cause I wasn't old enough to know, I didn't pay attention, I was making mud pies then.**

CA: Did you feel that, after your return home having been outside the villages and the camps that you realized that other people had been treated much better than you're were by the government?

**MD: Treated much better when at the camp?**

CA: After some of the adults were outside the villages and the camps and when they realized that they were treated better, you know like in Ketchikan or Juneau that people realized they were treated much better than they were by the government.

**MD:** I don't, I can't say that for sure, I don't know how they were treated, some were nice, some people normally are nice and others are not, so you can't make a flat statement like that,

CA: Okay.

**MD:** I never felt mistreated, when we first went to Burnett were so happy to get off the boat, and the berries were ripe, the blueberries, were ripe and there was little crab apples on the tree. So we ate blueberries until we found out they had worms in them. And we were horrified cause in Unalaska; they don't have worms in them.

CA: Really, wow, I didn't know that.

**MD:** And then I ate a little crab apple, and I was real happy, and then someone told me they were poisonous, so I was laying in bed waiting to die, my sister, little sister was crying cuz I was going to die, it so funny in the morning.

CA: Do you think that the government should have compensated you for use of your homes?

**MD:** They didn't use my home, I don't know if they actually used the homes, but they sure covered the hills with those the tents that had a wooden bottom, and then they had, then they started making barracks up the valley, there were a lot of barracks, and of course, in Dutch Harbor there were a lot of barracks, I don't know if they, my dad was home, so they checked him out, they thought he was a German spy.

CA: Did you ever feel endangered by either the Japanese or the Americans before the internment?

**MD:** I was always, we were always as kids, we use to hide when the Japanese came to town on their ships and we heard stories about how they would like my grandpa said, that when they were on islands trapping, they would ah sometimes capture the

**guys and keep them for slaves, one time there was a battle, I heard about the battle, they were up the Pribilofs, the Japanese were there, and the all the guys got their hunting rifles and chased them off, cuz they were up to getting the I guess they, I think that they were getting the seals, I don't know, but I know, I know that like it was rivalry. But they would come to town and play baseball with town people, and I remember hiding in the berry bushes, and we'd say Japs, Japs, and hide,**

CA: So, this is before the war?

**MD: Cecil, my husband told me they were I forget the word starts with a C, checking all the inlets and stuff, for their planning attack, yeah,**

CA: Do you know how they been doing that before the war?

**MD: No, I don't know.**

CA: Do you think that you would have stayed at your village, if given a choice?

**MD: I think I would have stayed in Unalaska, but what choice does a kid have, not much, but I don't think my mom would have, she was too scared.**

CA: Did you ever go sealing during the internment? Did you know people who did?

CA: Do you think that the government should have also given men back pay for working the sealing operation?

**MD: Oh yeah, that was horrible, what they did to the sealers the workers.**

CA: Yeah, returned after they were done sealing, returned back to the camps?

**MD: I think so, but they sure didn't pay them much to take them all the way, they took them all the way back, and they even said, they even took guys were in the army, and let them go home to work in the sealing, they had a bumper crop that year, that was in the tape, I just saw it.**

CA: How did you feel when the Coast Guard fingerprinted you and told you it was for security reasons? Do you believe that is the actual reason for being fingerprinted?

**MD: No, I didn't.**

CA: Were there things that were promised by the government to aid you at all in fixing the camp or gear for hunting and fishing after returned? Did you receive any assistance?

**MD: They might of, I don't know, cause I was, they put, took me right away, in this boarding school, I was 11, not quite 12, the first thing they did was given us shots, I was convinced, that I would not let put myself under their care again, vaccinations and stuff, I guess, they didn't, all the kids, I guess they didn't have records, but maybe some places they didn't have their shots, but at Unalaska we had the hospital, we all had shots, but they didn't listen to us, if we tried to tell them, it wasn't important, but it seemed like we didn't have any freedom.**

CA: With the income that you earned, were you able to buy what you wanted or were they denied?

**MD: If they worked, they could spend their own money I don't know what you mean by work, if they worked outside, you know to other people, I think they kept their money, cuz my dad would send my mom money, and she would go to town and get food or she would order food.**

CA: Did you ever keep a diary or write anything down about any events that took place?

**MD: No.**

CA: Do you teach your children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren about the internment?

**MD: I tell them about it, they I am crazy though.**

CA: How did the government treat you before the war?

**MD: Don't know, what the government is? Well,**

CA: Earlier you were saying that they were saying that they were telling someone they had to marry this one person.

**MD: That was in St. Paul.**

CA: That was in St. Paul.

**MD: I think, yeah, not in Unalaska.**

CA: Were you ever made to feel ashamed for what happened?

**MD: I never did.**

CA: Did you ever have any health problems because to the internment?

**MD: No I don't think so**

CA: Is there anything more that you could tell me about the health problems related to the internment that hasn't been said before?

**MD: I don't think so, I used to hide in the locker, when I didn't want to eat, and I was short, so they never find me, and then I would get, the girls used go to town and buy candy bars for a nickel, and they would sell them for a dime, so I could eat those, they made double their money that way, and then they would go to town next Saturday, we could go to town Saturday if we weren't on chain gang, I used to be on chain gang a lot.**

CA: What's chain gang?

**MD: See the dorm was so small, I mean the dorm was for high school, it was a high school then, and here we were 7<sup>th</sup> grade up, and they had to squeeze us in, between you know where there was room, and they put me, they ran out of room, anywhere, and they put me in the senior dorm, and I just slept in my slip and some of the**

senior girls, one of the senior girls used make fun of me, cuz I would wait for lights out, and then I would pull off my dress, and jump under the covers, but I tell you one thing, I had a really good friend in Ms. Breen, she was the nurse at Wrangell Institute, and she had me under she had me work at the health center, but not at first, but later, the first job I had to I had work in the laundry, I had to fold clothes, that's when I was in 1C, and then after the Pribilof girls came, they moved me into 1B, which was 8th grade, half of 6<sup>th</sup>, skipped 7<sup>th</sup>, that's how I graduate early, but, then one time when Ms. Breen was gone, I looked into file, and it said I had spots on my lungs, so that's why she was worried about me, she was a very caring person, very nice and she didn't get along with the principal, and then she moved up to I think it was Russian Mission, we were all so sad when she moved, all the health center girls, the health center girls had to go to the kitchen and get food for whoever was sick at the time, there was two boy dorms, and no one boy dorm one girl dorm, I guess, I mean ward, so, it was fun being a health center girl, I still know some of them, that I worked with.

CA: You mentioned chain gang, what was that?

MD: Chain gang was when I never made my bed good, it always looked messy, and the matron would stand down there on that side and I was way in the corner, second bed from the corner, and the bottom bunk, my bed would looked ruffled, and so everyone else's bed were real smooth, and mine would be ruffled, I never made my bed at home even, my mom even washed my hair, so I was on chain gang, me and Alice Golomoff, would be washing the kitchen floor, everyone else, the other girls could go to town, they had a bus they would and get us, take us to town.

CA: That was nice.

**MD: Yeah, that's nice they had a soda fountain down there, I forget what it was called now, cause it was really, it was the first time I had shakes and stuff you know and then we could go to the afternoon matinee if we had enough money.**

CA: Is there something about this event that nobody has asked, and that you would like to say?

**MD: I can't think of anything, anything I think of anything I always blab.**

CA: There's nothing wrong with that.

**MD: So, I forgot you were going to do an interview. But ah yeah.**

CA: I really appreciate you sitting and doing this with me, and thank you for the pictures.

**MD: You're welcome, I don't know if it is anything important. Cuz it's so hard now, with all the older people dead, yeah.**

CA: Well I was surprised to hear that my mom was from Kashega, it wasn't until I started doing this research that I found out and you know, having the opportunity to go to Kashega.

**MD: Oh yeah, that's so saddest point to me, I felt so good about and being, even though I didn't recognize it, a whole lot, just to be there and feel it and know how it looks, it made me feel happy.**

CA: So it was good to return back there?

**MD: It was always my favorite place, whenever we were going to Kashega, I'd be all happy, cuz my grandpa was there so he was strict to though, he didn't like us going in his wood shed, cuz in his warehouse, cuz he kept it so spotless.**

CA: So it brought back a lot of good memories?

**MD:** Yeah did, last year, I was pretty disappointed. *Turned off recorder, end of interview.*

## Appendix G

Interview with Nick L. Golodoff, Atka, Alaska, with Charles M. Mobley 2005

NG: 12/19/35 born Agattu Island, Parents Lawrence & Olena Golodoff. First memories of child at Attu: knows when Japanese came, that day went to church in the morning, after that it was a nice calm day. No wind, we could hear all kinds of noise, engines, young maybe 3 or 4 young teenagers, take a look, and see what was going on, when we were waiting for them to come down. Then the planes flew over, real low, Japanese plane, me I did not know it was Japanese or not, but he was very low, you could see his face. When he went by. I was on my way down to the beach, I like the ocean, the water all the time, I wanted to go out on the boat, so, on the way down, this one person, Alex , he walked towards the church by the time we got to close to the church, we hear some noises, different languages spoken, and then there we got by the church we heard some shooting, and we started running, Alex was running, so I thought he was trying to get away from me, so I ran after him, and on the way up to, he was running to the house, I, while we were running, I could see a month lying they were shooting at Alex, but the bullets, were only one more feet to reach Alex, but it didn't, I stopped, when Alex stopped, he looked right where the bullets were coming from, and started running again, so I kept running after him till to house and went under the house, when I got to the house, he wouldn't let me under there, he told me to get in the one behind the mud house, and the people were inside the mud house, they opened the door and calmness, I went in there, from there, later, Alex told us to come out or they gonna shoot um machine gun at place

**the mud house, we went all out, and they took us all to school house, its where I met my mom and dad.**

**CM: Were you scared?**

**NG: I must have been, because when I got to the school, I vomited, I didn't know I was scared, but I must of been, but after that they send us home I guess in the evening, they had us all there for almost all day, they sent us home to our own house, they had a guard at every house from then on, I don't know how long the Japanese were there. I remember going out, later, walking between the Japanese owners, and no one bothered me, but my parents stayed home all the time, only go outside the house and but me I was only six years old, so I didn't have no one to play with, so I walked among people, Japanese, that is how my picture was taken with me on back of Japanese soldier.**

**CM: Did you ever see that picture?**

**NG: No, I have two Japanese books that was written with some pictures in them. I have them at the house, I should have brought them over, the.**

**CM: If I understand correctly, there was one dead?**

**NG: Oh yeah, it maybe the teacher, yeah, somehow, they were telling, later on, I heard that they tried kill himself or something, but I don't know, but one woman got shot in the leg. But, when I was watching muds poking up, but I didn't know what it was until I got here in Atka and when shooting reindeer I could see mud flying, then I find out that it was bullets that they were shooting at Alex, while it was raining, but they didn't have enough range to one more. In Attu, one more two feet, one feet, mud was flying, they took us too, I don't know how the Japanese were in Attu, but I**

**remember it was a while, I mostly in early in the morning, the American plane goes, by way in early in the morning, and then I heard a lot of shooting, it happened a couple of times, and then the Japanese left Attu, they took us with them.**

CM: So let me go back, an American plane came over,

NG: **Couple times I know of, real low, he comes in on the water and then comes up and rolls it, and I think he was taking pictures, and then a lot of shooting, Japanese but when I look out my window and one morning, I don't know where he was sleeping but he didn't have no patch on, he was running for his fox hole, I remember he had the whole back hole, I saw him jump back in there,**

CM: So then you got in a boat?

NG: **In a cargo hold, they used to lower a pot of rice, I remember I didn't care much for rice, but I had to eat some and I don't know how long it took us, but I was told we were in Tokyo, they let us out to look at Tokyo, and then going back in the hole again, and took us to another island. I don't know how I got off, next thing I remember we were in one building, and I don't know too much after that, but all I know was, I was thinking about food all the time, I was hungry, it wasn't too bad after we got there, but it got worse and worse, because even the Japanese didn't have enough food at the end.**

CM: So were the entire village with you?

NG: **Far as I know yeah,**

CM: And I understand that the several of the villagers died during the concentration,

NG: **Yeah, to me, I thought yeah, I don't know what they died of, but they said they were in the hospital. I was at the hospital a couple times, I mean I went to visit my dad,**

my dad was there, it was about, we had two places to stay while we were in Japan. The first one, I don't even know what street, but the second place was close to the hospital. I could walk to the hospital, at the end, there hardly left over there, the hungriness, I wasn't thinking actually, food, I was thinking of pies and cakes and big house by the beach. I heard, I was in the hospital too by myself, but we couldn't find the hospital, when I was over there, we were looking for it, it didn't exist, and I am sure it was in the hospital, cause when I was in that hospital, I could see the from the window, grass it was half way under, and when I was there, there was one Japanese boy across my room and one side and nurse or one woman used to come in with a small bowl, not bowl, brought a bowl of rice. But when I got there, it was a bowl of rice once a day, now, it seems to me it was two three days, just to keep me alive. When I got to my mom and dad, I mean, my mom, later, I was told I was skin and bones, and my uncle and uncle Popeye and uncle Willy Golodoff, they came back, I expect they died here, right now all I know is my two brothers and my sister is the only ones from Japan that is still alive.

CM: Do you remember when you found out the war was over?

NG: No, I know, the policeman that lived with us in Japan, at first when we got there, there used to be different policeman taken turns and at the end, this one policeman, stayed with us for the rest of the just him alone, we all not the rest of the Atka got to know him very well, later he brought his wife and started to live with us and his wife, like I said, didn't keep track of nothing, all I was thinking about was getting better food and better place to stay, like I stayed in the house for 3 yrs, and more than 3 yrs., hard to go out, my mom worked, I remember, and a clay, something like

that, I used to walk over there, and walk back home again, so the other Japanese woman working there too, not many, maybe 3 or 4, Japanese woman and my mom were there, so I used to go there with my mom every morning, we didn't have anything to eat, while my mom was working, but I was strong that time.

CM: Do you remember coming back to the islands?

NG: Yeah, I remember taking a bus to Japan and a plane to Okinawa I think, and I don't know how we got to Philippines, but we were in Manila, they had a big hurricane over there, I was lucky, I was in the hospital, they had a big hurricane, I had my first ice cream, I vomited, and they took me to hospital, the hospital was halfway underground, the wind didn't bother it, I looked out the window, everything was flying, trucks rolling, big army tents was flying up in the air, came and flying all over the place, and we didn't leave for awhile, I think it was wind the one started at night, but it lasted all day, evening, the man nurse put a pack sack, crawled over to the mess hall to make sandwich for patients, and we ate evening, the men were in a different area, men hid behind the big medal freezer, the women were inside the armored wagon, so that is what I was told, if I was out there, I would have been blowing away, somehow I get to be lucky all the time, still lucky, because I was I had a lot of chances to die, but I am always lucky, swamped my boat three times in the ocean here, I am still alive, and when in this day, when I get cold, you die from cold, but lot of times my pants are frozen on me my eyebrows frozen around my mouth is frozen, as long as I am moving, I am okay, but one time I had a huh sit down in the boat with my wet pants and end up, and couldn't stand up, because my pants were so frozen, I barely got out to boat, and walked to my ?

CM: So were you were not allowed to return to Attu is that right?

NG: **Yeah, then they said there would be enough to left to Attu, I'm glad about that, because its way at the end, if we were there, everything will be very expensive, but here it here, its' not that far away, but still expensive, freight, you still have to pay, like the old timers used to say, before, we didn't have I think that the reason theres camps all my own, where the food, wasn't much, they didn't have no freezer and refrigerator, they dried everything, long time ago, before the Russians came around, meat and dried fish they dried, and then put in the after they sealing stomach, keep it from spoiling,**

CM: So the Attuans came back to Atka?

NG: **That's correct, from Japan, to Okinawa, to Manila, from Manila; they took us to a big Army transport to Calif. And from I think from CA, we took a train to Seattle, because I remember I slept on the train, and we stayed in Seattle for awhile me and my mom and had our own place and everybody had their own place there, I didn't know where the money was coming from but all that, had a little bit of money, so we bought our own food, I liked Seattle very much, seemed like a nice day, there all the time, must have been summer time, and then from Seattle, we got to Adak, I don't know how we got to Adak, from Adak, they barge, from wooden barge, brought us here, been here ever since, so I have been here 59 years here now in Atka.**

CM: When you returned or arrived here in Atka, what buildings were here?

NG: **They were building when we got here, there was a lot Army leftover lumber here, the military was still here, when we got here, so there were still building when we**

**got here, we stayed with all our families build us our little shacks for us, our little place over here, down there.**

CM: In the old village.

NG: **Yeah, and then, later they build us a bigger one, above here, and then now I live on the other side.**

CM: So there were a lot of Army people here, when you got back?

NG: **Not lots, but there were a few here, don't know how many but they had there must have been a lots here before that, because it was costing us over us on top the island, Quonset hut, all the way to Martin Harbor, a lot of lumber and tin when I got here, that is when I starting building my own boats, but Army lumber, army nails, just trying to build my own boat, I don't know where I got engine from, but I had a engine, got a shotgun, and started to get fat,**

CM: What happened to all those Quonset huts?

NG: **They buried them, the weather was taking care of them slowly, after the war clean up came around, and buried them all, tore them up, piled them, buried them.**

CM: Where did they bury them?

NG: **Mostly, most of them where they were, they just crushed them, covered them up and then planted over them, so they are all gone, we used the wood for fire wood, we got here, there were wooden stoves, we used up all the Army coal, so we had to use the wood to burn.**

CM: So the Army left some coal here, where did they keep it?

NG: **You know where the fish, no, way in the corner. That is where the coal used to be, we took and used it all up.**

CM: So the buildings here in old Atka, in old town here, were those being built when you arrived or were some of those buildings left over from before the war?

NG: **They donated two buildings, that was left before the war, rest was all built from after the war, everything was burned here, like in Attu, church and all.**

CM: Do you know which two buildings were left from before the war?

NG: **Yeah, I think that there is three here of em, two here, and one over where Golleys used to be. I think three were left,**

CM: Where is Golleys? So how many people were here in the village after the war, fifty, hundred, a hundred and fifty?

NG: **Which village?**

CM: In Atka?

NG: **More than that, I don't know but, after the war, there was way more than that, probably same amount right now, or more, because there were a lot of kids, most of them, went to high school, never came back.**

CM: Did you go to school here, where was the school house?

NG: **Yeah.**

CM: So did you do when you got back did you make a boat and you starting fishing?

NG: **I was still hungry, I didn't have no money they just dumped us off here, without money, we had to live off the land, that's what I did, low tide, I ate off the beach, I ate roots, berries, stayed alive till, I got a job at St. Paul, and started working every summer at St. Paul,**

CM: Seal skin factory?

**NG: From there, I started taking any job I could find, till I got job here, and I have been here ever since, been working here for 21 years now never left for a job, before, I used to, people hired, I go out working out with them and work anyplace in order to make money,**

**CM: So when you came back with your mother came back here and your father also?**

**NG: No father died in Japan,**

**CM: Your sisters?**

**NG: No one, sister came back, 2 brothers came back, only one, other one went to school at Edgecumbe, my mom and sister and brother came back with me. Fished for pink salmon, over crowded with pink salmon, there used to be fish seining, no one fishes seines anymore, so overcrowded there.**

**CM: So how did you fish there?**

**NG: With a rock, a rock, that is when with a rock and hit them with a rock, and go in and get them, sometimes the tide goes down, pretty shallow in there, most of the time we used to seine them and dry them, salt fish, but now everyone has freezer now days, don't salt anymore, but some people still dry fish, but most don't, now days, everybody works, but, every year, except last year, too many pinks, what other kind of fish go in there, silver, don't have a place to spawn, except for one, small Little creek off the side some place that is where I used to go, sometimes there would be 2 or 3 dog salmon in there.**

**CM: I am told there are clams too?**

**NG: Used to be until sea otters clean them out, I don't know if there are clams there now or not,**

**CM:** People tell me that there is a PBY airplane in the bay out here? What can you tell me about that?

**NG:** Well, it's close to the island, out here, about almost in the middle of that island, you can see the wing, the whole plane, it isn't very deep there, when we go out, we used to see it, but I don't know I haven't been out there for 15-20 yrs now, I don't know, you can see a star and the one wing and a star, higher up and the rest of it in a deeper part.

**CM:** Did that go down during the war or after the war?

**NG:** I am pretty sure it was after the war. Because it was a four engine plane right here too, you're looks like it came in hit the water got up on the ground and slid up and stopped, I was interested in the machine gun I went over there, but they already took them off the plane.

**CM:** Do you think it is still there?

**NG:** Right now the wing is off and it's ruined, at first it was nice and clean and shining, but now it's not.

**CM:** Did you used to trap?

**NG:** After the war I did, not much to tell, I learned by going out with the trappers, by the time my turn came around the prices were too low, so I didn't much after I got here, I trapped with the older people, helping them out, I didn't trap myself, I still too young.

**CM:** What size traps did you use?

**NG:** What do you mean, size number two?

**CM:** Long springs or coil springs?

NG: Long ones. I got to be expert, but didn't have time to , I mean I had time, but prices were very bad, because there were vermin and foxes,

CM: Who were some of the old timers that you learned things from?

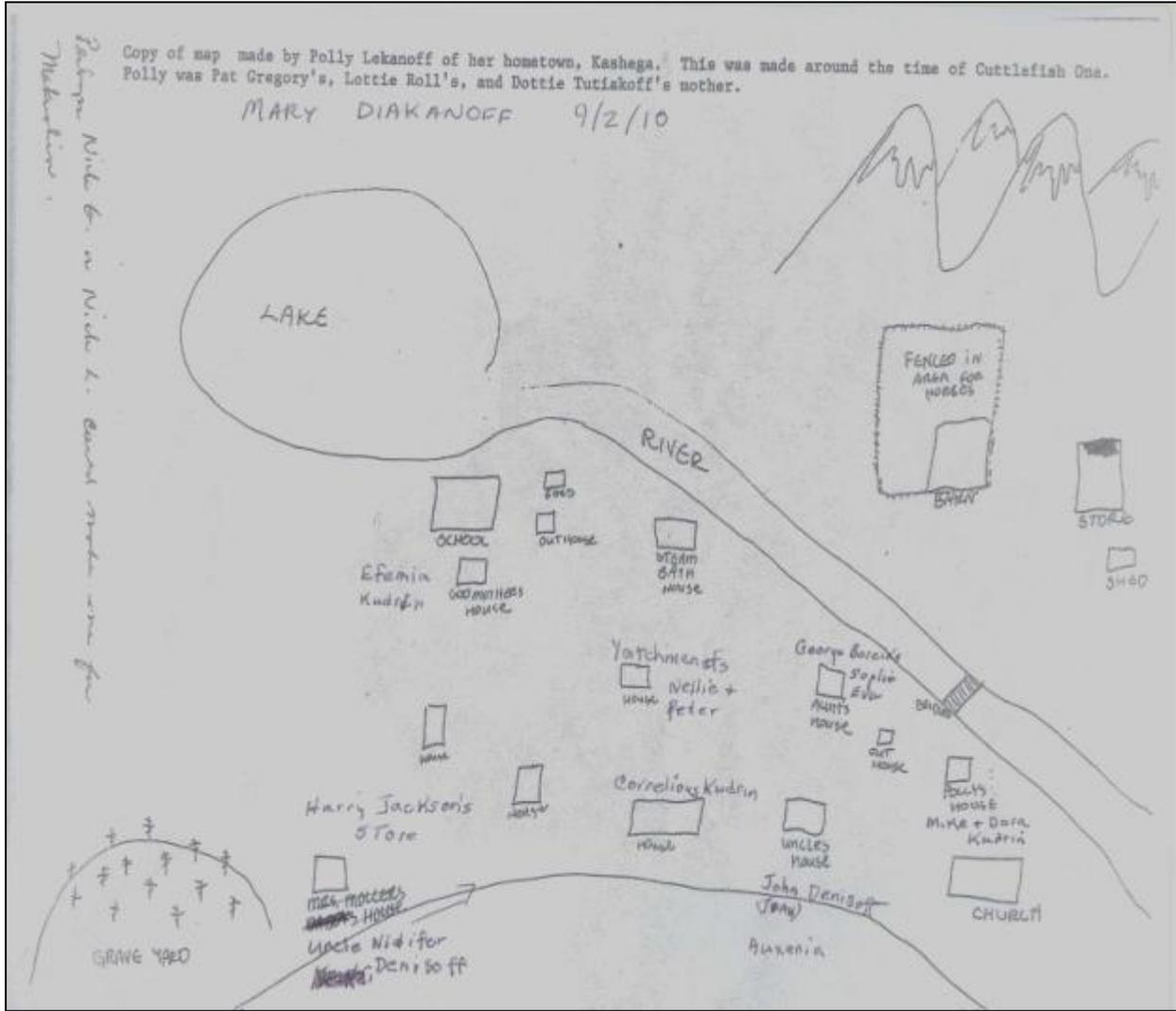
NG: Peter, George, grandfather, William Sr. and Godie both Tyler, George, Willie. All the timers are all gone, even Bo Dirks, told me about it. He says that the younger generation, but now days, everything is changing so fast, nobody is listening anymore, because of the govt, state and fed govt, taking over your kids, that you can't do anything do anything to your kids anymore, their afraid to go to jail, or they are spoiling everything, fish and stuff like that, they took over and they are running us out a fish and over fished, they run out of fish and they are coming to the Aleutians now, and starting to clean us out here. Later on, when I figured it out, that it was the Japanese that were mapping the area, Unalaska, Atka, Attu, people used to go out hunting, walking, see some other people, one year, when you look for them you can't find them, but you can see their tracks, in Attu, people used to go out hunting walking, when they come back, they asked if there was anyone else hunting besides me, tell him no, I saw somebody out there, he called for him, he disappeared, he went where he seen them. He's not there, those are not supposed but there is some things that I saw, sometimes I see, when I used to walk all by myself hunting, I see somebody, I don't know if they heard me, if you don't keep your eye on them, you'll lose them, just like I done in Attu, just before the Japanese showed up I was half way down the beach, there was a platform or where they were going to build a house, and on it there was a gunning sack, halfway down, I looked up and saw Jesus coming down to that huh, piece of running shed that was spread out, I watched him

**coming down, almost about 12 feet up, and he blessed me, and I turned around to see if anybody else was watching, and I looked up again, that time I was standing there, waiting there for him to show up again, and I went violent and I followed him down, that's when the Japanese started coming down the hill, I could see spots of them coming down, couldn't tell what they were but and there was 3 or 4 boys that went up the hill, to take a look, they never came back, they hid away, they had to send up some more people up with the Japanese to bring them down, they said they hid away in a cave, so there was ghost and no ghost.**

**CM: You've been back to Attu, right?**

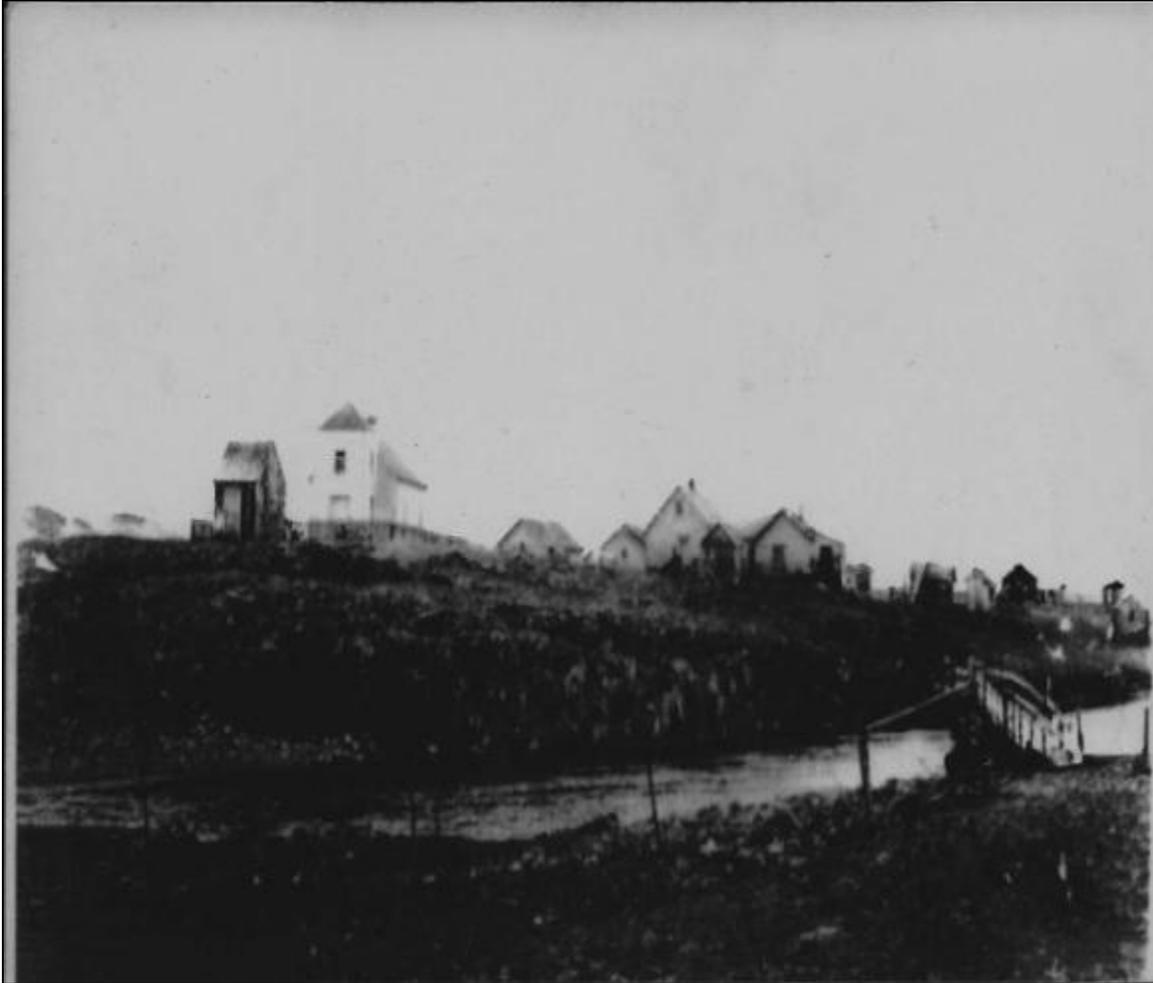
**NG: At first I was worked for Alex Company, from Tacoma, I salvaged a lot of military stuff, like medal, lead, copper, big medal boards, and stuff like that, when you did that did you find any guns, or anything like that, people did find ammunition, there was a lot of leftover ammunition, in Atka, we used them all up.**

# Appendix H



Drawn Map of Kashega, by Polly Lekanoff  
 Donated by Mary Diakanoff

## Appendix I



**Kashega before Evacuation c. 1940**  
Donated by Mary Diakanoff

## Appendix J Mausoleum One

Date of Internment	Name	Crypt No.
06/21/47	Axel Peterson	19
06/24/47	Peter Yatchminoff	20
09/15/47	Lena Knox	09
11/13/47	Harry Negoranna	23
11/16/47	Rachel George	21
12/03/47	Steven Stephan	18
12/13/47	Agnes Horace	01
01/03/48	Ruth Peters	03
01/13/48	Solomon Crafton	02
01/13/48	Doris Mishokoff	04
01/28/48	Speridan Nicketta	05
02/29/48	Nick Hansen	06
04/07/48	Wassili Hoover	07
04/24/48	Charles Healy	08
04/21/48	Ann Stephan	15
05/21/48	Cristine Pitmetalk	16
07/23/48	Hazel Williams	17
10/06/48	Luis Robinson	22
10/06/48	Mae Balluta	24
10/06/48	Alice Roberts	25
12/13/48	Body of Unknown	26
02/24/49	Carl G.F. Nelson	27
04/22/49	George Avelino	28
08/23/49	Florence Young	31
09/22/49	Kajino Matsu	32
10/04/49	Nellie Yatchminoff	33
10/20/49	Vera Tenape	34
11/04/49	Agick Speridan	35
02/07/50	Leonard Peters	36
02/23/50	Bessie Peters	40
08/04/50	Fred Toko	41
08/21/50	Abraham Albert	37
08/21/50	Bergman Pitka	38
10/16/50	Ann Dirks	39
10/25/50	Maggie Kuntz	42
02/20/51	Dennis Phillips	10
05/04/51	Fritz Petlorka	43
06/08/51	Alice Tobuk	44
06/27/51	Roy Bradley	49
07/12/51	Neil John	48

Date of Internment	Name	No. Crypt
07/24/51	Fanny Wassili	11
03/10/52	Charlie Nelson	47
04/18/52	Catherine Comuk	12
04/21/52	George Abalama	50
08/10/52	Charles Nelson	52
08/16/52	Joe Mosquito	13
09/10/52	Leona Weokoluk	14
11/24/52	Lucy Jordan	51
02/09/53	Olivia D. Villaries	55
02/13/53	Jennie Ricteroff Twins (Stillborn)	56
03/10/53	Margaret Brown	53
03/19/53	Annie Degnan	54
04/06/53	Gilbert Johnson	57
08/18/53	Jim Douglas Jr.	65
09/10/53	Baby Snook	58
10/06/53	Rita Tatoowi	70
10/20/53	Stanley Hughes	71
10/27/53	Stanley Clyde	72
01/06/54	Felix Albert	73
01/06/54	Mary Thomas	69
03/10/54	Paddy Thomas	74
04/01/54	Alma Upickson	78
05/10/54	Edward Jones	77
07/13/54	Baby Boy Snook	79
07/27/54	Peter Kobutak	66
07/20/54	Baby Girl Katasse	60
07/29/54	Joan Lawson	79
07/30/54	Baby Sandra M Didrickson	61
08/18/54	Simeon Call	78
09/07/54	Isabella Towarak	77
10/28/54	Baby Boy Frank Jackson	62
12/17/54	Baby Ballancier	63
04/13/55	Baby Didrickson	64
05/03/55	Mary Simeon	76
07/06/55	Dinah Eckok	80
07/29/55	Baby Naganuk	95
10/06/55	Baby Cook	96
10/11/55	Baby Bezezekoff	98
10/19/55	Baby Snook	97
11/04/55	Baby Ramos	99
11/25/55	Charles Mendelook	81
11/25/55	Baby Jimmie	100
07/23/56	Agnes Mann	82
10/19/56	John Sonny Jim	83

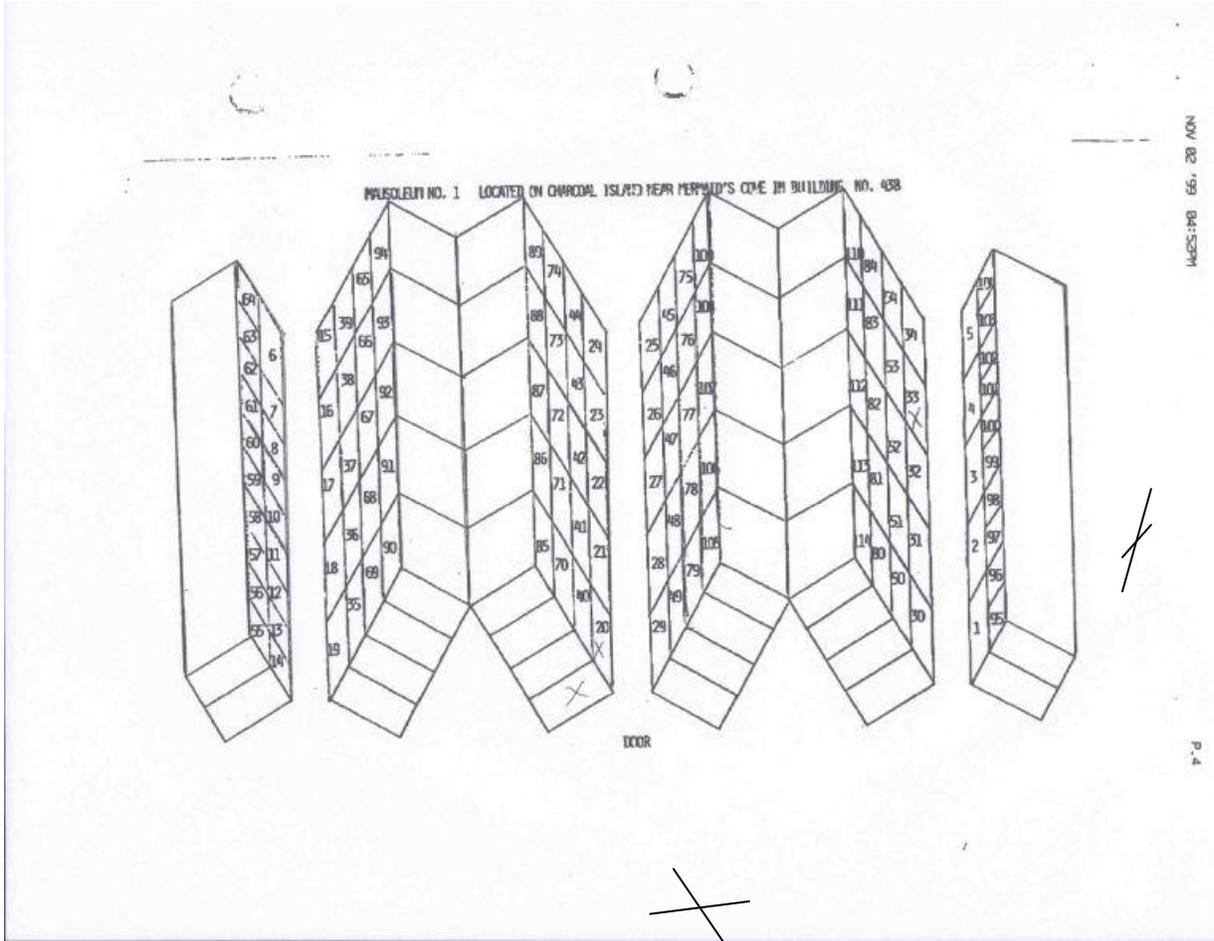
<u>Date of Internment</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>No. Crypt</u>
12/23/56	Beatrice Harrison	84
01/07/57	Elton Sugulook	85
02/01/57	Joseph (Ayagak) Bill	86
05/20/57	Andrew Kashevaroff	87
08/30/57	Paul Cleveland	90
09/03/57	Sylvester Sevauhuk	92
07/30/58	Mary Hangard	?
09/09/58	Andrew Alexeatrea	88
No date	Frank Nelson (5 mos)	104
No date	Wesley Jerrey Williams (6 yrs)	89
12/07/58	Lewis Kagonna	94
02/08/59	Baby Boy/Girl Tom (stillborns)	114
02/13/59	Baby Boy Powers (stillborn)	111
09/09/59	Baby Chulik	111
10/04/59	Helena Keliknak	112
12/22/59	Rosie Vaska	105
12/30/59	Anna Sorenson	108
04/0?/60	James Young	113
04/05/60	Baby McKinley	?
04/13/60	Dosithes Kosinvehoff	109

## Mausoleum Two

Date of Birth	Name	No. Crypt
05-23-60	Lena E. Alexie	116
10-25-60	Ruth Ann Edwardson	117
10-25-60	Edward Jacobs	118
11-18-60	Paul R. Mute	119
01-10-61	Anna Kushin	120
02-16-61	Jennie Fox	121
03-30-61	Eva Friday (Amputated Limb)	117
04-22-61	Wesley Flooting	115
07-11-61	Earl Wilson	122
07-12-61	Jessie Ketah	123
07-17-61	Wassillie Kalmakoff	124
08-15-61	Kenneth Slevery	125
12-05-61	Premature Infant	126
01-23-62	Christine Davis (7 ½ mo)	126
05-05-62	Baby Boy Blandov	127
05-07-62	Limb	126
09-01-62	Nicholas Ebakunoff	128
10-20-62	Maggie Martin	129
11-05-62	Frank Lane	131
12-10-62	Davis Simpson	130
03-12-63	Albert Charles (Limb Arm)	127
07-29-63	Clara Austin	132
12-14-66	Baby Boy Dalton	133

# Appendix K

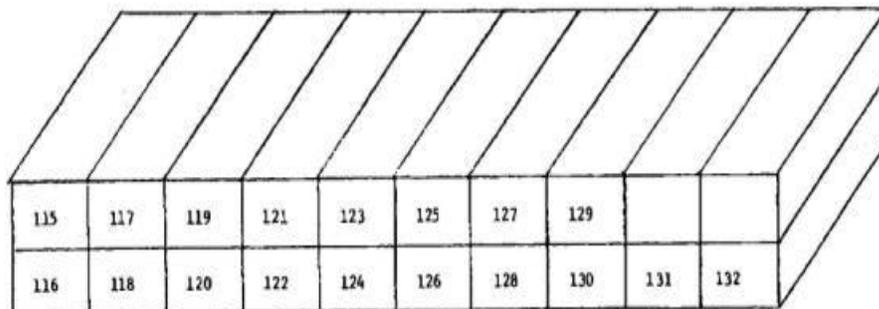
## Mausoleum One



## Mausoleum Two

ber 9, 1983

BACK OF MAUSOLEUM



DOOR

Schematic layout of mausoleum No. 2 located in building #347 in the area of Japonski Island known as John Brown's Beach.

WDC:TPB 66, 28 NOV

P.S.

## Appendix L



Nick Golodoff on back Japanese soldier Mr. Kamani's, in Japan cir. 1943.  
Courtesy of Rachel Mason.

## Appendix M



Mr. Kamani is on Nick Golodoff's in Japan, 1995.  
Courtesy of Rachel Mason.