

CONSEQUENCES OF UNPLANNED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
MINTO, ALASKA

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
JAMES BRADLEY HAYNES
1974

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ABSTRACT

CONSEQUENCES OF UNPLANNED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: MINTO, ALASKA

By

James Bradley Haynes

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Alaska State Housing Authority, Public Health Service, and others carried out a program of village rehabilitation and relocation between May, 1968 and July, 1972. Funding for the program was provided by various federal and state agencies which provided materials and technical assistance in organizing a mutual-help project for Minto, Alaska. This included the construction of thirty-eight new homes and complete utilities. The new community is a modern rural village in interior Alaska settled in 1972 by Athapascan Indians who had formerly lived at another site abandoned by choice.

Reconstruction and analysis of the Minto relocation project offers an example of the problems, complications, and misunderstandings, that can be expected when there are poor communications, misconceptions, and an uncoordinated plan of action. The study also illustrates in a more subtle

way, how recipients of social aid become alert to taking full advantage of bureaucracies.

Bureau of Indian Affairs attempted to delegate to the Village Council the authority to manage the project, but it became apparent that the Council was not equipped to handle the responsibility. As a result, various agencies found it necessary to exert their individual initiatives to accomplish the completion of the project.

Village participants found it necessary to devote time to subsistence hunting and wage-paying jobs as a practical necessity during the construction process and organization, cooperation, and communication became a problem. The project seriously disrupted the lives of all of the villagers for a period of years. It continued to the point where all participants were discouraged; yet today New Minto village is considered a success.

Certain steps could have been taken to prevent or ease some of the problems that were encountered. Conclusions and recommendations are offered as a result of this study which should be helpful in future village rehabilitation or relocation projects. Most important would be the creation of an intergovernmental board to implement planning and coordination by state and federal agencies at the local level.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNPLANNED COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT: MINTO, ALASKA

By

James Bradley Haynes

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Resource Development

1974

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have had an impact upon the completion of this project. To single any for recognition is an injustice as each has had an input for which I am grateful. A special note of appreciation, however, is due Dr. Maurice E. McGaugh, professor and former chairman, Department of Geography, Central Michigan University. He started it nearly two decades ago. My wife deserves more than a special note; she lived with it to completion.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Moving Plans by the Native Village of Minto

Recent government-sponsored reports indicate that of the 170 villages within the State of Alaska where the population is primarily Native,¹ less than a dozen are on the roadways of the state. Two others are located on the route of the Alaska Railroad, leaving approximately 165 predominately Native places located within isolated rural areas of the state.² Such villages are normally found along the coastal regions or at a river site, both of which afford some degree of transport as well as a base for subsistence items taken from the water itself.

While accessibility to these villages is somewhat enhanced by their location near water, transportation and communication to and from these communities remains a problem. The severity of the climate over most portions of

¹Native in this sense indicating persons who are Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut rather than whites who were "native-born."

²Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska, Alaska Natives and the Land (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 39-41.

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the state are such that water routes are generally limited to less than three months each summer, leaving less desirable alternatives; snowmobile, dog-team, and air service, a condition which further inflates the cost of living in a region where the inhabitants are acknowledged to be "among the most disadvantaged citizens of the United States in terms of income, employment, educational attainment, life expectancy, health, nutrition, housing and every important indicator of social welfare."³

Problems of accessibility are compounded in forty-five villages where there are no air transport facilities of any form.⁴ During the fall and spring these villages may be totally isolated for a period of weeks. Freeze-up presents a situation where float planes cannot utilize the rivers and yet the ice may be too thin to support ski-equipped aircraft. Spring break-up reverses the process while further compounding the problem by presenting an annual threat of inundation.

Minto, Alaska was typical of such a remote village (although it did possess an airstrip of good quality). Prior to 1972 the villagers were located on the Tanana River forty miles west of Fairbanks, but have since

³U.S. Senate Report Number 92-405 to accompany S. 35, 1971, p. 72.

⁴Airstrips where they do exist are often gravel and of "bush" quality, limiting the size of aircraft which can service the settlement.

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relocated to the upper Tolovana River some thirty air miles north of their previous location. The initial location, now referred to as Old Minto is abandoned with the exception of periodic sight-seers from Fairbanks and Nenana and possibly a few Natives who use the village during the summer salmon runs. This river-flat location subjected the village to periodic floodings--some severe, as the Tanana rose during each spring thaw.

Extraordinary rains in the interior of the state during the summer of 1967 culminated in the so-called "Fairbanks Flood" which received national attention. Fairbanks and a number of downriver communities were inundated on August 14. For the village of Minto, the flooding presented a climax situation when 23 of the 38 homes in the village were damaged to a point where replacement was deemed advisable. In addition, the usual harvest of subsistence items was virtually eliminated; fish, moose, and berries were not available at a critical time of the year. Fur-bearing animals, a major subsistence item seasonally, were flooded out as well. It was at this point that the alternatives of rebuilding or relocating to a new site were considered in detail.

The Problem

Much has been written about the physical, social, and psychological considerations of community planning, development and relocation. However, few studies have been

directed to these same aspects when the community in question was located in an arctic or subarctic environment, especially when the community was primarily Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut. The unique nature, physical and cultural, of northern communities, Native or not, rules out the direct application of southern or "lower-48" concepts. The reasons for this will be discussed in Parts II, III, and IV.

Settlement of the Alaska Native land claims in late 1971, with its overriding commitment to the economic development of the Alaskan Native people, will have a far-reaching effect on the political independence and economic well-being of its recipients.⁵ With the means at hand to increase self-sufficiency as well as to establish a base from which to compete in a white-dominated society there can be expected to be a rather rapid increase in attempts

⁵Public Law 92-203, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, 92 Congress, H.R. 10367, December 18, 1971 (85 Stat. 688).

Highlights of which provide four basic provisions:

(1) a grant to Alaska Natives of unrestricted title to 40 million acres of federal public domain in Alaska that mostly surrounds Native villages.

(2) to grant \$962.5 million to Native groups: \$462.5 million to come from the federal treasury over an eleven year period, and \$500 million to come from a 2 percent royalty on state and federal oil leases in Alaska.

(3) creation of 12 Native regional profit corporations to receive and manage approximately half of the \$962.5 million, some 18 million acres of land, and subsurface title to the entire 40 million acres.

(4) creation of approximately 200 village corporations to receive and manage the surface estate of approximately 22 million acres and approximately half of the \$962.5 million.

at transition from the current semi-subsistence transfer payment economy to a cash-orientated technological economy. This report is based upon the foundation of two important assumptions: First, within a relatively short period of time, an increasing number of Native villages will consider and elect to relocate on more desirable sites.⁶ Prime reasons for interest in relocation will be to escape seasonal damage created by the annual high water at a great

⁶The Branch of Housing Development in 1966 (Juneau Area Office) reported that since 1959 the following villages had moved:

Chaneliak to Kotlik
 Chenega to Tatitlek (due to 1964 earthquake)
 Holikachuk to Grayling
 Fort Yukon group to Birch Creek
 Fort Yukon group to Canyon Village

Villages in the process of moving (total population in some, and in some only a portion of the people):

Afognak to Port Lions (due to 1964 earthquake)
 Kolikanek to New Koliganek
 Nightmute to Toksook Bay
 Sleetmute to Village of Georgetown

Villages contemplating moves:

Alakanuk	King Island	Quinhagak
Beaver	Koyukuk	Rampart
Chefornak	Kwilgillingok	Shageluk
Circle	Napakia	Shaktoolik
Clarks Point	Napaskiak	Stevens Village
Deering	Pilot Station	Tanacross
Galena	Perryville	Togiak
Huslia	Nulato	Venetie

U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations,
Federal Facilities for Indians, Tribal Relations with the
Federal Government by Mamie L. Mizen (Washington, D.C.:
 Government Printing Office, 1966), pp. 629-30.

number of the current villages, the probability of increased communication and ease of transportation to other locations, the definite need for an improvement in housing and sanitation facilities throughout almost all of the Native communities in the state,^{7,8,9} and an awareness that certain agencies now existing, and whose future may be in doubt as a result of the Settlement Act, may be planning certain improvements and/or programs that could best be directed toward new sites. Secondly, with increased opportunity, mobility, and assured contact with other groups made possible by the Act, it appears unlikely that continued pursuit of the traditional way of life, consisting primarily of subsistence methods, will be preferred for very long--especially among the youth who already present not only the traditional generation gap, but what might be termed an acculturation gap as well. It would be dangerous to predict the demise of the small Native village due to outmigration, however. The rural Alaskan village, in fact, appears to be growing. The rate of natural increase is

⁷United States Census of Housing, 1960, Alaska, State, and Small Areas, Table 31, pp. 3-29, 3-30.

⁸U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service. Studies on Housing for Alaska Natives by Dennis R. Wik and others, Public Health Service Publication Number 999-AH-1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 1-11.

⁹U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Alaska Area Health Office, Water Supply and Waste Disposal in Alaska Native Communities by K. C. Lauster (Anchorage, Alaska: November 1, 1966).

keeping pace with any developing outmigration pattern.¹⁰

It is apparent too, that at the current time only a small number of Native migrants to the white population centers are successful in adjustment. This is thought to be partially due to racial discrimination as well as a general lack of education and vocational knowledge required to compete with the white-man. These factors in turn, effectively block access into meaningful and active participation in urban affairs. The pattern to evolve is generally one of movement to and from urban centers, such as Anchorage and Fairbanks, with return to the village normally inevitable. It is these types of findings that should tend to discourage the notion that rural villages in Alaska are disappearing and that further investment in them is unnecessary.¹¹ Harrison and Morehouse¹² have considered governmental efforts in the rural areas of the state and are critical of the administration of both state and federal programs. In fact, they predict a dismal future, asserting that rural development programs have been isolated and short-term affairs rather than a unified

¹⁰Alaska Native and the Land, pp. 39-41.

¹¹Arthur E. Hippler, "Patterns of Migration, Urbanization and Acculturation," in Alaska Public Policy, ed. Gordon Scott Harrison, Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1971), pp. 307-14.

¹²Gordon S. Harrison and Thomas A. Morehouse, "Rural Alaska's Development Program," Polar Record, XI (1970), 291-99.

cohesive strategy. They further claim that there is no overriding development plan and that no state or federal agency is capable of providing it. Surely it is natural for development agencies to assume that their programs contribute significantly to achieve a blending of the above goals, but little evidence as yet supports this assumption when considering community development in rural Alaska.

New Minto, as it exists today, is the result of over four years of construction, planning and frustration. The end result appears to be superior to Old Minto in most respects; however, avoidable problems were encountered throughout the planning/construction process and new problems continue to arise even though advisers from numerous federal, state, and local agencies were involved in both planning and funding. Research and enquiry indicate that at no time has there been a follow-up study on the results of Native relocation schemes. It is suggested that such a study could initiate a rudimentary beginning of a program that might be prepared for the purpose of providing for the orderly relocation of communities similar to Minto, while avoiding problems that might be of a recurring nature.

The Hypothesis

Treatment of Minto and its problems in this paper is not intended to be comprehensive; primarily because definitive answers are not yet available. Then too, many

of the right questions have not yet been asked. It is hypothesized: In cross-cultural Native village rehabilitation and relocation schemes the end-result will be enhanced if the decision-making process is surrendered to one group or agency where expertise in community development and cross-cultural relations is the sole responsibility of that group.

Throughout the study it will become apparent that duplication of effort and lack of communication between decision-maker/decision-maker and decision-maker/client played a significant role in the problems that developed and the length of time it took to complete the project. It will also be shown that frustrations develop when one group tends to think in terms of appropriations and fiscal funds, while the other tends to concentrate planning on seasonal activities determined by semi-subsistence living methods. An understanding of these differences is deemed desirable and necessary for meaningful interaction to take place.

In this case, the situation chosen for investigation meets the minimal requirements for the existence of a problem suitable to problem-focused research: (1) the various federal, state, and local agencies, the decision-makers in this instance, should be aware that high ideals and reasonable objectives are not enough to justify the expense of time and monies if there is disenchantment on the part of the villagers (clientele group) with the end result. (2) An outcome (objective or goal) is desired by

the decision-makers; namely a reduction of friction between agency and clientele groups, to hold dissatisfaction to a minimum in future projects of this nature (this outcome could also be stated as "satisfied villagers"). A system to identify potential conflicts before they become full-blown might also be sought. (3) The decision-makers have at least two unequally efficient courses of action to choose from; the continuation of fragmented agency input, with each accomplishing its phase of a non-comprehensive and vague plan of action--thereby justifying their singular input, or the alternative of creating a Native Community Development and Relocation Board with expertise and sensitivities not only to physical implementation but cross-cultural aspects as well. (4) A state of doubt, or some uncertainty can be assumed to exist as to where on this scale of alternative extremes there is a position best suited to meeting the problem. (5) An environment, or context, of the problem exists which consists of uncontrollable variables such as the actions of other decision-makers, reactions and counteractions, previous commitments of available resources and clientele preferences.¹³

¹³As a result of the settlement of the land claims issue, it is conceivable that the role of the decision-maker may change hands. That is, the client group; Native villages, may themselves become decision-makers who, in turn will rely upon the existing agencies for advice. In this event the components of the problem remain the same, however, the actor roles may be manipulated to a degree.

Objective of the Study

A primary objective is to use Minto and its problems as a model in an attempt to ward off problem situations before they arise in other community development or relocation schemes in the future. It is assumed that administrators in the various decision-making groups have an interest in knowing how to provide the services expected from their particular group. That is, how to best cope with expressions of dissatisfactions that arise from clientele groups as a result of policy. More importantly, they have an interest in having guidelines to follow in an attempt to avoid problems which may have occurred in the past. The key questions are: (1) how can present agency policy be revised to create efficient planning for future strategies? (2) are administrative remedies available with the resources at hand that can be geared to effectively meet the problems encountered in cross-cultural community development?

Each agency has an objective-goal. The fulfillment of that goal in an efficient and orderly manner is its key to continued existence. Each agency attempts to meet at least one of the following objectives: to insure viable economic development, to fulfill the needs of the Native people, or to maintain ecological balance. As will be shown, the traditional thrust of bureaucratic objectives does not provide the degree of flexibility needed to meet the local requirement that all three of the broadly stated objectives be compatible. This is further complicated by

the fact that apparent national policy goals are directed toward all three--but without specific priority. Then too, in Alaska there has been an obvious failure of agencies to realize (or admit) that there is a division between urban and rural, or less graciously, between Native and white. The central purpose of this study is to review the spatial and temporal factors which relate to the conditions of life, or quality of living, in a Native relocated community in interior Alaska.

Review of the Relevant Literature

To date, no comprehensive review of arctic or sub-arctic village relocation projects appears to exist. Literature on the subject has most often been presented concurrent with action. Post-mortem studies on the effectiveness of efficient planning and clientele satisfaction have not been attempted. Studies concerned with the problems of Native relocation have been presented in various forms by Ablon,¹⁴ the Alaska Rural Development

¹⁴J. I. Ablon, "American Indian Relocation: Problems of Dependency and Management in the City," Pylon, XXVI (Winter, 1965), 362-71.

Board,¹⁵ DeWitt,¹⁶ H.E.W.,¹⁷ Iverson,¹⁸ Stevenson,¹⁹ and mentioned in the Northern Affairs Bulletin.²⁰

Studies of the relocation of the Canadian town of Aklavik to the new site of Inuvik on the East Channel of the Mackenzie River Delta offers the most comprehensive set of literature related to community planning and relocation in the high latitudes. It should be pointed out however, that Aklavik, and now Inuvik, is a rather large (by northern standards) mixed community of Indian, Eskimo, metis and white as well as a governmental administrative center. The documented problems are, in many cases, of a different nature than those of a village such as Minto. However,

¹⁵P. Gagnon, The Beaver Project (Juneau, Alaska: Alaska Rural Development Board, 1959).

¹⁶Robert DeWitt and Cato Wadel, "Resettlement or Local Viability--Review of Sociological Issues--Notre Dame Bay Area," Preliminary Reports (unpublished), Institute of Social and Economic Research (St. Johns, Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967-8).

¹⁷U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, see footnote 8, supra.

¹⁸Noel Iverson and others, "Report on Newfoundland Resettlement Policies," Preliminary Reports (unpublished), Institute of Social and Economic Research (St. Johns, Newfoundland: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1967-8).

¹⁹Stevenson, Problems of Eskimo Relocation for Industrial Employment, NSRG-68-1 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1968).

²⁰"Housing Project at Fort Franklin," Northern Affairs Bulletin, Number 2 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, n.d.), pp. 7-8.

details of the decision to move and some of the resulting problems are applicable to the study situation. Writers to provide an incomplete but expanding list of the situation are Brown,²¹ Ervin,²² Honigmann,²³ Kettle,²⁴ Lotz,²⁵ Mailot,²⁶ Merrill,²⁷ the Polar Record,²⁸ Pritchard,^{29,30} and

²¹"A Compendium of Field Notes from Aklavik Town-site Studies, 1954," Report Number 64 (Ottawa: Division of Building Research, October, 1965).

²²A. M. Ervin, New Northern Townsmen at Inuvik, MDRP-5, Northern Science Research Group (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, May, 1968).

²³John J. Honigmann, "Preliminary Report of Field-work in Inuvik, N.W.T." (paper prepared for the 66th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., 1967).

²⁴J. Kettle, "The Old and the New Aklavik," Canadian Architect, I (November, 1956), 23-28.

²⁵Jim Lotz, Inuvik, N.W.T., a Study of Community Planning Problems in a New Northern Town (unpublished), Northern Coordination and Research Centre (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1962).

²⁶J. Mailot, Inuvik Community Structure, Summer, 1965, MDRP-4, Northern Science Research Group (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, May, 1968).

²⁷G. L. Merrill, "New Aklavik: Search for the Site," Engineering Journal (January, 1960).

²⁸"News Notes," Polar Record, VIII (1956) 53: 178-79.

²⁹Gordon B. Pritchard, "Inuvik--Canada's Arctic Town," Canadian Geographical Journal, LXIV (June, 1962), 6:200-09.

³⁰_____, "New Town in the Far North," The Geographical Magazine (September, 1964), 344-57.

Robertson.³¹ Settlement planning schemes for Native and white communities and their associated problems have been presented in publications by Ellis,³² Hippler,^{33,34} Honigmann,³⁵ Marshall,³⁶ Parker,³⁷ Stanley,³⁸ and Taylor.³⁹

³¹R. G. Robertson, "Aklavik, a Problem and its Solution," Canadian Geographical Journal, L (June, 1955), 6:196-205.

³²J. B. Ellis, S. W. Wright, and C. Aasen, "A Component to Systems Construction for Settlement Planning," Eskistics, XXIV (December, 1967), 124:55-59.

³³A. E. Hippler, "The Big Villages of Northwest Alaska, a Demension of Government Research" (unpublished) Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research (College, Alaska: University of Alaska).

³⁴_____, "Unplanned Consequences of Planned Culture Change," in Higher Latitudes of North America: Socio-Economic Studies in Regional Development, Occasional Paper Number 6, Boreal Institute (Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta, 1968).

³⁵John J. Honigmann, "Community Organization and Patterns of Change Among Northern Canadian and Alaskan Indians and Eskimos," Anthropologica, V (1963), 1:3-8 and 33-34.

³⁶H. Marshall, "Problems of a Contemporary Arctic Village," Arctic, XXIII (December, 1970), 286-87.

³⁷V. J. Parker, The Planned Non-Permanent Community, NCRC-63-5 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1963).

³⁸D. R. Stanley, "Modern Communities in the North," Western Miner and Oil Review, XXXI (December, 1958), 35-37.

³⁹T. G. Taylor, "A Mackenzie Doomsday: 1944. Arctic Survey 3," Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, XI (May, 1945), 189-233.

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Reports relating to the conflicting ways of life in northern communities are numerous and present insights into what can be expected when a village such as Minto is presented with the opportunity for relatively easy access into a mixed community such as Fairbanks. Leading reporters of this type of study dealing with the problems of acculturation and changing economic conditions are: Bucksar,⁴⁰,⁴¹,⁴²,⁴³,⁴⁴ Ervin,⁴⁵ Fairfield,⁴⁶ Fried,⁴⁷ Honigmann,⁴⁸

⁴⁰R. G. Bucksar, "Moosonee and the Squatters," Canadian Welfare (September-October, 1968), 15-16.

⁴¹_____, "The Problem of Squatters in the Northland," Habitat, XIII (January, 1969), 24-27.

⁴²_____, "Squatters in the North: An Appraisal," Northian, VI (Winter, 1970), 15-21.

⁴³_____ and Jim Lotz, "The Squatter on the Resource Frontier," Arctic, XXIII (September, 1970), 201.

⁴⁴_____, "Squatting in Canada: A Research Proposal" (unpublished), Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 1969).

⁴⁵A. M. Ervin, "Conflicting Style of Life in a Northern Canadian Town," Arctic, XXII (June, 1969), 90-105.

⁴⁶Robert C. Fairfield, "New Towns in the Far North," Journal of Canadian Studies (May, 1967), 18-26.

⁴⁷J. Fried, "Settlement Types and Community Organization in Northern Canada," Arctic, XVI (March, 1963), 93-100.

⁴⁸Honigmann and others, Eskimo Townsmen, Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology (Ottawa: University of Ottawa).

Lotz,⁴⁹ Sessions,⁵⁰ and University of Alaska,⁵¹ and VanStone.⁵²

While the village is expected to remain primarily Native in composition of population, there will be increased contact with the dominant white society and it is reasonable to expect that the socio-economic structure within the community itself will assume characteristics common to other communities where contact has been of a regular nature. Excellent studies of this process have been completed or are in the process of being concluded at this time. Leading examples

⁴⁹Jim Lotz, "The Squatters of Whitehorse: A Study of the Problems of New Northern Settlements," Arctic, XVIII (September, 1965), 173-88.

⁵⁰Frank Q. Sessions, Fairbanks Community Survey, A Profile of Poverty, SEG Report Number 16 (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1967).

⁵¹University of Alaska, The Barrow Community Study: A Report to Aid in the Physical and Fiscal Development of Barrow, Alaska, sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1964).

⁵²J. W. VanStone, The Economy of a Frontier Community, NCRC-61-4 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development).

are: Balikci,^{53,54} Foote,⁵⁵ Fried,⁵⁶ Graburn,^{57,58} Hughes,⁵⁹ Macgregor,⁶⁰ Parker,⁶¹ Usher,⁶² Vallee,⁶³ and Wilmott.⁶⁴

⁵³Asen Balikci, Development of Basic Socio-Economic Units in Two Eskimo Communities, Bulletin 202 (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1964).

⁵⁴_____, "Two Attempts at Community Organization Among the Eastern Hudson Bay Eskimos," Anthropologica, I (1959), 122-35.

⁵⁵Donald C. Foote and others, Saint Paul Community Study: An Economic and Social Analysis of the Community of Saint Paul, Pribilof Islands, Alaska, prepared for the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, U.S. Department of the Interior (College, Alaska: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1967).

⁵⁶J. Fried, "Urbanization and Ecology in the Canadian Northwest Territories," Arctic Anthropology, II (1964), 56-60.

⁵⁷Nelson H. H. Graburn, Eskimos Without Igloos: Social and Economic Development in Sugluk (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969).

⁵⁸_____, "The Social Organization of an Eskimo Community: Sugluk, P.Q." (unpublished M.A. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1960).

⁵⁹C. C. Hughes, An Eskimo Village in the Modern World, Cornell Studies in Anthropology (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960).

⁶⁰C. Macgregor, "Community Development and Social Adaption," Human Organization, XX (Winter, 1961-62), 238-42.

⁶¹S. Parker, "Ethnic Identity and Acculturation in Two Eskimo Villages," American Anthropologist, LXVI (n.d.), 325-39.

⁶²Peter J. Usher, The Bankslanders: Economy Ecology of a Frontier Trapping Community, Vol. I: History, Vol. II: Economy and Ecology, Vol. III: Conclusions and Recommendations, NSRG-71-1, NSRG-71-2, NSRG-71-3, Northern Science Research Group (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1971).

⁶³F. G. Vallee, Ponungnetuk and Its Cooperative: A Case Study of Community Change, NCRC-67-2 (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967).

⁶⁴W. E. Wilmott, The Eskimo Community of Port Harrison, P.Q., NCRC-61-1, Northern Coordination and

The Alaska State Housing Authority and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Juneau) have published Comprehensive Development Plans for a number of mixed communities throughout the state as well as several Community Fact Surveys, village studies, and Community Development Surveys.⁶⁵ In addition, independent studies have been published by the Kaltag Development Committee,⁶⁶ Kozely,⁶⁷ Oswalt,⁶⁸ Patterson,⁶⁹ and Van Stone.⁷⁰

Within the past ten years, a number of publications have been presented that document the fact that current policy issues are not meeting the assumed goal of "satisfied"

Research Centre , Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1961 (mimeo).

⁶⁵See Bibliography, infra., for citations.

⁶⁶Kaltag Development Committee, Handbook for Village Development; Village of Kaltag (Juneau, Alaska, 1965).

⁶⁷Lado Kozely, Bethel Community Action Program, Socio-Economic Report, City of Bethel (Bethel, Alaska, 1965).

⁶⁸W. Oswalt, Napaskeak, An Alaskan Eskimo Community (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1966).

⁶⁹E. A. Patterson, Community Assessment-Development; the Native Village of Gambell, Alaska, St. Lawrence Island (Nome, Alaska: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1966).

⁷⁰James Van Stone, Point Hope, An Eskimo Village in Transition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962).

clientele. Programs designed to bridge the gap between subsistence and a cash economy have routinely described the inadequacies of previously presented programs. A sample of such writings should offer positive as well as negative points of view. Reports in this area include those presented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs,⁷¹ the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska,^{72,73} Gazaway,^{74,75} Harrison,⁷⁶ Hippler,⁷⁷ and Lotz.⁷⁸

⁷¹U.S., Bureau of Indian Affairs, Program Memoranda: Alaska Natives (Juneau, 1967).

⁷²U.S., Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska, Report to President's Review Committee for Development Planning in Alaska on Economic Development Planning in Alaska, Vol. I, II (Anchorage, Alaska, 1965).

⁷³_____, Westward Alaska: The Native Economy and Its Resource Base, prepared by John D. Abrahamson (Anchorage, Alaska, 1968).

⁷⁴H. P. Gazaway, National Program Inadequacies and Needs to Better Serve Rural and Native Alaska, prepared for the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Juneau, Alaska, 1966 (unpublished).

⁷⁵_____, Needed: An Economic Development Program for Rural Alaska, prepared for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Juneau, Alaska, 1965 (unpublished).

⁷⁶Gordon S. Harrison and Thomas A. Morehouse, footnote 13, supra.

⁷⁷Jim Lotz, Northern Realities (Toronto: New Press, 1970).

⁷⁸Arthur E. Hippler, "Some Unplanned Consequences of Planned Culture Change," in Higher Latitudes of North America: Socio-Economic Studies in Regional Development, Occasional Paper Number 6, Boreal Institute (Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta, 1968).

Congressional documents such as Hearings before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the Committee on Public Works and the Committee on Commerce as well as Conference Reports, House and Senate Reports and insertions in the Congressional Record⁷⁹ indicate that rapid changes in the development and economy of traditional Native villages can be expected. Institutes within United States and Canadian universities, where northern studies programs are on-going, are developing programs to meet the anticipated problems. The Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research at the University of Alaska is directing attention in this direction and the Center for Settlement Studies at the University of Manitoba has three programs designed toward the improvement of life and community development in the north; Projects Habitat, Work Force, and Native Peoples.⁸⁰ The Boreal Institute at the University of Alberta, the Institute for Northern Studies; University of Saskatchewan, the Institute of Social and Economic Research; Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Northern Research Group; University of Montreal, the Committee on Northern Research; McGill University, the Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology; Saint Paul University (Ottawa) and the Arctic Institute of

⁷⁹See Bibliography, infra., for citations.

⁸⁰Correspondence with L. B. Siemens, Director, Center for Settlement Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 8, 1972.

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North America (Montreal) all participate in research whose thrust is often directed toward northern community development.⁸¹

Periodic publications by the Arctic Institute of North America; Arctic, a series of Technical Papers, their Newsletter and books of technical and general interest, together with Arctic and Alpine Research (University of Colorado), Musk-Ox (University of Saskatchewan), and North (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) supplemented by the Polar Record published by the Scott Polar Institute, Cambridge University are helpful in providing an understanding of the current trend within the area of study.

Research Methods

This investigation combines the techniques of historical review and documentation with those of correspondence and interviews directed to those known to be involved or interested, directly or indirectly. Discussions and correspondence with individuals involved on either side; that is, client and decision-maker was chosen as the most practical way to obtain the required data which would indicate what areas, if any, might require concentration in the future. As a result of the interviews, correspondence and materials received, light was shed on possible courses

⁸¹See Bibliography and text, infra., for citations.

of action--primarily because the results of such a synthesized review make more information available to the investigator than was available to any of the participants at the time they arrived at their decisions and took action. On the basis of this evidence⁸² conclusions were drawn. They are intended only as guidelines designed to assist others in avoiding similar problems in the advent of future village moves which are surely imminent.

At the core of this investigation is the detailed reconstruction of the Minto relocation project. A history of the various relationships was developed and information obtained (plus incoming information on public agency involvement and conflict minimization used elsewhere) was consolidated to serve as the basis for recommendations found in the concluding section of this report, Part V.

Initial procedure to develop the problem was to contact the various federal, state, and local agencies in an attempt to learn the details of their specific role in the project as well as how their opinions of Native development programs might influence the conditions of life

⁸²Of the various agencies and individuals contacted, the great majority were most gracious in supplying material from their files; normally at their own time and expense. In some few cases, cooperation was not extended and information was withheld. In one case, scanty information was subsequently supplemented voluminously as the result of a Senatorial directive and certain sensitivities developed over this project. Consequently, no attempt will be made to pin-point specific agency disenchantment or break-down of communication which did occur during the planning and construction phase of New Minto.

within a typical Native community. The purpose of this phase of the study was to explore and document the negative features that arose when such a great number of organizations and individuals became involved. Analysis included data-gathering by means of interviewing primary participants and acquiring copies of written documents related to the project.⁸³

Fieldwork

During the summer of 1970 and at various times during 1973 and 1974, the investigator visited Old and New Minto to observe first-hand and visit with the principals in the relocation scheme, the residents of the community. At various times (between 1970 and 1974) personal communication was carried on between the investigator and various agency representatives in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks who were involved, to some degree, with some phase of the Planning and construction of New Minto. In addition, visits were directed to individuals residing within the

⁸³ Agencies with some degree of involvement in the Minto relocation project included: Bureau of Indian Affairs; Juneau Area Office and Fairbanks Agency, State Division of Lands, State Division of Aviation, State Division of Public Welfare, State Department of Fish and Game, State Department of Highways, Bureau of Land Management, Farmers Home Administration, Public Health Service; Alaska Native Health and Arctic Health Research, Local Affairs Agency, Water Pollution Control Administration, Alaska State Housing Authority, Office of the Governor, Neighborhood Youth Corps, State Department of Education, the Attorney for the community of Minto, and the members of the Minto Townsite Committee.

community of Fairbanks who were somewhat knowledgeable and/or interested in Native lifestyle, acculturation, or community development. The goal was to gain additional information and insights, sift through available Minto files, obtain relevant documents, and photograph the existing situation at both sites. Detailed notes were taken during each phase of the information gathering process.

Summary of Methods

Techniques of the scientific method were applied to the study through the use of a plan which included: (1) impartial gathering of preliminary data, (2) making generalizations from that data by inductive reasoning, (3) testing the validity of the generalizations and deductive conclusions by making more observations, and (4) arriving at sound and reasonable conclusions. It is further recognized that the usefulness of the interview as a technique was limited by the subjectivity of (a) the reports of the interviewee and (b) the interpretations made by the interviewer. It is recognized too, that probing by the observer, in an attempt to further cooperation and motivation of the respondent, might have created a problem of bias. With this in mind, more emphasis has been placed on the existing written documentation of the move rather than upon the interview technique whenever possible. On the other hand, a considerable gap has always existed between the rhetoric of social change and action. Therefore, even

with the shortcomings of this study, it is felt that the possible social consequences of an objective review was worth the apparent problems.

Presentation of Results

Each of the succeeding Parts (II-V) will attempt to point out areas of consideration or document problems that arose at various stages. The concluding portion offers alternatives, either from a different point of view, from an outside source, or from agency modification of stance since the problem situation was encountered. An attempt will be made to make explicit the implicit trade-offs where controversy seems to exist. Recommendations will be given in the concluding remarks, considering the problem areas. Because this report is a descriptive comparison and an analysis of a historical event, it presents a verbal research model; consequently, the literary cognitive style, suitable for a qualitative model, and nominal scale of measurement has been used.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 258-62.

PART II

HISTORY OF NATIVE HOUSING ASSISTANCE

A variety of State and Federal agencies have been given the responsibility for the general improvement of rural or village Alaska. In many cases the role of the State remains primarily regulatory, however, the Alaska State Housing Authority has been active in promoting better housing for residents of the "bush" communities.

Federal agencies provide loans or grants for a wide variety of improvements. This portion of the report offers an overview of Federal and State programs involving housing, water supply, waste disposal and power as their programs affect Native communities.

Housing Programs

Three public housing programs are directed to serve Alaska's smaller villages; the Village Housing Program (HUD), the Alaska Remote Housing Program (State), and the Housing Improvement Program (BIA).

The Alaska (State) Housing Authority was created by the Territorial Legislature in 1945. It was then

instrumental in working with the Territory and its delegate to Congress in the passage of the Alaska Housing Act.¹ This bill provided the incentive for conventional housing and mortgage funds and created a "Remote Dwelling Loan Program" which allowed for loans up to \$500 for housing improvement in the rural villages of the state. The program operated for three years, providing improved housing (flooring, roofing, insulation) for many families--mostly in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta regions. Under this program the Alaska (State) Housing Authority acted as agent in the purchase and delivery of materials and the borrower accepted the responsibility of building or improving his dwelling.

In 1963 they received a Federal grant of \$180,000 to conduct a "housing demonstration project" in Native villages. The program constructed houses in three ethnic regions: southeast Indian (Tlingit-Haida), interior Indian (Athapaskan), and coastal Eskimo. The most ambitious project undertaken under the program was the relocation of an entire village. The community of Holikachuk was moved 20 miles to the new site of Grayling on the Yukon River. The Authority administered the grant, provided the materials, and supplied technical assistance for the construction of the homes. A mutual-help program was used and the owners

¹Public Law 81-52, Alaska Housing Act, 81 Congress, H.R. 17150, April 23, 1949 (63 Stat. 59).

are now paying for the materials used in the construction of the buildings.²

Prior to 1965, these were the only housing programs available to rural Native Alaskans. At that time, Senator Bartlett, introduced Senate Bill 1915, designed to attract funding for the construction of housing throughout the rural areas of the State. Documentation for the housing needs of Alaska's Native people had been provided by Abrams and the reader is directed to that publication for an extensive and comprehensive review of housing conditions in rural Alaska.³ The "Bartlett Bill" was revised and passed by Congress as Section 1004 of the "Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act:

Sec. 1004 (a) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to make loans and grants to the State of Alaska, or any duly authorized agency or instrumentality thereof, in accordance with a statewide program prepared by such State, agency, or instrumentality, and approved by the Secretary, to assist in the provision of housing and related facilities for Alaska Natives and other Alaska residents who are otherwise unable to finance such housing and related facilities upon terms and conditions which they can afford. The program shall (1) specify the minimum and maximum standards for such housing and related facilities (not to exceed an average of \$7,500 per dwelling unit); (2) to the extent feasible, encourage the proposed users of such housing

²Alaska State Housing Authority, Low-Income Housing Demonstration Program; Grayling, Metlakatla and Bethel, Alaska, Alaska State Housing Authority Remote Housing Report Number 2, December, 1968.

³Charles Abrams, Housing the Alaska Native, Alaska State Housing Authority Remote Housing Report Number 1, February, 1967.

See also: Footnote 8, Part I, supra.

and related facilities to utilize mutual and self-help in the construction thereof; and (3) provide experience and encourage continued participation, in self-government and individual home ownership.

(b) Grants under this section shall not exceed 75 per centum of the aggregate cost of the housing and related facilities to be constructed under an approved program.

(c) There is authorized to be appropriated not to exceed \$10,000,000 to carry out the purposes of this section.

It marked the real beginning of rural housing programs in Alaska. One million dollars was appropriated in 1968 which was used to build 159 new homes and repair 8 existing houses in 1969 (of this, 20 units were authorized for the planned community of New Minto from the 1969 funds). A second \$1,000,000 was appropriated in 1969 to be used in 1970. From those funds 176 new homes were constructed and two that were existing were repaired.

Some of the money appropriated was used for related activities such as water and sewer, but agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Public Health Service were encouraged to provide these services in an effort to conserve funds for the actual construction or repair of homes. This seemingly reasonable measure was to have unexpected consequences during the construction phase of New Minto and will be commented upon later.

In addition to federal legislation providing funds, the State of Alaska attempted to assist in the development

of rural housing by authorizing an additional \$1,000,000⁴ to match the federal authorization of \$10,000,000 (although 10% was later redirected for "administrative expenses").

In 1970 Congress did not make an appropriation to continue funding the program and in an effort to continue, the State appropriated another \$1,000,000 which resulted in the construction of another 131 new homes. To fill the vacuum left by the failure of Congress to fund the so-called "Bartlett Program," the Department of Housing and Urban Development initiated the Village Housing Program in 1970 in addition to the State's program. Under this program 200 houses were constructed in 10 villages at a cost in excess of \$2,300,000. In 1971, the Alaska State Legislature approved a \$3,000,000 bond issue for village housing.

Recently the Federal government extended its Indian housing program to Alaska. Plans, as they were initiated, were to provide housing funds that would eventually result in the replacement of all substandard housing in Native villages. This program was to be administered jointly by the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Alaska State Housing Authority, however, the two never came to terms concerning roles and responsibilities and the program was off to a weak start.⁵ If and when this program becomes

⁴Alaska House Bill 414.

⁵U.S. Department of the Interior, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Appropriations, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations, Fiscal

operational it is considered unlikely that Native communities would continue to participate in the ASHA program since the grant portion of the federally-administered program would be much greater.

Program Administration

Administration of the current program rests with the Alaska State Housing Authority (ASHA). It is guided by a Committee appointed by the Governor, with an Executive Board developing the criteria for the selection of villages, reviewing and approving plans, and selecting the villages to be served.⁶ Between 1969 and 1971, 663 homes were constructed throughout the State (Table 1). ASHA uses the money provided by the Federal government to issue loans and grants. Loans are made for terms to twenty years and include the cost of the non-labor portion of the house. Interest rates cannot exceed the same rate that ASHA pays to the Federal government. Grants to 75 percent of the homes are available when a family does not have enough income to qualify for, or to repay, a loan. Tables 2 and 3

Year 1973; 92nd Congress, Second Session, 79-80; and Fiscal Year 1974, 93rd Congress, First Session (HR 8917), pp. 197, 217, 221 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972-73).

⁶The administration of ASHA (and their choice of contractors) routinely faces rather severe criticism by one or the other political party not currently charged with directing the destiny of the State. Currently (March, 1974) the Authority is operating under the barest possible staff and is in danger of being disbanded.

Table 1.--Native Housing Assistance.

Location	Start	Completed	Units
<u>New Construction</u>			
Kiana	1969	1970	16
Kivalina	1969	1970	7
Noorvik	1969	1970	21
Point Hope	1970	1971	24
Selawik	1970	1971	26
Buckland	1970	1971	12
Ambler	1971	1972	16
Chalkyitsik	1971	1972	11
Minto	1969	1971	20
Kaltag	1971	1972	19
Chevak	1970	1971	24
Scammon Bay	1970	1971	15
Hooper Bay	1970	1971	22
Pilot Station	1970	1971	22
Mountain Village	1970	1971	28
Kotlik	1969	1970	17
Ermononak	1969	1970	17
Alakanuk	1971	1972	31
Akiachak	1969	1970	15
Chefornak	1969	1970	19
Quinhagak	1969	1970	6
Toksook Bay	1971	1972	26
Napakiaak	1971	1972	20
Mekoryuk	1971	1972	20
Good News Bay	1971	1972	20
Kwethluk	1971	1972	13
Tetlin	1971	1972	13
New Stuyahok	1971	1972	17
Manokotak	1971	1972	19
Wainwright	1971	1972	25
Golovin	1971	1972	10
Unalakleet	1971	1972	19
Yakutat	1971	1972	20
Holy Cross	1971	1972	15
Shishmaref	1969	1970	21
Total			663

Table 1.--Continued.

Location	Start	Completed	Units
<u>Rehabilitation</u>			
Chefornak		1969	2
Emmonak		1969	1
Chevak		1970	1
Kivalina		1969	4
Point Hope		1970	1
Noorvik		1969	1
Total			10

Table 2.--Grant-Loan Schedule; \$5,651 Home.

Adjusted Income*	Term of Loan	Monthly Payment**	Loan Amount (Totals \$5,651)	Grant Amount	Monthly Grant Credit
0-1500	20 years	\$ 9.68	\$1413	\$4238	\$17.66
1501-1750	20	11.57	1689	3962	16.51
1751-2000	20	13.49	1969	3682	15.34
2001-2250	20	15.45	2254	3397	14.38
2251-2500	20	17.44	2546	3105	12.94
2501-2750	20	19.48	2843	2808	11.70
2751-3000	20	21.55	3146	2505	10.44
3001-3250	20	23.66	3454	2197	9.15
3251-3500	20	25.81	3768	1883	7.84
3501-3750	20	27.99	4086	1565	6.52
3751-4000	20	30.22	4411	1240	5.17
4001-4250	20	32.48	4741	910	3.79
4251-4500	20	34.77	5076	575	2.40
4501-4750	20	37.11	5418	233	.97
4751-5000	19.00	39.48	5651	0	0
5001-5250	17.50	41.89	5651	0	0
5251-5500	15.50	44.34	5651	0	0
5501-5750	14.50	46.83	5651	0	0
5751-6000	13.25	49.35	5651	0	0
6001-6250	12.50	51.92	5651	0	0
6251-6500	11.50	54.52	5651	0	0
6501-6750	10.50	57.15	5651	0	0
6751-7000	10.00	59.83	5651	0	0
7001-7250	9.50	62.54	5651	0	0
7251-7500	8.75	65.29	5651	0	0

Source: ASHA.

*Adjusted income is determined by taking the average of the gross income for the last three years and subtracting \$100 for a spouse and each child under 19 years of age.

**Monthly payments include interest at 5-3/8 percent. Sixty cents is added to the monthly payment to cover the cost of handling the loan.

Table 3.--Grant-Loan Schedule; \$6,628 Home.

Adjusted Income*	Term of Loan	Monthly Payment**	Loan Amount (Totals \$6,628)	Grant Amount	Monthly Grant Credit
0-1500	20 years	\$11.36	\$1657	\$4971	\$20.71
1501-1750	20	13.56	1980	4648	19.37
1751-2000	20	15.82	2308	4319	18.00
2001-2250	20	18.12	2644	3984	16.60
2251-2500	20	20.46	2986	3642	15.18
2501-2750	20	22.84	3334	3294	13.72
2751-3000	20	25.27	3689	2939	12.24
3001-3250	20	27.75	4050	2578	10.74
3251-3500	20	30.27	4418	2210	9.21
3501-3750	20	32.83	4792	1836	7.65
3751-4000	20	35.44	5173	1455	6.06
4001-4250	20	38.09	5560	1068	4.45
4251-4500	20	40.78	5953	675	2.81
4501-4750	20	43.52	6354	274	1.14
4751-5000	18.75	46.30	6628	0	0
5001-5250	17.00	49.13	6628	0	0
5251-5500	15.50	52.00	6628	0	0
5501-5750	14.25	54.92	6628	0	0
5151-6000	13.50	57.88	6628	0	0
6001-6250	12.50	60.89	6628	0	0
6251-6500	11.50	63.94	6628	0	0
6501-6750	10.50	67.03	6628	0	0
6751-7000	10.00	70.16	6628	0	0
7001-7250	9.50	73.35	6628	0	0
7251-7500	9.00	76.57	6628	0	0

Source: ASHA.

*Adjusted income is determined by taking an average of the gross income for the last three years and subtracting \$100 for a spouse and each child under 19 years of age.

**Monthly payments include interest at 5-3/8 percent. Sixty cents is added to the monthly payment to cover the cost of handling the loan.

show the relationship between income and payments for two home types available under the program.

Several types of housing units have been developed, with styles varying from one to four bedrooms. The difference in the construction costs of the various floor plans is reported to be slight, consequently schedules for payment of the two types shown in the tables are typical.

Villages must apply to be considered. Ideally projects are reviewed based on the economic viability of the area, need, willingness of the people to participate in a mutual-help program, and whether or not available building sites are free from flooding and erosion problems. The number of homes built in any one village is determined by the need of that village compared with other villages as well as funding restrictions. ASHA reports that repayment has been excellent to date. Payments may be made on a monthly or yearly basis since many Native people have only seasonal employment; as a result cash may be available only at certain times of the year. ASHA's Village Housing Program is a mutual-help program. That is, prospective home-owners must help with the construction of the home, working as a group under the direction of a building supervisor. The buildings must be complete before anyone takes possession. The object is to provide training for local people as well as reduce costs. It has been estimated that costs would more than double if hired labor were used.

Federal Requirements

Under HUD guidelines, water and sewer must be provided for each home constructed with their money. No houses can be built which are not served by utilities. Fortunately these may be trucked water, individual wells, and "honey-bucket" (hand-carried) waste disposal. State-financed housing programs carry no requirements for such services--a disparity which created consternation for the people of Minto. Other differences between State and HUD requirements emerge routinely since policy decisions for State financing is made by ASHA's Board of Directors and policy measures for other village housing programs is determined by HUD.

While subject to criticism, the Village Housing Program and the Alaska Remote Housing Program are used by the villages, if for no other reason than being one avenue open to achieving improved living conditions. About 90 percent of the State's rural communities have requested some form of participation; which in some cases may reflect an awareness of grant aid as well as need. Participants have the right to sell the homes. If a buyer (acceptable to ASHA and the Village Council) is available, the owner can sell his house for whatever price he can command. A new payment plan is then developed by ASHA in relation to the new buyer's income according to the grant-loan schedule.

In summary, the Remote Housing Program was the first of continuing efforts to upgrade poor housing in

village Alaska. Its over-riding drawback lies not in the details of its conceptual framework but in its capacity to meet need. Six hundred sixty three new homes were built under these programs and an additional 190 were constructed under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Housing Improvement Program (HIP). This was barely adequate to keep up with annual population growth and decay in existing housing. These programs, designed to eliminate substandard housing, succeeded only in reaching a standstill and actually falls short in reducing the number of families living in poor housing.

BIA Housing Improvement Program

Since 1968 the Bureau of Indian Affairs has operated a public housing program that has been notably successful. It is intended to specifically benefit the low income rural villages. Funding is through Congressional budget appropriations for the Bureau and is therefore subject to fluctuation as well as danger of elimination at any time. The "HIP" program is a nationwide program with Alaska normally allocated about 10 percent of the annual BIA budget. Its primary intention is directed toward rehabilitation, but in Alaska more is spent on new housing because so few existing rural houses are habitable. Minto received funding for eight new houses in 1969 and ten more in 1970.

BIA's program is a direct grant. After a house is built, it is turned over to the receiving family with no obligation for future payments. The recipient assumes immediate ownership (unless the village chooses to hold the homes in tribal ownership), so there may be more pride of possession with this program than in the ASHA program.⁷ This too, is a mutual-help program which is intended to keep the cost in the \$6,000 range and in many cases local materials (such as logs) are used for construction. This tends to maximize the economic benefits as well as produce houses that are in keeping with the surrounding environment.

Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel determine where, and in what number, HIP houses will be built. Need is used as their primary criterion. There may or may not be provisions for water supply and sewage disposal. Land ownership is not a prerequisite, nor is land-use planning. Therefore the program is flexible, allowing even individual or village ownership. Whenever, possible, the Bureau arranges to provide sanitary facilities (through Public Health Service), but these facilities vary widely from village to village. The flexibility of the HIP program results from these outstanding features: it can be used for

⁷ Another way to look at this is that outright ownership, without even a cursory obligation on the part of the recipient, will result in little pride development and actually help create an "easy-come, easy-go" attitude. This, superficially at least, appears to be the prevailing attitude.

new construction as well as rehabilitation, it can be used to benefit the most rural families, the families with the most children, or the families with the lowest income. There is also an attempt to promote community responsibility by consulting with village leaders; involving them in organization of the work, the selection of families, and the management of the project.

The HIP program attempts to arrange for wages for the new owners working on their homes through one or more of the state agencies. This tends to avoid conflicts that develop from the use of a worker's time during a period when there is a need to earn whatever money might be available. The summer construction season is also a time of subsistence food gathering. Wage payment and the BIA program therefore tend to reinforce each other to the benefit of the recipient families as well as to help make the program work.

There is also reason to believe that the HIP method (turning over ownership of the new home without payback provisions) is less costly in the long run. In the other programs, where the housing agency holds a mortgage, the remoteness of many Alaskan villages places administrative expenses on the agency for as long as twenty years.

There are some apparent problems with the HIP program: it is administered by an agency independent of the other housing programs and, as will be seen, coordination is difficult. In some cases HIP houses and Remote Housing programs have been built in the same village in the same

year to the detriment of both programs. This was the case with Minto and will be commented on in the following pages. Another problem is lack of sufficient funding to really make a dent in housing deficiencies. A study conducted by the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska concluded that a total of 9,445 houses would be needed by 1971 to replace the substandard housing in the state. Three hundred forty more would be required each year to serve new couples reaching marriageable age.⁸

To sum up, the BIA program is small compared to the other housing programs; but it is specifically directed toward the low income rural Native villages. It is used extensively in the smaller, more remote villages. It is more flexible than other programs, and it maximizes economic benefits as well as Native participation. It has been successful even with some coordination problems.

The Farmer's Home Administration

The Farmer's Home Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has several home loan programs designed to serve rural areas. The applicant need not be a farmer but must reside in a small town or rural area. In Alaska, the most important of the Farmer's Home

⁸ Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska, Economic Outlook for Alaska (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 341.

The same publication presented additional data noting that 8,718 of 10,344 units housing Alaskan Natives were substandard of which 8,437 should be replaced, p. 346.

programs is the so-called "Section 502 Loan." This is a loan offering money at 7-1/4 percent up to thirty-three years. The applicant needs little in the way of a down payment; as low as 2 percent. Unfortunately an applicant must have title to the land upon which he wishes to build, and this is not the case with the majority of Alaskan Natives today.⁹ The program, while restricted to low and moderate income persons, does not help the lowest income group because an applicant must be capable of repaying the loan. FHA has determined that an income between \$8,000 and \$9,000 is usually necessary to assure payments on one of their loans. As a result, even though the program is for all eligible applicants, it is largely a "white man's" program. Only one of six applicants is Native. In southeastern Alaska the ratio runs as high as 30 percent which may reflect the higher number of Natives owning land in that region. If that is the case, then the settlement of the Alaska Native land claims could result in a surge of Native applicants, as they begin receiving money and lands under the terms of the Act. At any rate, the Farmer's Home Administration has indicated that they wish to encourage

⁹Under the terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, village and regional corporations have until December 18, 1974 and 1975, respectively to make their land selections. "Core" township applications are, in some cases, currently pending, however, with the bureaucratic process, title will probably not pass for a considerable time.

more Native participation in their programs--especially by those in the more remote areas.

Related Agency Services

To be effective in improving living conditions, housing development programs should be coordinated with the improvement of other public facilities serving the rural areas. A review of attempts to provide related services such as electricity, running water, sewage disposal and local access roads will help to define problem areas based on experiences of the past few years. The construction of Minto offered an excellent review of problems encountered in an attempt to provide utility services. The fact that problems did arise does not preclude the fact that these support services should be provided in some form whenever possible.

In the rural villages most of the people have had little or no experience in maintaining a home equipped with plumbing or electrical systems. Provision of these services should then include training in the operation and maintenance of public utilities. Assistance must be provided to home-owners as well as to those responsible for maintaining and operating the utility system. Many villages with semi-subsistence economies do not have the necessary cash to cover the operation or maintenance of a utility system after the initial costs are paid. Federal and State governments are then faced with policy decisions as

to how much should be subsidized by the public toward the cost of operating these services in rural communities. Obviously the issue should be dealt with when villages are selected and utility systems discussed.

In most high latitude rural villages a house with running water or a flush toilet is unusual. Water is often obtained from the closest river or stream. During the summer water may be carried by bucket. Ice is cut, stored, and later melted for winter supplies. Some shallow wells are utilized. Except for a few villages with running water provided by recent Public Health Service programs, distribution systems are limited and serve only a few homes. Outdoor toilets and indoor "honey-buckets," dumped in the river or at the edge of the village, are typical methods of human waste disposal. An unsanitary supply of water with poor waste disposal practices is the rule rather than the exception.

As villages become larger and more permanent, hardships caused by lack of water and sewage systems will tend to intensify. For example, in 1950 the mean population of Native communities was 226. In 1960, the same group of communities had a mean population of 260, and 316 in 1970, representing an increase of 40 percent in 20 years.¹⁰

¹⁰Alaska State Housing Authority, Mountain Village Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage: Alaska State Housing Authority, December, 1971), pp. 33-38.

Better infant and maternity health care, in combination with high birth rates and a lowered death rate has laid the basis for a potential population crisis. As a result of the rapid growth, a skewed age structure has resulted. The full impact of this will not be felt until greater numbers of young people mature to child bearing age (which they are beginning to do), but it can be predicted that the Native population of Alaska will soon experience a more rapid growth rate. This crisis has been ignored (and even denied) by federal and state officials, even though it has been in process for twenty years. It has been popular to debate how soon the small villages of Alaska will disappear. This misconception of the declining Alaskan village is totally inaccurate and has been pointed out by Hippler.¹¹

As communities grow, it will become even more difficult to haul water or dispose of waste conveniently. Historically, smaller or transient communities could dump trash and waste at the edge of a village or even into the rivers without harm, but in larger, more permanent communities, a better system of utilities will be necessary.

¹¹Arthur E. Hippler, "Patterns of Migration, Urbanization and Acculturation," in Alaska Public Policy, ed. Gordon Scott Harrison, Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1971), pp. 307-14.

See also: Alaska Natives and the Land, pp. 39-41.

Housing Support Agencies

Within the past ten years various agencies have begun to provide support services to rural communities in Alaska. The U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), initiated its rural community water system in 1964 and since then they have assisted several Native communities in developing wells, waste disposal systems, and piped water-sewer systems. The Alaska Village Electrical Cooperative (AVEC), has even more recently developed power systems in the rural villages using Rural Electrification Administration (REA) loan funds. AVEC, formed in 1967, has now completed power systems in about fifty communities.

ASHA's Remote Housing Program and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Housing Improvement Program have both followed PHS and AVEC into the rural communities. The various programs represent substantial effort to improve these villages, but they have met only a minor portion of the need. In 1971, the State Department of Highways initiated its Local Service Roads and Trails Program which is currently providing funds for the development of trails and minor roads connecting facilities within and around village areas. The program is a needed supplement to the State's Federal-Aid Highway Program, as it provides for the construction of local roads and trails which are not included in federal-aid programs. Under this Act, project priorities in rural villages are established by the State Department of Highways based on requests from local leaders

and residents. Requests so far have exceeded funds. Initial funding was provided by passage of a \$6 million bond issue in November, 1970, with an additional \$4 million made available by a second bond the following year. Actual construction work began in 1972. Funds available will be exhausted at the end of 1974 and if additional money is not provided, programs scheduled for 1975 and 1976 will be abandoned.

During the construction phases of the Local Service Roads and Trails Projects, local residents and equipment are utilized as much as possible. This is beneficial to the economy of the villages involved and helps to reduce overall costs, while providing additional training to local people, who are often hired to maintain the projects once completed.¹²

All of these efforts now being directed toward rural villages are signs of an awareness of the poor living conditions on the part of the state and federal governments. As might be surmised, however, this increased awareness coincides with the Alaska Native land claims movement and the advent of the Native politician.

Unless the agencies providing housing, water and sewer systems, and power are able to focus on the same communities concurrently, they will waste time and dissipate

¹²State of Alaska, Department of Highways, "Five Year Highway Construction Program," January, 1973.

their efforts. In some cases the Remote Housing Program has rehoused as much as half the population of some villages. In other cases, as with the community of Minto, entire villages have been relocated or rebuilt. Eventually it is hoped that all substandard Native housing will be replaced. Certainly water and sewer systems should be a complementary part of this procedure. If not, new systems will have to be built, rebuilt, or extended to service new housing. In such a case, there now exists the possibility that connections serving abandoned homes will stand unused.

ASHA, AVEC, BIA, and PHS are aware of the advantages of meshing their programs and focusing on the same communities. Coordinating meetings have been held but the various agencies continue to serve separate villages and opportunities for coordination have been lost. In the past this may have been due to the timing of each program: PHS built its first water system in 1964, four years prior to the first housing program. After these housing programs were begun, PHS adopted a policy of serving only those communities where new housing was being developed. Unfortunately, AVEC's choice of communities is dictated by REA loan fund restrictions, primarily the limitation that a village must have the potential of paying for its power. Fuel oil costs in Alaska range greatly; from 20¢ per gallon in the coastal regions to \$1.00 per gallon when air freight is necessary. Without a subsidy, AVEC cannot afford to serve villages where fuel costs are over 40¢ per gallon.

In areas of high fuel cost, the expense of running a power program exceeds local cash resources. As a result it is often impossible for AVEC to provide power to villages served by BIA and/or ASHA programs.

PART III

GEOGRAPHY AND ENTHNOLOGY

When dealing in cross-cultural ventures it seems reasonable to forward the view that an understanding, if cursory, of cultural variance would tend to enhance the relationship necessary to complete intended programs.

During the relocation of Minto no documented attempt was made to understand historical events or to seek the "level of exposure" of the recipients prior to involvement. Geography, ethnic background, and the transition from a nomadic subsistence economy to a sedentary semi-subsistence river village is described. Had this information been available to agency participants of the move prior to implementation, several problems could have been avoided.

Location and Physical Setting

New Minto is located on the North Fork of the Tolovana River approximately 50 miles northwest of Fairbanks at 65° 09'N latitude, 149° 20'W longitude (T4N-R9W, Fairbanks Meridian). It is on the west side of the river on a ridge 250 to 300 above the high water mark. This site

and that of Old Minto, on the Tanana River, reflects the continued importance of a riverine location as a source of livelihood and transportation. In fact, every settlement within the region is sited on the banks of the Yukon or one of its tributaries.

Water in relation to land surface and the low relief of the flats within which Minto (both Old and New) is located is the dominate geographical feature of the area. It contains innumerable lakes, of which Minto Lakes are the largest. The flats contain approximately 400 square miles, surrounded by rolling hills reaching to over 4,500 and 3,000 in elevation on the northwest and northeast, respectively, and by the Tanana River to the south. The new village is located at the base of a range of hills in the north-central portion of the flats. Minto Lakes proper, the dominate physical feature within the flats, occupy approximately twenty square miles. The number of lakes apparent at any one time is determined by the season of the year. During and after the spring thaw the area appears as two large sheets of water, but in late summer, once the water level has dropped, the water bodies are reduced to four or five main bodies of water with innumerable adjacent ponds and lakes. Numerous creeks and streams flow into either the Chatanika or Tolovana Rivers which eventually enter the Tanana below the site of Old Minto. The area is primary level, seldom rising higher than 350 feet. There are areas of higher and better drained ground interspersed

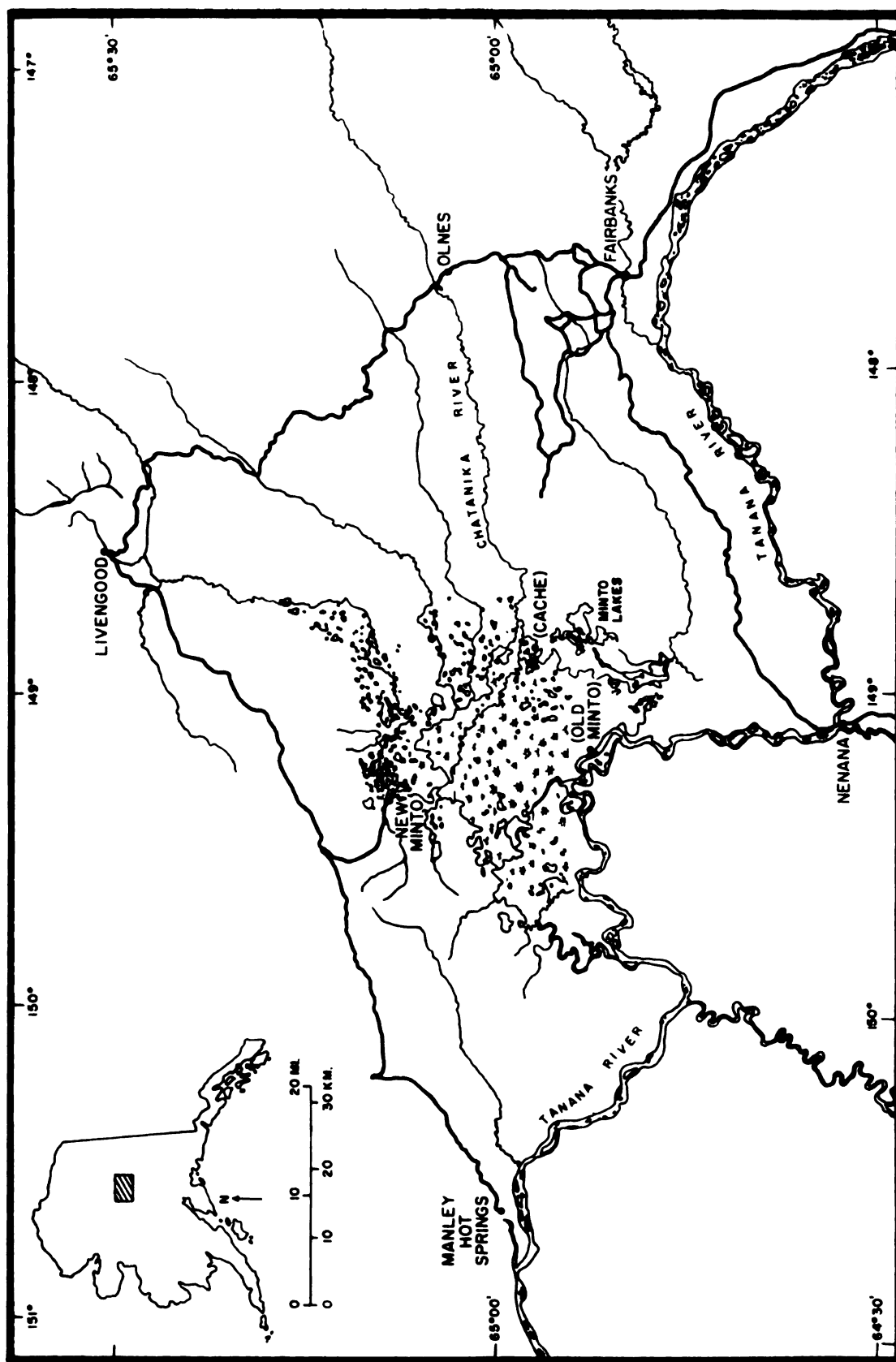


Figure 1. Reference map of Minto Flats, Alaska.

throughout the region; however, they are normally less than a few hundred yards in diameter and less than 100 feet higher than the surrounding area.

Vegetation of the flats follows a pattern; higher ground contains paper birch, quaking aspen, balsam poplar, alder, black spruce, and white spruce which is the dominate species. Lower ground contains willow, which is dominate, and bluejoint grass appearing in the more moist areas. Within the flood zone is swamp-grass; and on into the water is bur-reed and mare's tail, various sedges, water parsnip, slough grass, foxtail and again, swamp-grass. In the stagnant pools or in ponds with poor drainage is horsetail, bladderwort, buckbeam, wild calla, sweet flag, cinquefoil and clumps of leather leaf. In the lakes there is a mixture of water milfoil and pondweeds.¹

Climatic Factors

Minto (both Old and New) and the surrounding area lie in the northern portion of what has physiographically been termed the Nowitna Lowland which drains the Tanana River, a major tributary of the Yukon. The climate of the area is influenced most directly by the Alaska Range to the south. This range of mountains forms an effective barrier to the flow of warm moisture-bearing winds from the north

¹David C. Hooper, "Waterfowl Nesting at Minto Lakes," in Second Alaska Science Conference, 1951, published 1953 (College, Alaska: University of Alaska), pp. 318-21.

Pacific Ocean. Because of a lack of a moderating influence, a wide variety of temperature extremes occur in the area and there is a definite continental climate (Table 4). Extremely low temperatures in winter are the result of polar air masses flowing in from the north as well as prolonged heat radiation during periods of extended winter darkness. Snow cover and low sun-angle contribute to heat loss by a high albedo. Winter temperatures are below zero regularly, with extremes exceeding -60°F . The White and Crazy Mountains to the north aid in the settling of cold air into the lowland and create conditions favorable for temperature inversions during periods of extremely cold weather. Under this condition the air temperature increases up to approximately 2,000 feet and then gradually decreases creating a situation favorable for the creation of extensive ice fog in lowland areas. In the summer temperatures decrease with elevation in the normal manner.

During the summer months of June and July, the sun is above the horizon from 18 to 21 hours each day and average temperatures reach into the 70s. Extremes of 90°F or more are common however. Between November and March sunshine decreases from 10 to less than four hours daily. The average annual temperature at Fairbanks is 26°F ; the all-time low was recorded at -66°F , and the highest on record is 99°F . The growing season, considered to be the average number of days between the last frost of spring and the first of fall, runs approximately 100 days; from late

Table 4.--Climatic Data for Minto Flats Area, Alaska.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Ann.
<u>Temperature--Degrees F</u>													
Daily Maximum	1.7	12.0	24.8	42.7	60.2	71.7	72.7	67.3	55.4	36.1	13.8	2.3	38.4
Daily Minimum	-16.0	-8.7	1.2	17.0	33.6	44.1	46.8	43.0	33.6	18.6	-2.3	-14.8	16.2
Record High	42	49	56	71	88	95	99	90	85	67	59	58	99
Record Low	-66	-59	-56	-32	0	26	29	19	7	-28	-54	-62	-66
<u>Precipitation--Inches</u>													
Rainfall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.09	0.78	1.48	2.10	2.43	1.32	0.39	0.04	0.0	8.64
Snowfall	10.9	7.0	6.6	2.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	7.0	7.7	8.5	50.61
Total	0.83	0.51	0.42	0.24	0.80	1.48	2.10	2.44	1.36	0.93	0.63	0.57	12.31

Source: University of Alaska, Institute of Agricultural Sciences Tech. Bull. No. 2.

May to the first freeze which is normally expected by the end of August. Ice formation on the river will normally support a man by late October and begin to break-up in early May.

Since the flow of air is generally from the south, the Alaska Range receives most of the precipitation and carryover into the interior is light--between 10 and 12 inches each year (Table 4). Light showers in May build to an August maximum with a noticable decline in precipitation by December. Snowfall in the lowland can be expected during September and reaches a maximum in January. Average depths vary, but great extremes are not uncommon. Moisture in the snow comprises about 40 percent of the annual precipitation in the Chena River valley near Fairbanks² and there is no reason to believe that nearby Minto Flats would be otherwise.

Ethnic Background

Native inhabitants of the Minto Flats area are of Athapascan linguistic stock known ethnically as the Tanana. The Tanana Indians represent a northern division of Athapascan who lived in small nomadic groups averaging between 30 to 80 persons. They are reported to have

²Paul J. Frey and others, The Chena River: The Study of a Subarctic Stream, Federal Water Quality Administration, Department of the Interior, Alaska Water Laboratory Water Project Number 1610 (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, October, 1970), p. 9.

ranged the area drained by the lower Tanana River below the Tok River, the region near the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers, a small region along the Yukon above the confluence, as well as having had a settlement at Lake Minchumina in the upper Kuskokwim drainage.³ Olson, in delineating their former area, stated:

A line can be drawn starting on the Tanana River about six miles below Nenana going northward through the foothills to the present mining village of Livengood. . . . People went up the rivers and creeks such as the Chatanika, Tatalina, Goldstream and Tolovana. . . . They hunted in the hills north of Fairbanks . . . , and so the eastern boundary is somewhat uncertain, but from a point just south of Livengood, the line could be continued to the west and north towards Sawtooth Mountain and the Tanana Hills at the base of the White Mountains. Following the curve of the hills southwesterly, the line would end up again on the Tanana River near the point known as Tolovana. South of the Tanana River from Tolovana eastwards toward Nenana, the line would make a large crescent swinging back to the point of origin.⁴

Existing literature on the background of the Tanana Indians is vague and in some cases conflicting. Only limited archeological work has been completed in the Minto area. Unfortunately, most of the possible previous sites are inaccessible for most of the year. For example, the known location on an old village, where the Chatanika River emerges from the hills onto the flats, can be reached only

³C. Osgood, The Distribution of the Northern Athapascan Indians, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, Number 7 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 19.

⁴Wallace M. Olson, "Minto, Alaska: Cultural and Historic Influences on Group Identity" (unpublished Masters thesis, University of Alaska, May 20, 1969), p. 9; see Figure 20.

on foot or by a shallow draft boat.⁵ It is some 35 air miles from Fairbanks and 25 miles from the closest road. Rainey⁶ has summarized what anthropological work has been done in the area.

Various groups located along the river have been reported by Swanton as Clatchotin, Huntlatin, Nukluktana, Tolwatin, Tutlut, and Weare.⁷ The problem of ethnic background was further complicated by Kozely when he reported that "Mr. Peter John, the (then) present Minto chief . . . was empathic in saying that they were not Kutchin, but rather Teyokhotana." Kozely was not successful in tracing the origin of the term "Teyo," but points out that the word "Khotana" is a name applied to several Athapascan groups of the lower Yukon and Koyukuk Rivers.⁸ "We were unable to

⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁶Froelich Rainey, "Archeology in Central Alaska," in Anthropological Papers of the Museum of Natural History, XXXVI, pp. 355-405.

⁷John R. Swanton, The Indian Tribes of North America, Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin Number 145 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), pp. 539-40.

⁸Native associates of the author have found it amusing when he was unable to distinguish between "upriver" and "downriver" (Yukon) Indians. For those knowledgeable, there is an apparent cultural division (i.e., style of footwear, method of cutting fish) located between upriver Fort Yukon and downriver Beaver.

locate any geographical name resembling Teyo or anything similar; was "Teyo" the name of a Khotana chief?"⁹

To pass over a matter better assigned to ethnographers, Dr. Kozely laconically concluded that the settlement of Minto was founded by nomadic Athapascan Indians who were previously living in the Minto Lakes area. Better history can be developed and is important here because an understanding of divergent lifestyles can be a significant factor in understanding and working in cross-cultural groups.

Kozely was apparently on the right track as he mentioned that the 11th Census Report of 1892 reported:

The people inhabiting the banks of the Tanana River have variously been named the Tennan Khotanas, Tananatena, and Tennan Kutchin, the latter being probably the best known and significant. They live in small settlements generally away from the main river, in scattered portions, and are distinguished only by the name of the chief of each band (p. 126).

This would lead one to believe that the people were, in fact, Kutchin; denied by the chief and informant of Dr. Kozely. Hodge reported that the Kutchin are "an Athapascan tribe in Alaska which hunts throughout the basin of the

⁹Lado A. Kozely, "A Community Development Survey, Native Village of Minto Flats, Alaska," in Resource Analysis of Minto Flats Area, Alaska, I.B.E.G. Report Number 3 (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1965), p. 14.

Tanana River, but has its villages along the upper stream in Lat. 63°, Long. 142°."¹⁰

Since Old Minto is located 64°54'N-149°10W (T1N-R8W, Fairbanks Meridian), Kozely was quite correct in noting that this would place the "habitat" of the Tenan-kutchin in the country far away from Minto. Indeed, it places them in the extreme eastern portion of the interior lowland, an area historically occupied by the Nabesna, a more eastern Athapascan group, and over 400 river miles from the site of Old Minto, almost to the Canadian border.

Initial contact with the small groups of Tanana River people was with Russian traders, who in 1860 entered the area from the lower Yukon. Additional contact followed with trappers for the Hudson's Bay Company. The first recorded scientific expedition into the region was that of a river passage by Lieutenant Henry T. Allen in 1885,¹¹ who recorded his arrival at the camp of Evan below present-day Old Minto. He reported that Evan had a population of 35 men, 20 women, and 20 children, and that other camps upriver contained between 40 and 70 persons. His report concluded that the entire number of people living along

¹⁰Frederick W. Hodge, The Handbook of Indians North of Mexico, Smithsonian Institute, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin Number 30 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1912).

¹¹Henry T. Allen, Report on an Expedition to the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk Rivers in the Territory of Alaska, in the Year 1885 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), p. 451.

the Tanana numbered 232.¹² McKennan has reported that the camps on the upper Tanana varied in size from 16 to 59 persons.¹³ Consequently it is safe to assume that the Minto people followed a similar pattern; living and travelling in scattered camps, loosely classified as "bands."

Olson states that these bands existed into the early 1900s and were identified by their leader's names. Bands were reported at Coschacket on the lower Tanana, led by Evan; and at Tolovana further upstream, led by Alexander. A group called the Wood River-Nenana people were led by Thomas and John led an encampment located near the confluence of the Chena and Tanana Rivers. The leader at Mintu (Minto), whose location was not identified was not identified was Charlie (Figure 2). Similar leaders were located at other points along the river.

Since contact times these bands have collapsed into a few important villages. The people of Coschacket have settled at Tanana, while those from Tolovana have moved to Minto. The Wood River-Nenana people have settled in Nenana and the people from Chena have generally settled in Fairbanks.¹⁴

¹²Ibid., p. 477.

¹³Robert A. McKennan, The Upper Tanana Indians, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, Number 55 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 18.

¹⁴Olson, Minto, Alaska, p. 17.



Figure 2. Tanana Chiefs Group Portrait, Circa, 1915.

Initial geologic and geographic information of the area was first recorded by Brooks as late as 1898.¹⁵ An early history of the people as well as that of the region is vague. One fact does stand out however, the area commanded by the present-day inhabitants of the flats has historically had a reputation for being an area of sparse population. Stuck stated;

This stretch of the river is the stretch least occupied by any sort of settlement, between Tanana and Fairbanks. . . . The abandoned telegraph station marks the half-way point, but it must be looked for carefully or it will be missed. . . . This station where two Signal Corps men lived with no neighbors save perhaps some encamped Indians for many miles around.¹⁶

Hrdlicka reported that "the Native population has always been remarkably scarce."¹⁷ In addition, estimates of population figures for the entire lowland substantiated these low figures. Dall estimated 500 people,¹⁸ and in the Census of 1880, Petroff indicated that he felt that the

¹⁵A. H. Brooks, "A Reconnaissance in the Tanana and White River Basins, Alaska, in 1898," in Annual Report 1898-99, U.S. Geological Survey, Volume 20, Part 7 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), p. 425.

¹⁶Hudson Stuck, Voyages on the Yukon and Its Tributaries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 283.

¹⁷Ales Hrdlicka, Anthropological Survey in Alaska; Alaska Dairy 1926-31 (Lancaster, Pa.: Jacques Cattell Press, 1943), p. 16.

¹⁸William H. Dall, "On the Distribution of the Northern Tribes of Alaska and the Adjacent Territory," Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1869 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

entire region contained from three to seven hundred persons.¹⁹ Other figures varied, but always the suggested population was small: Richardson; 100, Allen; 600, the Census of 1890; 373, the Census of 1900 and 1910; 370 and 415, respectively. Mooney estimated 500, including the Nabesna people.²⁰

Whether the figures are reliable or not is doubtful since the reported scarlet fever epidemic of 1868 must have taken as great a toll among the Tanana as it did with the Kutchin further to the east.²¹ When writing of Minto, Hrdlicka stated, "Most of the Indians here, and elsewhere in the region, (are) said to have died of the "flu" in 1918. The scourge was such that in places the bodies were lying around and had to be burned by government agents."²² At any rate, the written account from the 1880s on does not suggest an extensive number of Indian sites or inhabitants; and Minto as a permanent village on the Tanana does not appear until sometime between 1915 and 1917 at the earliest.

As to earlier sites occupied by the Minto people, one informant has indicated that elders of the present community recently informed him that,

¹⁹Ivan Petroff, Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska, U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, 10th Census, Volume 8, 1884.

²⁰Swanton, The Indian Tribes, p. 540.

²¹Alaska Natives and the Land, p. 212.

²²Hrdlicka, Alaska Dairy, p. 16.

They recall five village locations; the first two, the people lived in skin tents and the next two in log or partial log shelters. The fifth in frame homes. The first site was just 200-300 yards upstream from the present site, the second was in the center of the Minto Flats, the third was 200-300 yards downstream on the Tolovana from the present site (you can still see some old logs, etc.), the fourth on the Tanana River, and the fifth is the present site.²³

This information is substantiated by Olson, who commented on a former settlement known as "Cache" on Lake Minto, where platform caches with roofs constructed partially of sawed timber (therefore built after the traders arrived) were found. He also noted the nomadic nature of the early inhabitants, indicating that outside of the log winter houses, the Minto people would sometimes move every few days.²⁴

By the turn of the century the site known as Cache, at the confluence of a small river draining Lake Minto and Goldstream Creek, was the main settlement of the Minto people (see Figure 1). Two events were to change the lifestyle of the people dramatically; the discovery of gold in the Fairbanks area in 1902, and the introduction of the fishwheel at Chena in 1903. The fishwheel could provide hundreds of salmon daily during the seasonal runs, and the increased supply, cut, dried, and stored, would supply larger dog-teams which expanded the range of hunting and

²³Communication with Mr. Doug Jende, Public Health Service Sanitarian, Fairbanks, Alaska, March, 1973.

²⁴Olson, Minto, Alaska, pp. 13, 27.

trapping groups. As a result, the people began traveling regularly from Cache to the Tanana to fish. With the discovery of gold came the influx of thousands of miners bringing the opportunity to trade as well as the beginning of a transition from a purely subsistence way of life.

Olson documents the growth of the village of Nenana, considering that community to be the most significant factor in the eventual establishment of Old Minto as a river village. "Tortella Hill" at the confluence of the Tanana and the Nenana Rivers had been a center for the "gathering-up" of Tanana Valley inhabitants, and it was the logical place for a permanent village to form.

During Allen's reconnaissance in 1885, there was no village at the Nenana site as yet,²⁵ but by 1898, Brooks reported the two largest settlements on the river to be Cantwell (now Nenana) and another at the mouth of the Toklat River.²⁶ One year later Castner noted eight villages on the river, the largest being composed of twenty cabins at the present site of Nenana.²⁷ Just after the turn of the century a trading post and other "business establishments" were opened in the village, and while a few people travelled

²⁵Allen, Report on the Expedition, p. 451.

²⁶Brooks, A Reconnaissance, p. 491.

²⁷J. C. Castner, "Report of Lt. Castner," in Compilation of Narratives of Exploration in Alaska (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), p. 693.

from Cache to Fairbanks, Olson feels that primary contact took place at Nenana, Rampart, and Tanana.²⁸

In 1902, the telegraph line was constructed between Tanana and Nenana with one station listed as "Minto." The station was located on the north bank of the river opposite the mouth of Totchacket Slough, approximately ten miles upstream from the site of Old Minto. It was in operation until 1918. A winter mail route, with roadhouses along the trail, was also established along the line's route.

Nenana took on additional significance when an Episcopal Mission was established between 1905 and 1906, and then opened a school in 1907. Travelling missionaries would visit the scattered camps of the Indians in the area, but soon realized that they would have only minor influence on the population with such limited contact. As a result, they began to encourage parents to send their children to the mission school and Nenana became a second home for many Minto people who now began residing part of the time in Cache and part of the time in Nenana.²⁹

About the time Nenana was growing into a permanent community, a trading post was established on the Tanana. The river was now the center of activity in the area and in 1915, Chief Charlie built a single cabin approximately

²⁸Olson, Minto, Alaska, p. 129.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 129-32.

two miles upstream from the post at a location which was to evolve into Old Minto village.

Minto Village on the Tanana

Old Minto's initial location was said to have been selected "because it was closer to hunting and fishing sites."³⁰ In fact, hunting and fishing were still reported as "good" in 1929. It is more likely however, that Chief Charlie's cabin was simply located at a convenient spot on the river that suited his particular needs. The status and influence of the chief, even though lifestyles were changing, must have been a major factor in the migration of the people to that location, especially after the outbreak of Spanish Influenza in 1920 which took as high as a 60 percent death toll. It is also probable that migration was directly related to a desire to participate in the cash economy offered by selling wood to the steamboats using the river between Fairbanks, Nenana, Tanana, and other downriver villages as a result of the gold rush and the completion of the Alaska Railroad in 1923.

As the village grew, there was a transition from a strictly nomadic subsistence economy to a semi-permanent semi-subsistence way of life. The most common cash-making enterprise was that of cutting wood for the steamboats.³¹

³⁰Kozely, "Community Development Survey," p. 15.

³¹Stuck, Voyage on the Yukon, p. 271.

Stuck also reported the establishment of a fox farm in the village,³² however, there is no indication that this venture was successful and it is not mentioned again. Sufficient people had moved to the site by 1929 that the Episcopal Church decided to establish a full-time deacon there. The nomadic ways of the people lessened and the movement between Cache, Nenana, and Minto merged into two distinct communities, Nenana and Minto--Cache was abandoned.

By 1936 the population had increased to about ninety people and the Bureau of Indian Affairs established a Day School within the village. The opening of the school had the further effect of transforming the village into a more permanent community. To further solidify what had previously been administratively considered a "group of Indians having a common bond of living together in Minto Territory, Alaska," a Constitution and By-Laws were submitted and approved by the Department of the Interior on May 23, 1939. The Native Village of Minto resulted and was chartered as a federal corporation.³³

By 1940, most of the residents were "full-time" even though a few families were moving seasonally in and

³²Ibid., p. 272.

³³U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Corporate Charter of the Native Village of Minto, Alaska (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), pp. 1-2; and Constitution and By-Laws of the Native Village of Minto, Alaska, pp. 2-4.

out of the village.³⁴ Eleven families were still living in tents, but all of the others had log cabins. The village had by now reached the point where products of the white culture were no longer luxuries, but necessities. Guns, lumber, nails, ammunition, chicken wire (for fishwheels), windows, tools, etc., were now in demand and a village cooperative store was opened in 1944.³⁵ Kozely observed:

For years the people had wanted a cooperative, but lacked the capital to make the initial investment. Finally, in 1944, it received a rare offer to cut firewood to fuel riverboats. The entire village worked for three months cutting 1,060 cords of wood and put the proceeds from the sale into the store.³⁶

³⁴The conflict of continued nomadic subsistence vs sedentary village life is noted in the Minutes of the village business meeting for April 3, 1943: "Every man must take his family with him in the summer or pay another man before he leaves to guarantee help for wife and children." See footnote 36, infra.

³⁵Olson, Minto, Alaska, p. 172.

³⁶Kozely, "Community Survey," p. 45. There is confusion concerning the establishment of the village store. Minutes of various village business meetings indicate that the store had been established as early as 1942, and it was certainly in operation by 1944:

"It was agreed to cut logs and build a small cabin for a store. Each man in the village will be asked to give three days work at the beginning of March 19, 1942."

"The Council agrees to sell on credit to anyone who signs an order on his government check to be paid by the teacher when the check comes."

"Some men refused to do their part in the labor asked by the Council for a small store building . . . resolved that public work ordered by the Council for the general welfare is a tax on the members of the village and must be done by each able-bodied man or his paid substitute."

"A letter from the Juneau Office (BIA), dated June 18, 1943 suggested a change in the name of the village

World War II provided seasonal employment on the river and the railroad, but even with this source of income not much money was coming into the village. The village store continued to be, at least partially, supported by a "Poll Tax." Excerpts from the business meeting records indicate how a balance between subsistence and cash flow was maintained:³⁷

The Poll Tax for 1943 shall be two rats per person or \$2.50 cash, payable before June 10, 1943. . . . Rat price will be \$1.25 in the store and \$1.00 cash (4/3/43).

The Poll Tax fur is to be sold by the Council and be divided between the General Fund and the Store Fund (6/10/42).

C. W. Holland, teacher, reports that 39 people paid him 78 rats for Poll Tax. Teacher reports the sale book in the store shows \$298.85 in rats, cash and checks. There are 153 rats counted in the money above (6/8/42).

Prices for rats at the store shall start
 In Trade 1.50-1.75-2.00 bought to win or lose
 In Cash 1.25-1.50-1.75
 Mink Trade 8.00-10.00-12.00-14.00

store because 'Minto Village, Inc.' sounds like a profit organization."

Apparently the confusion stems from the fact that seven men did receive a contract to cut wood during the summer of 1944. It was at that time agreed "after certain amounts of wood have been cut the manager may give reasonable amounts of credit (or cash) to customers on their wood orders . . .," dated 2/4/44; and "I.O.U. vouchers on the store . . . to use when taking in wood orders, furs, big checks, etc. when cash is not plentiful," dated 3/24/44.

Minutes of Business Meeting (unpublished), University of Alaska Archives (University of Alaska, Fairbanks).

³⁷The reader's attention is directed to the disparity between Minto's "world" and events taking place in the modern world. The level of contact between the two cultures should have been a major consideration for the village relocation project which was to take place twenty-five years later.

By 1945, the river boats were almost all converted to deisel power and this source of income all but ended for the village. Following the war, acculturation--and dependence on the dominate white economy--proceeded rapidly. The assignment of two full-time missionaries (the deacon of 1920 stayed only three years) were important additions as the presence of missionaries in any village has been recognized as a major agent in culture change. Minto was now under the joint influence of the Episcopal Church and the Assembly of God.

Over the next several years, Minto "progressed" in a manner similar to other Native villages in Alaska who were in need of cash and cash goods, but who had little, if any, way to obtain them. From time to time, various agencies were able to fund needed improvements within these villages, however, aid was sporadic at best, and further served to create the expectant welfare condition so common in some parts of Alaska today. The following improvements to Minto are listed chronologically, and are annotated, to indicate the nature of change taking place as dependence on cash flow took an increasing hold on the village:

1952--A rough airstrip was constructed bringing some income to the village in the form of construction and maintenance wages.

1956--The cooperative store joined the Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association, known as ANICA. To assist the store, two loans were made: one for \$11,000 and one for \$20,000. By 1965,

the store's indebtedness was \$25,000, primarily as the result of the extension of large amounts of credit.³⁸

1960--A BIA classroom was constructed providing some temporary income.

1961-1966--Management of the store changed hands several times. In 1961, 1962, and 1963 it was decided to limit, even discontinue credit--but credit was extended even further.

1961--The State improved the airstrip under the Federal Aid to Airports program at a cost in excess of \$100,000.

1962--The State, through its Rural Development Administration, spent \$2,500 in the form of wages for village improvements which consisted of the construction of pathways, bridges, ditches, and boardwalks.

1962--Minto was severely flooded in 1962. Following the flood, plywood was supplied for the construction of family outhouses. Only the school had indoor plumbing.

1963--The village received \$6,000 from the State's Rural Development Program for the construction of a community building.

1964--Twenty-eight men listed their occupation as trapping, others had either seasonal employment (firefighting, railroad, etc.) or no income at all.

1964--The Rural Development Administration, again, spent \$2,500 in the village for improvements.

³⁸Early history indicates that the store had been an insurmountable challenge to the village as witnessed by various entries in the mentioned business meeting records:

"Teacher reports (name) has borrowed \$20.00 cash and \$3.00 credit without any security. . . . Storekeeper must not sell on credit or loan store money without good security" (2/5/43).

"The store manager must pay cash for what he buys from the store just as any other member of the corporation" (4/3/43).

"(name) used part of the store rats to pay his personal account . . . resolved that . . . must not use store money or furs for his own personal use" (10/1/43).

1964--A Native-owned private generator (7.5 KW) was purchased and electricity was sold (sporadically) at a flat rate of \$8.00 per month.

Caught between the conflicts of two cultures, Minto too developed the dual identity of not quite fitting into the present and not wanting to return to the past. This became apparent in the mid-sixties when one of the missionaries in the village indicated that, in his opinion, the village had gone "downhill" in the past few years. He noted that there had been a lessening of a spirit of industry and ambition not apparent in the community in earlier years.³⁹

Old Minto: 1967

Minto, as it existed just prior to the flood (Figure 3), contained a village population of approximately 200 persons; all but six were Native. There were approximately forty homes (Appendix A) constructed in a loose pattern along 2,500 feet of the river. The airstrip was located one-tenth of a mile northeast of the community and connected to it by the major "road" of the settlement. Scheduled air service delivered mail, passengers, and freight twice weekly from Fairbanks (when the runway was in usable condition). Two other trails ran in a north-south direction through the community. In addition to the homes, there was also a Community Center, two water-well buildings

³⁹Olson, Minto Alaska, p. 188.



Figure 3. Old Minto, Alaska, 1971.

(with one part-time usable well), and the cooperative store with a sizeable warehouse and cache. Non-Native housing was limited to the teachers residence (which also contained a classroom), a church, and a two-story mission house belonging to the Episcopal parish, a log hotel and a BIA cabin. The other four buildings were owned by the Assembly of God Church, whose minister was also the local postmaster. One of these mission buildings served as the community post office.

Every home in Minto was constructed of logs with no insulation other than cardboard on the interior walls. Heating was provided by wood stoves, supplemented, in some cases, by gas-fed kitchen stoves. Only six of the homes contained more than one room. The largest house has been measured at 22x22 feet. Most of the others averaged closer to 16x18. Furnishings in all rural villages of Alaska are spartan by modern standards and Minto was no exception; table, chairs, possibly a bench and one to four beds offer a typical view. Housing conditions reflected both the economic status of village Alaska as well as the psychological view toward a house. A home was viewed as a functional structure suited primarily to keeping inhabitants warm, dry, and protected from the climate. It was simply a place of shelter, suited for entertainment, the carrying out of household tasks, and for the protection of goods that might be damaged by the elements. During the existence of Old Minto housing had never been viewed as a status symbol.

The majority of homes were make-shift wired to receive electricity which was irregularly supplied by the privately-owned power plant (which had a history of excessive break-downs). Additionally, power from the small unit was not supplied between April and September, thereby eliminating radio and television during the "light months." The village water supply consisted of one usable well--solely dependent on the availability of power for the filling of the holding tanks. The water was discolored, rusty and reported to be contaminated. During the periods of no power, the river, snow and ice were used to meet village water requirements. Independent power sources were available to the mission homes and the school, however, this power was not available to the people of the village.

The village sewage system consisted of one chemical toilet at the school and individual privies, often over 100 feet from the homes. There was no sanitary land fill. Garbage and other refuse was either thrown into the river or burned on the ice.

The school system of the village consisted of the school building, originally run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but relinquished to the State of Alaska after the Statehood Act. Forty-two pupils were enrolled in grades 1-8, with another 22 students (grades 9-12) away from the village attending schools in other locations, such as Fairbanks.

Employment opportunities for the residents included hunting, fishing trapping, handicraft items, firefighting and sporadic employment on the Alaska Railroad or one of the barge lines running the Tanana River. Subsistence activities were centered on the river for fishing, the surrounding area for fur-bearers and berries, and in the area of Dunbar (see Figure 1) for hunting. A journey to the Dunbar hunting grounds required travel by canoe and included many portages. Moose killed there were stored in caches until after freeze-up when subsequent trips were made by dog team to retrieve the meat. Figures 4 through 19 offer a view of Old Minto as it existed in May, 1974.

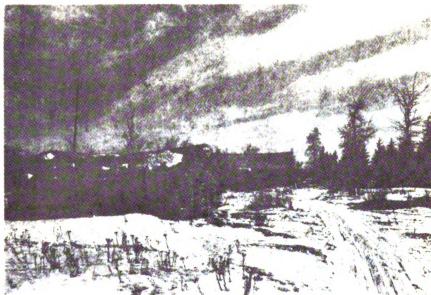


Figure 4. Dwelling and Community Hall (Background).



Figure 5. School Complex.

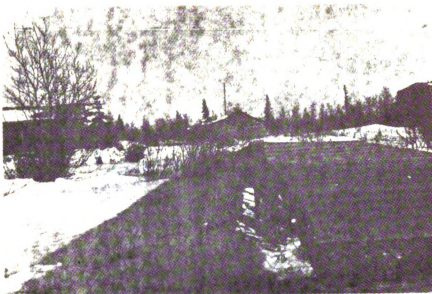


Figure 6. Boardwalk Bridge and Wellhouse (Right).



Figure 7. Northern Boardwalk Bridge and Residences.

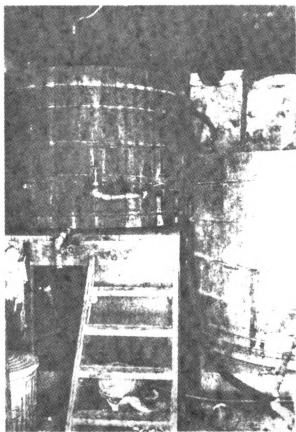


Figure 8. Interior, Community Wellhouse.



Figure 9. "Overnight" Cabin, Old Minto, April, 1974.



Figure 10. Typical Storage Cache.



Figure 11. Vandalized Church.

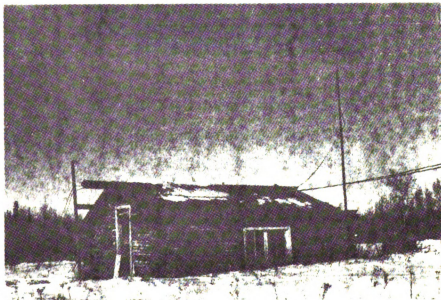


Figure 12. Old Minto Home with Television.



Figure 13. Desecrated Grave.

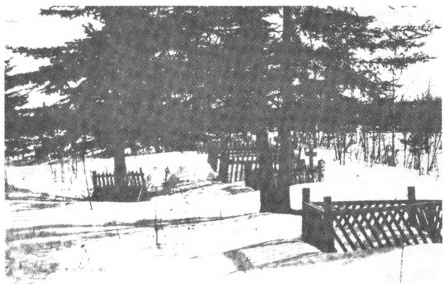


Figure 14. Community Cemetery, Old Minto.



Figure 15. Residences on Airport Trail.



Figure 16. Coffee Shop on the Tanana River.



Figure 17. Typical Street Scene.



Figure 18. Riverfront Complex, Upriver View.

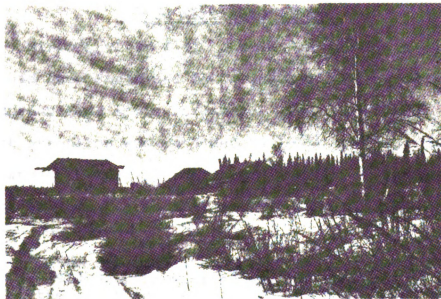


Figure 19. Riverfront Complex, Downriver View.

PART IV

VILLAGE RELOCATION RECONSTRUCTED

A reconstruction of events that took place during the planning, construction, and relocation phases of the Minto move reveals the inefficiency, lack of planning, duplication of effort, and lack of communication that existed from the onset of the project.

Documentation of the need for change, which lends support to the conclusions and recommendations offered in Part V, is presented in the following pages.

The Fairbanks Flood

Minto's river flat location on the Tanana historically has been subjected to periodic floodings as the river rose during each spring break-up. The first flood to attract attention was recorded in 1937; however, because of the newness of the village (established as a permanent feature as recently as 1916 or 1917,¹) and its small size,

¹Olson reported that the first cabin was built in 1915. In 1914 Sniffen visited all of the villages on the banks of the river and his report: The Indians of the Yukon and Tanana Valleys, does not mention Minto; had the village

it is doubtful that previous floodings would have attracted much attention from other than the indigenous population.

Severe flooding created havoc with the village in 1949, during the summer of 1951, again in 1962, and the last in 1967. National headlines were made in reference to the so-called "Fairbanks Flood" of August 14, 1967 and damage to that city overshadowed the plight of other small river-bank communities from all but those agencies specifically concerned with Native or rural affairs.

Effects of that flood on Minto have had a profound impact on that village right up to the current time. As a result of the high water, 23 of the 38 homes were under water and the village felt the full impact of adverse effects associated with the deterioration of health and sanitary conditions.² Olson described the flood this way:

On July 20, 1967, the river began to rise and within six days it was over its banks. Four houses had water in them, and there was enough water in the low area to require canoes for crossing. Such floods have become progressively worse as the river bank is cut

been present he could not have missed it. Files received from the Bureau of Indian Affairs indicate that the village was established in 1916 and Kozely's report generally agrees, using 1917.

²Records from the various agencies indicate discrepancy between the number of homes within the village. The number varies between 33 and 38. Visits to the site fail to clarify the differences because a number of buildings have been removed since the flooding. It is also quite possible that there were buildings standing, but not in use at the time of the disaster. Olson's map reproduced in Appendix A indicated 43 homes, of which 6 were vacant on June 1, 1967. Most important, at least 60 percent of the village was effected.

away at the upper end of the village. The flood which began on August 14, 1967, was somewhat higher and approximately 11 houses had water in them. The entire softball field was under several inches, but homes #10 to #3 were not flooded. The flood of 1962 was more severe.³

Since the origin of the village, the river has eroded the bank so that the housing area of 1937 has been completely cut away. Even though none of the surrounding land is very high, the people had retreated to whatever elevated ground was available. During the 1967 flood, the banks of the river were being destroyed at the rate of 4 to 6 inches daily. A low area running through the center of the village floods during every period of high water.

Many problems arose as a result of the floodings: sewage from the out-houses was spread over the area, base logs of the flooded homes were damaged weakening the entire structure, and the water supply became contaminated. Property damage was great. Further effects of the most recent flood resulted in the virtual elimination of the usual harvest of fish, berries, moose and other fur-bearing animals.

Aid was sent to the village in the form of food, clothing, bedding, parkas, sleeping bags, mattresses, and dog food (at the time of the flood, Minto's canine population was close to 400 animals). The Red Cross was responsible for donations which amounted to almost \$6,300.

³Olson, Minto, Alaska, p. 214.

The Rural Development Agency initiated "Operation Mainstream" to aid in the reconstruction of the village by receiving appropriations of \$50,000 for rebuilding flood damaged homes, future drainage, and village improvements. Ten thousand dollars was spent in 1967 and will be commented on in the following pages.

As the flood waters receded, the Bureau of Indian Affairs spent three days in the village assessing damages, which, in turn, resulted in a request for funds to "rehabilitate and upgrade." The same process was implemented in Nenana and Fairbanks.

Since the village had a history of flooding, and continued riverbank erosion presented a problem with no higher ground in the immediate area, some consideration was given to complete relocation of the entire village. Existing school facilities and the airstrip represented a sizeable investment (for the support agencies) and were a major consideration in the discussion of abandonment. Uncertain conditions in view of past floodings, a reported lack of firewood, high prices in the village store, lack of employment opportunities, and an increased dependency on a money economy caused further anxiety for the people. On April 10, 1968, the village voted unanimously to relocate, possibly to the north on the Tolovana River.⁴

⁴Tundra Times, Vol. 5, Number 118, p. 5.

Initial Moving Plans

Early in 1968, a moving committee was established and, with the support of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a meeting of various state and federal agencies was requested to meet with the village residents sometime in May. Prior to that, a petition (undated) to move the village was developed by the villagers:

We the people of Minto, hereby petition the Bureau of Indian Affairs for assistance in moving Minto from its present location to the area on the north side of Rock Island Lake or such other suitable location as may be agreed upon.

Minto's present location, being relatively isolated, being seasonally wet and annually flooded, is detrimental to our social, economic and healthful well-being. The present location is not conducive to improvement.

A new location, such as at Rock Island Lake, with abundant resources, road, river, and air access, and a dry and healthful environment, will allow us immediate returns in decent housing and long range benefits in regard to social and economic improvement.

Minto has a population of (blank), of whom 67 have signed this petition.

Over 75 percent of the qualified voters within the village signed the petition indicating their interest in moving the village from its present location. The petition was submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and within a week letters were being sent to "all interested agencies to participate in a meeting to discuss their problems." Further stating, " . . . people feel that any move should be well-planned and coordinated and they need the advice of the various representatives of agencies."

This initial involvement of a governmental agency stated that the prime reasons for an interest in moving were:

1. The present site is seasonally wet and floods each year, causing considerable damage to real and personal property and affecting the sanitation of the area.
2. There has been a steady decrease in the availability of game in the vicinity of the present village.
3. There appears to be a possibility of improved communication opportunities in other sites which are being considered.
4. The various land bills now under consideration may make it desirable and opportune at this time to consider movement now to enable townsite selection without dispute.
5. There is a definite need for improvement of housing and sanitation. If a move is to be made in the next short period of time, then these improvements, they feel, should be made at the new location.
6. They are aware that certain agencies are planning various improvements and they feel that these agencies should be made positively aware of their intent to move so that planning may be accomplished.⁵

The (then) Acting Superintendent (Fairbanks) for the Bureau of Indian Affairs can be quoted, " . . . there is no use in attempting to improve the dismal living situation there. This is what we hear from the residents of Minto. We can only agree," and "That Minto should be moved to livable ground where livable housing can be constructed is, again, undeniable . . . anything would be an improvement."⁶

⁵BIA Communication, April 17, 1968.

⁶BIA Communication, March 12, 1968.

The requested meeting was held on May 17, 1968. Nineteen agencies represented by thirty-three persons met with eleven delegates and an additional fourteen interested persons from the village to discuss the proposed relocation. Highlights of that meeting follow:⁷

Since the request for the meeting had been sent, an ice jam formed below the village and the entire area was again flooded. It was pointed out that since the village had been established, the river bank had eroded some 400 feet, continually forcing the residents to move further back into the swampy land near some small lakes in the area. They were now in the position of having their backs at the lakes, the river at their front door, swampy land underfoot, and no place to move. Additionally, permafrost lay two feet below the ground to a depth of 60 feet; eliminating any possibility of sewage facilities or cesspools. The community well was in extremely poor condition, in fact, contaminated. The general health conditions of the people was described as "poor." In the past vegetables, such as potatoes, cabbage, and other greens had been grown locally, but due to the deteriorating soil conditions all vegetables were now being flow in from Fairbanks. In addition, the region had been the area of declining wildlife. In general, residents had been leaving Minto, especially the

⁷BIA Summary of Meeting; concerning the relocation of the village of Minto, Alaska, May 17, 1968.

younger people, primarily because of the poor living conditions and the inability to continue living off the land.

Isolation was another factor to be considered. During break-up and freeze-up the village was totally cut-off from other areas. The airstrip became unusable, and dog teams and boats were unable to operate. A site with road access would be desired to have free contact with other communities. In fact, the village was one large family and it was pointed out that there was a need to encourage other people to establish homes at the new site.

In an attempt to remedy the current situation, some residents had already reviewed three sites for possible relocation. The areas had allegedly been viewed for advantages not available at the present location; good water and soil, better hunting, room for expansion and a favorable site for the building of another school and air-field. Of the three locations discussed, attention centered on one that was located on the Tolovana River approximately nine miles from the Elliott Highway. This would make construction of a road into the area feasible, there was river access and a suitable location for an airstrip as well as being located by a lake on higher ground.

Since the availability of the suggested sites had never been determined, the point of land acquisition was brought up. A Realty Officer from BIA indicated that he did not foresee problems in obtaining land once the

feasibility of a site had been determined. The attorney for the village further clarified points pertinent to land acquisition in an area that had been selected by the State. He, as well, did not indicate any concern over possible dispute. Apparently neither were aware that two months prior to the meeting, the Acting Superintendent, concerned with Minto's intent to move, had requested assistance from the BIA Area Director's Office in Juneau concerning an already existing inter-agency conflict:

The land in the various sites considered for the Minto move has been selected by the State of Alaska, but Tentative Approval has not been granted.

The land the village moves to should be surveyed, preferably prior to the move, and made available for a patent to a Townsite Trustee for deeding to the occupants. The only agency for this type of survey and land transfer is the Bureau of Land Management. The State of Alaska has no such provisions.

The Bureau of Land Management is adamant in refusing to accept land back from the state solely to survey the land for the Natives. This Bureau of Land Management policy is stated to be based on whether the state or BLM has the responsibility for administering the land in question. Fear was expressed as to setting precedents. The Native's social and economic welfare, the economic improvement to the state, or achievement of overall federal programs concerning the Natives was given little consideration. Such a stand by the Bureau of Land Management appears to be in direct conflict with the stated policy of the Secretary of the Interior as concerns his intent to aid all Alaska Natives in all aspects. It further does not follow the expressions of the President in his recent speech to Congress concerning his wishes to assist all American Indians toward full participation.

The Bureau of Land Management has the authority and the means to accept, survey, and transfer the land for the new Townsites. It would appear that they also have

the directives from the Secretary and the President to do this. At this point however, further negotiation looks futile . . .⁸

BLM representatives attending the meeting were either unaware of this conflict or elected to remain silent at that time.

A member of the State Highway Department stated that while an access road was possible, there were then no funds available for a road in that area and the earliest any action could be expected would be when the next Highway Program was submitted to the State Legislature. If money were approved, a rough road could be constructed the summer following funding, probably in two or three years. If a permanent road were constructed, costs would be in the neighborhood of \$35,000, and could run as high as \$75,000 per mile. He also cautioned that the Elliott Highway was not open during the winter. From October 15 to April 15 the existing highway was not maintained, primarily as a result of adverse climatic conditions and extremely high maintenance costs. This would not give Minto the year-round access to Fairbanks and other areas that they had deemed a major factor. The highway department did offer assistance in determining the feasibility of proposed locations; their geologists and engineers would be assigned to study ground conditions from aerial photographs, maps, and so forth, in what would appear to be a logical first

⁸BIA Communication, April 12, 1968.

step before considering other factors. At this point the group agreed that not enough information was available to make a decision on site selection. As a result, a "Site Selection Committee" was formed.⁹ Members of that committee included representatives from the State Highway Department (Chairman), the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, H.E.W.'s Public Health Service, the Federal Aviation Administration, the State Division of Aviation, the State Division of Water Pollution and Control, and the Alaska State Housing Authority along with the attorney for Minto village and other members of the Minto Townsite Committee. It was felt that a report and recommendations could be provided by the end of June, six weeks hence.

Construction of an airstrip at a new site was discussed and it was made clear that the present airstrip was only six years old and had been constructed at a cost in excess of \$100,000 (which was then the average figure for 2,500 foot facilities). Since other villages were not presently being served with any sort of accommodation, a field for New Minto would have to be programmed on a

⁹There is a variation in the record at this point; one BIA report indicates that the committee was formed at the suggestion of, and by, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, while another report indicates that the committee was appointed by the Council of Minto with the concurrence of the agencies involved. The fact that Native involvement in the selection of this committee was documented early in the negotiations will become significant as the relocation details evolve.

priority basis with sixty-five other villages then in need of facilities.

Officials from the Public Health Service agreed that whatever the village decided, there would be a continuation of health service at the present village and at any new location that might be selected. A new clinic (none then existed) had been planned for construction during the coming summer. Since plans called for a pre-fabricated building, PHS indicated that they would continue with those plans and then move the building to the new site when appropriate. PHS also commented that while running water would be an ultimate goal, a central supply of good quality water would be all that could be hoped for in the immediate future. However, they would indicate to the village what could be done in the way of water, sewers and waste disposal once a new location was firmly established. The only problem would be the degree of involvement they would be able to offer immediately, since under the present funding system, no major project would be possible until fiscal year 1970-1971.

One of the agency reports indicates, in fact:

The villagers understand that it is going to take considerable time and coordination before any final plan can be established, and that if financial assistance is given by any agency or agencies it will have to be programmed a year or more in advance. They are hopeful that something will come out of this meeting which would show them the direction they should be going. It was emphasised that there must be concerted agreement among the residents of Minto and that this is something they all want and once a definite plan is

established and a coordinated plan developed, the village will be prepared to move in total. The delegates stated their feelings that they expressed the consensus of the village that once they had moved to a new and better location, there would be no desire for any to remain behind, or move back to the previous location.¹⁰

The members thus assured the agencies present that all of the residents had been contacted and all planned to move; two villages would not be the end result.

A representative from the State Department of Education mentioned that possibly the State would make a contribution so that the school would be included in any future water supply system. He stated further, that whatever location was chosen the school would follow the village, even if only temporary facilities were provided initially. The community was assured that if they moved during the summer, there would be a school that fall. If a project did develop to provide water and power the school would buy service; providing the rates were equitable. There was additional discussion on the location of a school in the new village as well as the possibility that the present school might be moved too if it were at all feasible. It was still considered an adequate structure even though some of the villagers stressed the need for a new building because of heating problems during the colder months.

¹⁰BIA, Summary of Meeting, p. 4.

Even though the people indicated that they would prefer to relocate to an area where they would have the benefits of subsistence living as in the past, a point was made that they would also have to give thought to the need of planning for a cash economy. That is, to take into account such things as power, water, sewage, and school facilities and the costs involved in running them. A representative from the Alaska State Housing Authority mentioned that his agency worked closely with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and could obtain grants for such planning. The state supervisor for the Farmers Home Administration stated that his agency assisted people in rural areas, and there were several ways in which low-income housing could be made available, but income potential was a definite factor to be considered. His recommendation was that the people consider relocation to an area where their level on income would be enhanced. Certainly if they expected to enjoy the benefits of running water, electricity, sewers, a clinic and a new school, they should plan on how they were going to pay for them.¹¹

ASHA's Remote Housing Program was mentioned. The state had just authorized \$1,000,000 and applications

¹¹Kozely's study had previously indicated that the income from the village would average only about \$3,000 per family, based on income from wages (fire-fighting, railroad, barges, etc.), Neighborhood Youth Corp employment, the sale of furs and state and federal welfare payments.

could be submitted any time, however, no construction would be scheduled until the following season. The Superintendent of the Fairbanks Agency (BIA) indicated that their request for emergency flood relief funds, while not yet received, would not necessarily have to be applied to homes at the present site. They might better be used in replacing those structures at a new location. He also mentioned the BIA Housing Program, but stated that funds had already been committed and were, at best, limited. Further, Congress had stipulated that two-thirds of the available funds had to be used for rehabilitation of existing homes and only one-third for new homes. In any case, limitations on the amount available to an individual home would not meet the needs of Minto. Then too, a request for funds for the village could not be made until the following fiscal year (1970-1971) and then only a small amount could be expected since Alaskan allocations had to be split between all five BIA agencies in the state.

Members of the Native delegation expressed concern as to how they could earn a living while they were occupied building homes. Their income was meager, and summer construction would interfere with subsistence fishing and employment opportunities such as fire-fighting. The Farmers Home Administration representative mentioned that their policy would allow loans only for construction of homes and not for purposes of payroll, but perhaps the Office of Economic Opportunity, through the Rural Development

Agency could provide funds for wages as well as community buildings other than homes.

Minto's sawmill was suggested as a possible source of income as well as material for homes. The villagers indicated that they were willing to put up their own buildings, but also wished to upgrade any new community to an acceptable modern standard. They felt the sawmill was capable of providing lumber for framing, but they would need additional advice on construction methods as well as financial assistance for providing doors, windows, hardware, insulation, and roofing. They indicated also that they would like to begin the community with approximately 40 two to three-room houses, large enough for families, but small enough to heat economically. At this point one representative present indicated that he had read a study which had mentioned that an 800 foot square house would cost approximately \$1,500 or \$60,000 for the entire village.

There was some additional discussion concerning the feasibility of moving the village sawmill to a new location and then cutting logs, or leaving it at the present site and barging lumber to a new location. It was decided that the difficulty of moving the mill and building a barge would offset any advantages gained by moving it to a new site. Further, it might be possible to move it overland on skids after freeze-up.

Employment was discussed and several ideas were offered on ways in which Minto might establish a cash

economy. One of the most practical for the given moment was offered by the BIA Superintendent; to consider the use of the existing sawmill for producing logs on a commercial basis, assuming that there would be a ready market for logs in Fairbanks, Nenana, and other locations damaged by flood waters. It was felt that this venture could produce revenue that would assist the village in their moving plans.¹²

Other considerations were that the villagers might involve themselves in tourism. The possibility of establishing guide services for duck hunters and big game hunting was also discussed, as was the possibility of renting and operating boats for hunting and fishing in the area.

Neighborhood Youth Corp (NYC) representatives from the Governor's Office announced that their "Operation Mainstream" project had been funded up to \$20,000 to assist with employment for the villagers and that \$5,000 was available immediately. There was one stipulation, however, the money had to be used immediately--definitely committed by mid-June for expenditure during the summer. It was suggested that the money be used to move the sawmill to a new site, then spending the summer gathering the logs for construction and setting up a camp with NYC youth doing the work. Since a new site had not yet been established

¹²In fact, a feasibility study had already been completed by the University of Alaska at the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This study was known to both the local BIA personnel and a number of the residents of Minto. See Footnote 9, Part III, supra.

and the condition of the sawmill, after going through two floodings, was questionable, it was felt that this idea might be premature. Someone else suggested that if the sawmill were operable, the logs and lumber could be sawed at the present location and later moved when a new site had been established. No conclusion was reached, but the general feeling was that "something could be planned that would take advantage of the available funding and that the main thing was for the people to show good intentions and a willingness to work toward a common goal."¹³

BIA's Housing Officer mentioned that the village of Shageluk had relocated a number of years earlier and had encountered "problems" even though their move had been "fairly well coordinated." In fact, the move had taken four or five years and some of the homes were not yet complete. Apparently the primary problem had been that materials were furnished, but there was no available money to build the homes or pay for the labor.

None of the agencies represented at this meeting, other than NYC, appeared to have any ready cash and were totally dependent on state or federal appropriations which would not be available until 1969 or 1970, possibly later in some cases. All of the agencies involved however, did pledge support and indicated that they would provide aid if and when funds became available. At this stage it was

¹³BIA, Summary of Meeting, p. 8.

decided that much had to be learned, specific plans had to be developed, and financing would have to be arranged before much else could be accomplished. With this in mind it appeared that a move would not be made until the summer of 1969 at the earliest. In concluding the meeting, it was announced that the Fairbanks Agency was expecting an addition of a Community Development Specialist with a staff to work on just such problems. Someone would be able to assist Minto in making detailed plans after all available information had been gathered. It was felt that a report could be available to all interested agencies by the end of the year. Further, if it were agreeable with the people of Minto, one person would be assigned to work with the village as plans developed.

A visiting Community Development Specialist indicated in his report of the meeting,

. . . there was no question left in the minds of anyone in attendance that the people of Minto were desirous of moving to a new location. A number of them stated that they would like all of the help available to them, but if such help is not forthcoming, they would move on their own.¹⁴

Changing Land Status

Since Alaska was then in a period of conflict between State selection and Native claim to the land, it is appropriate here to briefly sketch a history of the Native land claim movement, particularly as it affected Minto

¹⁴BIA Memorandum, May 20, 1968.

Oil activity (1961) in the adjacent Nenanan basin, of which Minto flats is structurally a part, prompted the State of Alaska to apply for most of the lands within the flats; lands which the Minto people "have always used." The State's selections were in accordance with the provisions of the Alaska Statehood Act of 1958,¹⁵ but the immediate response from all over the state was a variety of infringement protests by the Native population. As a result of these protests, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began filing formal complaints on behalf of various Native groups, including Minto. The legal description filed as a result of the so-called "Minto Protest" reflects the Native view of land use:

Beginning at Dunbar at approximately Latitude 64 45'30" and Longitude 148 45' thence NNE approximately 35 miles to a point at approximately Latitude 65 13'30" and Longitude 148 17', thence NW approximately 25 miles to a point on the west Fork River at approximately Latitude 65 27'15" and Longitude 148 57', thence following the West Fork upstream approximately 12.5 miles to the confluence of Starvation Creek past its terminus in the same SW direction approximately 20 miles to a point at approximately Latitude 65 11' and Longitude 149 57', thence SE approximately 13 miles to the Tolovana River at approximately Latitude 64 59' and Longitude 149 41'30", thence following the Tolovana River in a SSW direction approximately 12 miles to its confluence with the Tanana River, thence following the Tanana River downstream approximately eight miles to the confluence with the Kantishna River, thence following the Kantishna River upstream approximately 10 miles to a point approximately at Latitude 64 38' and Longitude 150 2', thence ENE approximately 38 miles to Dunbar and the point of beginning, approximately 1,124,000 acres.

¹⁵Public Law 85-508, Alaska Statehood Act, 85 Congress, H.R. 7999, July 7, 1958 (72 Stat. 339).

Figure 20 delineates for comparative purposes, Olson's "area of ethnic use" (see Part III), the "Protest," area, and the area which has been withdrawn for selection by Minto as a result of the settlement of the Alaska Native land claims in 1971.¹⁶

During the oil activity, the Alaska State Division of Lands (Forestry Branch) conducted a "reconnaissance survey" of the area (1962) and later disclosed plans to convert Minto Flats into a recreation area. The plan included an access road from Fairbanks which was intended to "open-up the area" (but not be extended to the village itself). The community was not consulted in the matter and learned of the project through the news media.¹⁷ February and March, 1963 issues of the Tundra Times document the

¹⁶Section 11 of the Act withdrew approximately twenty-five townships from around each qualified village for possible selection. Selection acreage for village corporations is to be based upon the number of Native enrollees to each qualified village as determined by the BIA certified roll. Minto, with an enrollment of 300 persons, is entitled to select 115,200 acres within the withdrawal. Their selection must be "reasonably compact and contiguous." The shaded area of Figure 20 represents Minto's tentative selection as of May, 1974.

See also: Public Law 92-203, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 92 Congress, H.R. 10367, December 18, 1971 (85 Stat. 688).

¹⁷There had already been \$25,000 of Federal-State matching funds appropriated for the road before the Minto people were aware of its proposed construction.

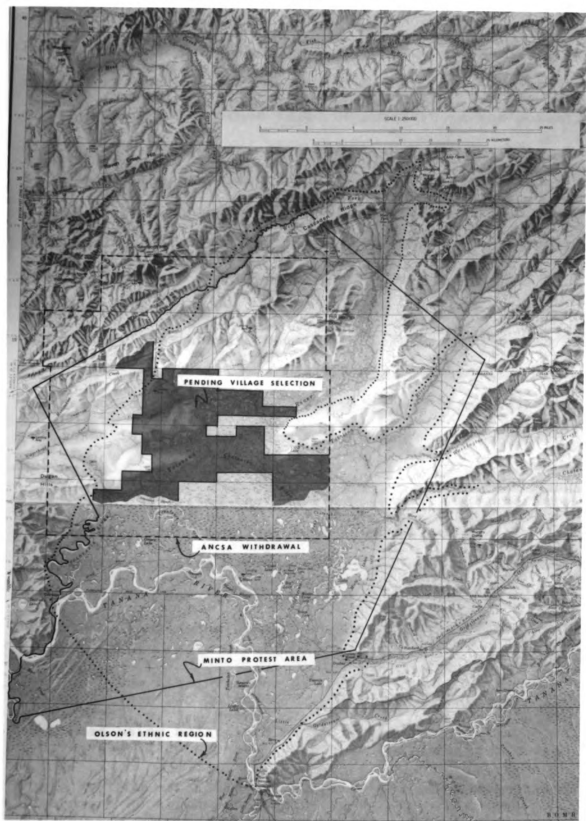


Figure 20. Native Land Claims and Final Settlement Pending Under the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act.

Native position regarding the encroachment of the State onto their lands.¹⁸

There was another surge of interest in the potential of the flats in 1963 and 1964 when timber stands were selected by the State as "forest lands" even though the Bureau of Land Management managed the land pending outcome of the "Protest" which was then in the hands of the Interior Department. When the state indicated timber interest in the area, the Bureau of Indian Affairs commissioned the Institute of Business, Economic and Government Research¹⁹ to conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of a Native-operated sawmill near the village. That study was published in 1965 with a companion community development survey.²⁰

In June, 1965 the community learned that the Bureau of Land Management had continued to grant land in the flats to private interests despite their 1961 claim. More than thirty oil and gas leases had been granted and the University of Alaska had obtained title to two sections of

¹⁸See also: Theodor B. Hetzel, "Alaskan Indians Caught Between Two Cultures," Indian Truth (September, 1962), 40:3, p. 2. Hetzel stated, ". . . Minto's object to a road being built into their territory" and "the Natives had filed repeated claims to the land in question."

¹⁹Now named the Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska.

²⁰Kearns and Kozely, Resource Analysis of Minto Flats, Alaska, Part 2, pp. 1-110.

"recreational" land near Minto Lakes. The village lost the tracts by forfeit by failing to exercise their rights of appeal within the allotted time. They claim never to have been advised of the pending grants.

Again in 1963, Minto learned that BLM, when registering their protest of 1961, had reduced their claim by 93,000 acres relying instead on another map drawn by a Minto resident ten years earlier.

As a result of snowballing Native land claims, the entire state was virtually under seige by 1968. To further complicate matters a number of claims overlapped and more land than existed within the entire state had been claimed by the Native population. On the basis of these claims, the Bureau of Land Management (since 1966) refused to process mineral lease offers or state land selections that might be clouded by a Native claim. In 1969, Secretary of the Interior Udall withdrew all "unappropriated and unreserved" federal lands from state selection creating what became known as the "Alaska Land Freeze."²¹ In addition, the federal courts indicated that a history of Native use and occupancy could remove land from the classification of "vacant, unappropriated public domain" and therefore, from subsequent selection by the state. The matter of the Alaska Native land claims has been settled, but the

²¹Public Land Order 4582, "Withdrawal of Unreserved Lands," as published in 34 Federal Register 1025, January 23, 1969.

complicated and time-consuming process of implementing the provisions of the Act, selecting the land, recording the selections, etc., is only beginning. The effect of the land claims issue and its settlement have had and will continue to have a great effect on the people and the village of Minto. The dispute had its origin resulting from inaction of Congress. Alaska claimed the Minto Flats under provisions of the 1958 Statehood Act which authorized the newly founded state to select over 103 million acres of land from the public domain. Minto contended that the lands were subject to aboriginal claim. Congress, in fact, did recognize, in the Alaska Organic Act of 1884, and again in the Statehood Act, Native rights to the land but failed to determine these rights or to determine a means of conveying title until the statewide claims settlement of 1971.

The Process of Site Selection

Returning to the process of site selection (p. 99); Committee members selected to review sites for the proposed relocation submitted their report and recommendations the following summer.²² That report indicated that of nine agencies requested to sit on the committee only five did in fact participate: the State Department of Highways, the State Division of Aviation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Public Health Service. There is no indication that

²² Sometime after July 26, 1968.

members of the "Minto Townsite Committee" or the attorney for the community participated. In fact, as will be shown, the entire effort devoted to this phase of the planning process was futile--the site had already been selected by the village!

Totally the site selection committee reviewed four areas; three as directed by comments made during the May meeting, and one additional that came to the attention of the committee chairman as a result of later conversations with the State Division of Lands Office in Fairbanks when they learned that a fourth area was also being considered "by certain individuals." The village council had indicated that they would consider any site selection suggestion, limited by three criteria: (1) a southern exposure, (2) water access to the Tanana River, and (3) the possibility of future road construction to connect with the present highway system.

In an effort to expedite that report, the chairman had forwarded each member of the committee a set of U.S.G.S. topographic maps of the Minto flats area upon which he had noted the four suggested areas. He requested recommendations concerning site feasibility as might be influenced by the reviewer's knowledge of problems that could be encountered in actual field work. A final report was later compiled from the replies received. Three of the tentative areas were visited personally by members of two agencies; Public Health Service and the State Department of

Highways. The fourth area was reviewed by only the Department of Highways.

Final recommendations contained a description of the sites investigated including comments on the probability of a good water supply, the apparent presence (or absence) of permafrost and the suitability of the area for airstrip and road construction. Each site observed met the criteria indicated by the village council. Two of the potential areas were discouraged as not meeting the needs of the village and the shortcoming of another were pointed out:

During stages of low water, we feel that access to the Tolovana River may be difficult from the tentative village site unless causeways or trestles are built from the high ground to the river proper. . . . Our thinking is contrary to the thoughts expressed by the Natives of the village of Minto.²³

The fourth site, the one being considered "by certain individuals" and not on the original list, was presented as the one being the "most suitable site for the relocation of Minto village."²⁴

On July 26, 1968 the Bureau of Indian Affairs again met with the village and discussed the general nature of what they must do within the framework of working with other agencies. It was suggested that they develop a written plan indicating their needs, how they proposed to meet those needs, and then to submit this document to the

²³Report of the Advisory Committee on Relocation of Minto Village, undated, p. 2.

²⁴Ibid., p. 4.

various agencies; in turn, requesting a coordinated and comprehensive plan of action from each agency involved.

Needed school facilities were discussed as was the proposed PHS clinic scheduled to be built that summer. Previous conversations between BIA officials and the State Department of Education had determined that the present school building could not be moved to a new site, but that portable classroom units would be provided. It was also suggested at this time that the new clinic might best serve if it were delayed until spring (1969) and then be constructed at the new site. This information was passed on to the village as the BIA was successful in obtaining a letter from the village council, stating that it was their desire that the Public Health Service wait until the move to the new townsite was complete before construction commenced. This letter was subsequently passed on to PHS for their files, and complied with even though contrary to recommendations within their own agency. One PHS representative who had attended the initial relocation meeting had indicated that in his opinion the pending move would become complicated and probably take a number of years to complete. His recommendation was that the proposed clinic be built as planned because the need for adequate health service was immediate. The building could be constructed in a manner that later movement would be possible.²⁵

²⁵PHS communication, April 29, 1968.

In a later, undated, BIA report (written in early August), it was pointed out that while the chairman of the site selection committee was in the process of preparing the final draft of his report, funds had been provided by the Neighborhood Youth Corp through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) for approximately \$15,000 to be used for brush clearing at a new site. That report stated, "Acting on the presumption that it will be to their advantage to move, and probably to the Number One site, that with the listed disadvantages, the Council of Minto has commenced site clearance." The fact that the site selection committee's report had been expected by the end of June is academic since the selection had proceeded--without the site selection committee! Minto was in the process of moving.

Planning Processes

Minto's village council had been directed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to layout a townsite, make arrangements to get a transfer of land from the state or Bureau of Land Management, whichever the case might be, and to make some determination as to how they might be provided with electricity, water and waste disposal. In return the council asked that the BIA contact PHS to obtain technical advice from their field sanitarian. This resulted in the filing of an application for water and sanitation grants

through the Public Health Service under PL 86-121.²⁶ They also filed an application for consideration for ASHA's Alaska Remote Housing Program and began an enquiry concerning service under the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative program.

BIA officials felt that the village would submit the requested written plan to the various agencies by the end of August and they could then use the coming winter to negotiate for materials and cut the necessary logs (it was estimated that 4,000 would be required) with actual construction beginning in mid-May. Hopefully all construction would be completed so that the village could relocate that fall.

By this time funds had been appropriated for the "repair and rehabilitation" of the flood-damaged homes. Totally \$424,000 had been scheduled to meet the needs of Fairbanks, Nenana, and Minto. Of that amount, \$44,000 (previously mentioned as \$38,000) had been allocated to the village.²⁷ As mentioned during the April meeting, it

²⁶Public Law 86-121, Surgeon General--Indian Sanitation Facilities, 59 USC 1963, July 30, 1959 (73 Stat. 268).

²⁷Records relating to the funds appropriated for the Minto project varies with different reports over time. In a review of fund distribution taken in 1971, one official indicated that a total of \$50,484 was initially received. That amount was reduced by \$22,000 with the consent of the village council, to meet other pressing rehabilitation needs in Fairbanks and Nenana. Subsequent funding was apparently promised the village if they agreed to the transfer of funds.

was assumed that these funds could be used to purchase supplementary items rather than actually repair the damaged homes in the old village. By now BIA was under the impression that the village sawmill (on loan from BIA) would be used to produce logs for the construction of the new community. Additionally, the Superintendent indicated that he was taking steps to obtain an additional \$25,000 to supplement the allocated funds, since that amount would not be adequate for the construction of all of the homes required. The total need for construction costs and materials was estimated at \$72,000. He had also taken the initiative in an attempt to locate surplus equipment, the goal being two "cats" and several trucks. One bonus to come from this search was the acquisition of two 100KW generators. Plans were made to repair and rebuild these units during the coming winter and then deliver them to the construction site the following summer. As well as being a source of power for the village it was felt that the proposed health clinic and the school would have access to the power on a contract basis with the community. The generators would also serve to provide training for selected members of the community in operation and maintenance.

A medium-sized bulldozer was dispatched to the site by the BIA to begin roughing out a road from the Manley Hot Springs road to the site. This was to provide a means of year-round transportation to the village assuming the road,

up to the point where the tractor took its initial cut, could be kept open by the State Department of Highways. The Highway Department had indicated to the Bureau of Indian Affairs that they would consider keeping the road open for a longer period of time, possibly on a year-round basis, as soon as evidence of need arose and funding became available, especially if a sufficient number of people would be served.

By October, the anticipated \$72,000 had been reduced to \$54,000, again for the "repair and restoration" of damaged dwellings. BIA officials indicated, however, that they were willing to bend the stipulations of the authorization "if the people of Minto were prepared to participate in a self-help type program."²⁸ Feelings were that more positive benefits could be realized by the entire community if aid were extended so that money could be put into a totally new village rather than repair only damaged homes. The quoted correspondence goes on to state, " . . . as long as we could observe and report the completion of twenty-four housing units, our Area Office would be satisfied and any savings they might make through the self-help effort might be utilized in the procurement of additional materials for other members of the community needing housing." It was felt that this allocation would be adequate for the basic materials required for forty homes. Perhaps not enough

²⁸BIA correspondence, October 11, 1968.

attention was given to another BIA memorandum (subsequently dated December 12, 1968) in which a member of the Alaska State Housing Authority was quoted as saying that their experience in the past had been that it took \$56,000 for twenty-two homes during the Grayling relocation. That village also provided their own logs from local sources. At this point a program was proceeding that advocated the construction of a forty home community on the basis of less than \$1,300 per home--less than half the known required capital proven necessary by previous experience.²⁹

Minto's council now indicated that they would not send crews to the site to cut logs until early spring because that was a time when they could be peeled most readily and also be available for construction. This was apparently agreeable with the Bureau of Indian Affairs as their plans were then modified to contract with the community to have the sawmill moved during the winter and to help them reestablish it once moved. It was still planned that initial construction would begin in mid-May with relocation completed by the end of October.

Part of the plan for self-help was that the village must carefully lay out their needs and then discuss them on an individual basis with each agency, especially where problems might arise in that agency's particular field.

²⁹If any of the personnel were aware of additional funds to be later provided, no mention of it as yet was indicated in the available records.

With knowledge that a move such as this would require considerable pre-planning, arrangements were made for the Tribal Operations Officer (BIA) to spend time at the village assisting with the development of a plan indicating how the village and the various agencies would interact.³⁰ Each agency was to be dealt with individually, however, since BIA was vitally involved in the planning process as well as funding a considerable amount of money, they made it clear that they were to participate in all of the meetings as well as to act as the coordinator between village and agency meetings.

On November 22, 1968, there was a meeting in the village between the village council and officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Alaska State Housing Authority and the Public Health Service. It was pointed out at this time that ASHA did not have funds from which they could provide aid, but that they had gained considerable experience during a previous relocation project (Holikachuk to Grayling) and they would be able to offer technical advice from which Minto could benefit. Further, the Remote Housing Committee would meet during mid-January to select villages to be included in the Alaska Remote Housing Program (Minto had applied three weeks previously). The village council indicated that they would like to meet with ASHA again,

³⁰The Community Development Specialist mentioned previously did not materialize.

after that meeting. They also supplied ASHA with a map and layout of the new townsite as it had been drafted by the council. ASHA indicated that they would make and distribute copies to the appropriate parties.³¹

A representative from PHS, Office of Environmental Health indicated that they would be willing to put a well in during the coming summer, but that the remaining sanitary facilities would have to wait until sometime during 1970. There had been a rumor in the village that a charge of \$60 would be assessed for each home tied to the system once it became operational. It was stated that the original homes in the townsite need only agree to keep the homes heated and take care of the property (toilets, etc.). As additional homes are built, the new residents would have to pay for the materials required to tie into the system, and that might amount to \$60.

PHS also stated that there would be a need to determine if permafrost were present as the system of pipes would be buried and sewage treatment facilities would require a lagoon. It was noted that the proposed health clinic would cost approximately \$100,000 and therefore, PHS required absolute assurance that the move was definite and the townsite conclusive. Another meeting was planned for January when the council indicated that they would then

³¹A copy of that map is provided in Appendix B.

like to meet with the State Departments of Highways and Aviation.

On December 3, 1968, the village council submitted the requested village relocation plan (expected in August) to the Superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Fifty copies were prepared for distribution and plans were made for further meetings to discuss the next phase of the planning process. Copies of the "plan" were distributed early in 1969 to "All Interested Federal and State Agencies" with a cover letter cautioning the recipients, "The attached plans prepared by Minto are not as complete or detailed as they could be, but its theirs." The letter further indicated that each of the agencies who had attended the May, 1968 meeting would be invited to Minto for an individual meeting to further clarify whatever assistance they could provide at the time of the move as well as for immediate needs of the village.³²

Native Dissent

As early as November there had been undertones that the village was not now 100 percent in favor of the impending move. This became subtly apparent when visiting PHS officials began stressing the need for action; "once

³²The village version of the moving plan as well as a BIA attachment to the cover letter, entitled; "Planning Checkpoints, Village Development" are included in Appendix B. This is the only plan known to exist, Native, agency, or otherwise.

you make a definite decision to move . . . we must know if the moving is definite. . . . The people of Minto need to decide where they are planning to build." The above comments were made in regard to sanitation at the new site as well as to the construction of the proposed clinic, a matter previously thought to have been resolved. The village had requested that a temporary clinic be established in Old Minto until the move was completed, but that request was denied.

During the winter the attitude of a number of the villagers became apathetic, and in some cases hostile, toward the proposed move. There is no record, other than rumor, of why this change of attitude came about.³³ A report entitled, Minto Field Trip written by the Tribal Relations Officer on April 25, 1969 clearly indicated that the situation was deteriorating. From this point on there is recorded disenchantment from both Native and agency points of view. The first documented differences concern the road being roughed out between the selected site and the existing state system. The cat that had been dispatched the previous August had accomplished little. Apparently a new problem involved whether or not the road was to be

³³Enough written material exists that it would be possible to document the change of attitude mentioned. For the purposes of this report it is only necessary to indicate that the time lag between request and action resulted in changing priorities for a portion of the village residents.

built over the route the village thought best or whether it was to be constructed according to the recommendations offered by engineers employed by the state. A solution became apparent when it was indicated rather strongly that both BIA and state road funds had been committed in the construction of the road, consequently the work would be completed by meeting the requirements and specifications of the engineers--especially if the village expected future maintenance. The route now being agreed upon resulted in a five-man Native crew being dispatched to leave for the new site that week. Two would operate the tractor and the other three would do hand brushing. BIA offered to provide the crew with food and surplus clothing, if required. It was stressed that timing was of essence because materials were scheduled to arrive the following month and it would be important to get them into the village as soon as possible.

Further reluctance to begin work on the road was now attributed to a rumor that the tractor they were using (on loan) was to be moved to the village of Nulato. BIA neither confirmed nor denied this, indicating only that the existing or another piece of machinery would be available to the village within a week or so to replace the one that might be moved. The agency point of view stressed that the most important thing would be to make the best possible use of the equipment that was then available at the moment.

A representative from the Rural Development Agency (RDA) (funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity) explained that funds from his agency could be paid as wages for everything other than a person building his own individual home. Additionally, some of the RDA funds could be used for purchasing fuel to operate equipment being used for construction of the road, for clearing ground at the community site, or at the proposed airstrip. The tractor operators would receive wages from these funds--and the response was immediate!

In view of the lukewarm attitude of the people in regard to the initiation of relocation activities, it was pointed out to the village that unless all of the residents agreed to relocate, and unless work commenced that summer, the RDA/OEO funds could not be made available. The Bureau of Indian Affairs also indicated that unless positive action were not soon forthcoming they would have to do one of two things; repair the homes that were affected by the flood over twenty months ago, or, if they chose not to start work that summer, they would be forced to return the "flood money" to the U.S. Treasury. At this point members of the village were advised that ASHA had approved their loan application and Minto had been recommended to receive \$119,000 (later indicated as \$90,000). This would make possible seventeen new homes under the ASHA-sponsored program. The village was advised that of the 110 communities who had made application, Minto was one of ten selected

to receive funds only because they were moving. If they did not intend to move, ASHA would take the money to aid another village which had shown a desire to work together as a whole community. Further, the funds were a "one-shot-deal," once aid was received there was little likelihood that it would be extended again.

Earlier (in April) the Alaska State Housing Authority had taken family applications from those people who were interested in receiving housing assistance. The program is said to have been clearly explained, with emphasis placed on the mutual self-help concept of assistance. Under the program, the maximum amount that could be borrowed was \$7,500 for any one house. This led to an alledged situation where unless the seventeen families, who had indicated a desire for a \$7,500 home, decided to borrow less, the whole village could not participate in the ASHA program and therefore could not move to the new site. As a result, the persons who had made application for individual housing under the program took a vote among themselves and decided to borrow less to give others a chance to participate in the allotted funds as well. Once this was decided, the village agin unanimously decided to use three-sided logs to again be made available through the use of the village sawmill (which remained in its old location at Old Minto). Some of the men familar with the operation of a mill stated that it would be possible to cut 2x4's and other

roof material as well. Only roofing, flooring, and windows would need to be purchased from outside sources.

BIA indicated that at the time there was \$50,239.73 available to Minto in the form of rehabilitation funds. Between BIA and the Alaska State Housing Authority, there was therefore in excess of \$169,000 to help Minto in building new homes. Under the experience gained in the Grayling move, this amount of money would be enough to provide sixty homes, if the current plan were followed. Representatives from RDA/OEO indicated that if ASHA funds were utilized to purchase basic structural materials, then money earned from RDA sources could be used by the village to purchase finishing materials such as paneling and insulation. This idea was, in turn, supported by BIA who indicated that if a family required food and clothing as a result of their wages being used to buy materials for the homes, their office could and would provide money to meet these needs. The only requirements were that all must agree to share equally in earning money as well as to help others build homes when they were not working for wages. The village members agreed that if RDA, OEO, and BIA would follow through with this plan, then they would again be willing to cut the necessary lumber and prepare the three-sided logs for the needs of the entire community.

Availability of land was now raised as a pressing question. The Bureau of Indian Affairs explained that there were three ways to obtain the property for the village. The

State of Alaska had indicated a willingness to turn the land back to the Bureau of Land Management so that they, in turn, could turn it over to Minto. In this case the people of Minto could move and then request that BLM survey a Native townsite, or the village could buy the land from the State of Alaska. It was pointed out, however, that this manner of acquisition might affect their pending land claims; if they decided to buy the land from the state, even for \$1.00, how could they explain that action when they already claim to own the land? In addition, elderly people who built homes and also received State Aid would have their homes subject to a lien. In this situation, once a person died, the state could sell the home to pay for the aid they had provided. Also, under this manner of acquisition, all of the personal property in the village would become taxable. The third alternative would be acquisition under the land claims settlement once completed.

It was made clear that the village had to decide which method of acquisition they wanted. If they received the land from the Bureau of Land Management, the state could not tax their property or require repayment under the state welfare programs. In addition, if the land were held in trust by the government, the BIA could continue to provide assistance in building roads and an airfield as well as to provide measures of up-keep. If they purchased land from the state, the village would obtain title and the people could not receive additional BIA assistance.

Questions concerning the availability of land for a new townsite had actually been settled in Juneau the previous February (1969). A meeting with various agencies was held, and it was decided to proceed with the acquisition of lands through the state rather than through the Bureau of Land Management because of the mentioned survey problems. Additionally, this method would not effect aid currently being provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, other than the fact that their road funds could not be made available within the actual townsite. Under this method of acquisition, the village would have to provide their own survey, estimated at \$9,000,³⁴ but in an effort to defray costs, the Bureau of Land Management agreed to provide a "blown-up" aerial photograph for a surveyor to work from and State Railroad Development agreed to make available a man capable of surveying "under supervision." BIA's Roads Division would provide planning assistance to the surveyor³⁵ and the Neighborhood Youth Corp was able to appropriate \$10,000 for construction of a new highway to the site. It was at this time that BIA agreed to loan the caterpillar tractor and essential fuel to the village for the construction of the road.³⁶

³⁴Alaska State Housing Authority, Memorandum, February 18, 1969.

³⁵State of Alaska Memorandum (agency unknown), May 2, 1969.

³⁶Alaska State Housing Authority, Ibid.

On April 25, 1969, the state notified the village that they recognized the "need and desirability for the village . . . to relocate" and agreed to "assist by making lands available." Their letter of intent stated, in part:

Subject to . . . receipt of clear title to the State from the Bureau of Land Management and not withstanding any final settlement of the native claims by Congress, the State of Alaska . . . will convey . . . to the City of Minto upon its incorporation as a Fourth Class City all lands as follows:

T4N, R10W, F.M., Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 35 and 36.

T4N, R9W, F.M., Sections 3 through 10; 15 through 22; 27 through 34.³⁷

New Minto Construction

Enough enthusiasm was generated during the next few weeks that by mid-June fifteen families had camped at the new site. They were engaged in fishing, working on the townsite, building the road, and clearing an area suitable for an airstrip. By now it was anticipated that the actual move would commence the following spring (1970).

Various divisions of the Public Health Service³⁸ were fully involved in preparing plans and taking action

³⁷The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was settled prior to Minto's incorporation and they now hold the state's pledge of an additional township "not withstanding any final settlement" should they elect to incorporate. The village is currently seeking professional advice concerning the advantages and disadvantages of incorporation vs receiving an additional 20,000 acres of land.

³⁸Office of Environmental Health, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Sanitation Facilities Construction Branch, and the Sanitary Engineering Staff.

for the required water and sewage facilities. Some concern was expressed for rapid completion of a well as the families encamped at the site were using riverwater for cooking and drinking. The river was reported as sluggish, discolored, and definitely unsuitable for domestic use without treatment. A number of the villagers had been afflicted with diarrhea, attributed to the drinking of the water from the river. It was recommended that an exploratory well be driven as soon as possible to determine the availability and quality of ground water. Based upon the topography of the area it was estimated that it might be 250 to 300 feet to a water-bearing strata. Past experience with wells in the area indicated that iron removal would probably be required.³⁹

A number of borings at various locations around the site indicated the presence of permafrost, creating an additional requirement; the water and sewage system would have to be insulated and recirculating to keep the water from freezing, even in the summer. Components required consisted of pumping equipment, iron removal facilities, a method of chlorination and flurodiation, storage tanks, boilers, and approximately 10,000 feet of insulated water

³⁹An alternative method considered for a potable source of water would have been to construct an infiltration gallery, either at the river or at Uncle Sam Creek, two miles northwest of the site. Drilling, the most acceptable method, subsequently proved satisfactory.

main and water service lines. The natural slope of the location made gravity collection of sewage facilities feasible. There would be approximately 3,500 feet of eight-inch sewer pipe for the collections sewers and outfall, while the sewer service lines would require 4,000 feet of four-inch insulated pipe. A facultative lagoon was recommended for sewage disposal as it was noted that this type of system required less skill and expense in operation and maintenance than other suitable types. The system was designed to serve a total of sixty homes, or approximately 300 people; about a 50 percent increase over the present population. That increase, if and when it occurred, could be serviced by extending the water and sewer mains. The projected cost of these services was estimated at \$423,000. Public Health Service was at least preparing complete and comprehensive plans before initiating construction.

Members of the Alaska State Housing Authority indicated that they had little faith in the residents to provide the promised logs in time for construction and they began considering the alternative of purchasing logs from Fairbanks. Prices were checked on materials such as windows, doors, and tile. In addition, the price of log construction was compared to frame houses, and "surprisingly, the frame buildings proved to be much less expensive."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Alaska State Housing Authority, Progress Report, Minto, November 23, 1969, p. 2. While no facts or figures exist to confirm or deny this, the factual nature of this statement is questionable.

On May 2, another meeting was held at Old Minto to discuss and explain the difference in cost factors between using logs or providing houses of frame construction. Since frame houses proved to be less expensive, the people elected to use the frame method of construction. There was a proposal to combine BIA and ASHA funds into one program which never materialized. Time was running short and it was deemed necessary to order materials as soon as possible. It was now agreed that ASHA's Remote Housing Program would furnish the materials for twenty frame homes and the BIA would use its money to build log houses for the remaining sixteen families.⁴¹ Under the ASHA agreement, twenty families chose from one of three plans; most selecting the \$5,600 home with one to three bedrooms. ASHA provided the usual 20-year loan to cover the cost of the house, based on a maximum grant of up to 75 percent of the cost in some combination upon the family's assets and income (Tables 2 and 3). The houses, when complete, would be rectangular with one door and, at most, four windows. They would be either 20x30 or 28x30. The BIA constructed homes, while to be of log construction, would follow the same basic floor plan.

It was the policy of PHS's Indian Health Service to provide water and sewer lines to within five feet of a

⁴¹Of the seventeen families who were to receive housing assistance, the number had since been increased to twenty because bids for materials were considerably lower than had been anticipated. ASHA letter to Representative John C. Sackett, May 23, 1969.

house. The remainder, including house plumbing, was stated to be the responsibility of the housing agency. On this particular project, it was noted that ASHA had sufficient funds to furnish only a kitchen sink and bath tub and no permanent piping to any house. As a result of this shortage it was the recommendation of the PHS authorities involved, that they contribute sufficient funds to ASHA to install all necessary water and waste plumbing, a lavatory and water closet in the twenty ASHA homes. Since BIA plans called for complete plumbing in their sixteen homes, IHS indicated that they would accept responsibility for service to only within five feet of these homes as was their policy, but that they would service the ASHA homes completely.

By July 1969, the road project was completed in rough form suitable for four-wheel drive traffic and a crude landing strip had been constructed (now the village dump). The people had laid out lots for the houses and determined a location for the school. At this time, the people of New Minto called a meeting with representatives of the BIA, ASHA, the State-Operated Schools, and the Public Health Service to further discuss the location of the school, water and sewage completion, power plant location, the airport and selection of carpenter helpers. PHS explained the nature of the water and waste facilities they were going to provide and indicated that plumbing supplies would be ordered that fall. The Division of State-Operated Schools stated that if anyone remained in the new village

that winter they would provide teachers--as long as there was a place for them to stay and hold classes. A site on the perimeter of the village was selected for location of the power plant and two unwilling men were selected as "carpenter helpers."

Building materials, barged to the site from Nenana, arrived during the latter part of August and actual construction began the first week of September, about four months behind the most previous revised estimate. Initial construction got off to a slow start, reportedly because a number of people within the community refused to participate. The slow progress of the new village created enough concern within ASHA that they held another meeting on September 11 at both Old and New Minto to discuss the problem. The meeting at the new site was reported as "very encouraging," but there was voiced dissention among the villagers because people remaining at the old village would not begin work on the project. The meeting at Old Minto "was disappointing and did not accomplish a great deal." Efforts to encourage the people to move to the new village and begin construction met with excuses that they wanted to remain to work on the sawmill,⁴² or that they could not afford to go as the men were out firefighting and this was

⁴²The same machinery was to have been relocated to the new site over a year ago at BIA expense, but "no one got around to it." ASHA Inter-Office Memorandum, May 2, 1969.

a major source of family income for a number of the people.⁴³ Hunting season came and virtually all of the people spent time moose hunting. The people at the new site used the weekends to hunt while the people remaining at the old village, again, refused to cooperate. Disagreements were common, adjustments were continually made, and the construction superintendent indicated no small degree of frustration. Participation of the village council was reported as "not very good." Meetings were held and only two or three members would attend. "The council was not effective at all in ironing out the problems the people encountered."⁴⁴

On September 29, the Alaska State Housing Authority made an attempt to enforce their Memorandum of Understanding, which stated that if persons did not participate in the program they would be replaced with families who indicated a desire to work on the homes. During the meeting members of the village council who were present agreed to remove three persons from the "First Priority List" and to replace them with families who were working at the new site. The reaction from the people remaining at Old Minto was--No response!

⁴³No mention was made of the RDA/OEO wage appropriations or to the offer of BIA to provide food and clothing during the construction process.

⁴⁴Alaska State Housing Authority, Progress Report, Minto, November 23, 1969, p. 6.

During the month of September, two weeks were spent on the construction of homes. Twenty men and women worked a total of 1,111 man-hours, averaging only 55 hours per person for the two week period. During the month of October, the number of persons working averaged seventeen, with a total of 2,369 man-hours worked, while the average number of hours per person increased to 139 for the month. ASHA indicated disappointment, "for all of the work and time different state agencies put into Minto to help the people with this move, they extended very little work or cooperation."⁴⁵ The limited number of persons remaining at the site and the arrival of cold weather concluded the seasons construction activity on November 1. Four houses had their roofs in place, two were wired for electricity and eleven floors had been constructed. No work had started on the BIA-funded houses and the sawmill was still at the old village. There was encouragement from agency officials for some of the men to remain in the four nearly completed houses and continue working throughout the winter. The men indicated that they were concerned about leaving their families at the old village (which was necessary because of the school). In addition, they had to provide firewood and other sustenance for their families.

BIA now aware that their program was far behind ASHA's and probably partially responsible for the split

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 6.

in villager attitudes, stated that of the \$50,000 they had received originally for "rehabilitation" purposes, only \$45,000 was left because Minto had used 10 percent allowed for "administrative" purposes. In addition it was now pointed out that eighteen new homes would be required, not sixteen as indicated earlier. The Bureau now indicated that if \$45,000 was not enough to build the remaining eighteen homes (which they knew was not), additional money would be made available from BIA's HIP fund. Additionally, if some of the people were unable to cut enough logs for a house or would rather have a frame house like those provided by ASHA, this could be arranged. Today New Minto does not contain one log home.

By the summer of 1970, almost all of the villagers were located at the new site; home being one or two tents pitched next to their future homes. Under the best of conditions, the situation can be imagined as crowded and inconvenient, however, the summer of that year was considerably wetter than usual, adding to discomfort and causing considerable delays in construction. Work progressed slowly, but at least steadily, toward completion. Reports indicate that numerous technical problems were encountered and that additional agency aid was provided in an all-out effort to complete the project for the village by that fall. Dissention appears to have been resolved or at least considered secondary to the project at hand; none of the reports received relating to the 1970 construction season

indicated specific disenchantment and terms such as "mutual-self help" and "cooperation" do not appear in the file material received or reviewed.

Power became a major problem at this time. The Alaska Village Electric Cooperative had received authorization from their funding agency, REA, to construct a system, but easements were first required. Amendments to the "Land Freeze" allowed rights-of-way, but since the land had previously been selected by the state, the Bureau of Land Management could not issue the necessary leases or permits even though they held title to the land. Since the state did not have tentative approval for the selection they could not issue the necessary permits either. The matter was resolved by AVEC meeting REA requirements with written statements of "non-objection" supplied by the state and the Bureau of Land Management. In addition to domestic use, power was vital to the school as well as to the water and sewer systems now under construction. The previously mentioned BIA generators were as yet not repaired nor moved to the construction site. A well had been completed at a cost in excess of \$70,000 and material for the waste and water system was either on-site or expected pending completion of the road. The ASHA contractor was located in the village and had crews working in an effort to complete the project by fall--the cost now approximated \$378,000; considerably over the original estimates.

The road, still suitable for only four-wheel drive traffic was not adequate for the movement of heavy traffic. Consequently, the State Department of Highways became involved in the completion of the project. Heavy rains that summer created problems with completion; two low spots made it impassable until late in the season, which, in turn, created additional delays in other projects. The frame houses barged to the site the previous summer were 75 percent complete by early August, but materials for the remaining BIA homes were being stored in Fairbanks pending completion of a suitable road. Portable classrooms were delayed in Fairbanks as well. It was planned that the 40-odd students would have a school by the end of September, making up for lost time on Saturdays or possibly during the Christmas holidays to meet requirements related to legal number of days of instruction. The units were finally delivered and set-up in mid-October.

Airstrip construction became a source of additional aggravation. The strip roughed out the previous year had to be relocated as it was too small and too close to the site reserved for the school. This led to a concentrated attempt to secure aid for a larger and permanent facility. The State Division of Aviation had indicated opposition to the village relocation during the initial meeting in 1968. The Old Minto airport, constructed in 1961, carried a 20-year obligation for maintenance and operation. Because of the large investment in the existing, and now almost

deserted, Old Minto facility, the village would have to be evaluated within the state's Five Year Capital Improvement Plan when revised that fall. A time-table for construction would not be given, especially when so many villages within the state were still using gravel bars, lakes or rivers as their only airport. The village had been informed (in 1968) that a new airport could not be constructed for at least five, and possibly ten years. This presented an additional problem for the community as the existing Post Office at Old Minto was adamant in stating that it could not relocate until an all-weather airstrip was provided at the new site. All during the summer, an 80-mile round trip boat journey was made to the old village to pick up mail. Later a dirt airstrip approximately 3,000 feet long was constructed and by the end of July, 1970 the Post Office made the necessary move. New Minto officially existed!

In an effort to beat cold weather and complete as much work as possible, the Army's 559th Engineers of the 171st Infantry Brigade from Fort Wainwright, was moved from the Army base near Fairbanks to the village to help with road construction, assembling prefabricated siding for the BIA-funded homes, and working on the plumbing and sewage systems. The members of the village remained permanently at the site even though all of the houses were not completed that year. On December 23, 1970, an estimate of costs for

thirty-eight homes, water, sewer, and well were announced at \$673,000.⁴⁶

New Minto Problems

Even though the village residents had relocated, that was not the end of the confusion, nor was the new settlement complete in any sense. By the end of 1971, two of the BIA houses were not yet finished and it was estimated that another \$7,700 would be required for completion. In addition, plumbing was nonexistent in a number of the BIA-funded homes and the estimate for completing this job was an additional \$9,350. The community had various assets valued at \$8,195; consequently an additional \$8,855 would be required to complete the project initiated almost four years ago.⁴⁷

By April, 1972 the village water and sewer system were reported to be in "a deplorable and sad condition." PHS stated that they could assume responsibility for maintaining the lines to only within five feet of the homes, closer than that was out of their hands. Only four houses had flush toilets working and another had a broken line from which a "glacier" had built up under the house "to a point that if it builds up any more it will eventually

⁴⁶BIA News Release, December 23, 1970. Total BIA allocations as of December, 1971 were stated to be \$131,451.92, according to a HIP Audit Report for Minto.

⁴⁷BIA Memorandum, December 3, 1971.



Figure 21. New Minto, Alaska, 1972.

enter the house." PHS water and sewer lines, buried six to eight feet below the main street were another source of aggravation. There had been breakage through freezing and the lines had been dug up several times. In fact, the State Department of Highways refused to upgrade the main street because of the continual problem with the lines. ASHA finally took the initiative to complete the hook-up of the remaining water and sewer lines while BIA provided the funds. Utilities were eventually completed in mid-1972.⁴⁸

PHS responded to the mentioned subsurface problems by sending the Village Council a letter stating that they had been doing "a lot of thinking about their problems" with the utility systems during the winter (1971-1972). That coming summer they proposed to: (1) clean all sewer lines, (2) install a warm water tank in the pump house which would periodically inject warm water into the sewer system creating added flow as well as a source of heat to prevent freezing, (3) provide grease traps to retard freezing and instruct the village residents on their proper use, (4) replace every water line within the village with new copper lines having more and better insulation, (5) install heat tapes on water lines which come on automatically during cold weather, (6) all lines would be equipped with thaw cables which would allow an above ground heat source to

⁴⁸ (Agency Unknown) Minto Field Trip Report, April 24, 1972.

be applied in the event of freezing, and finally (7) additional steps would be taken to improve the pump house and circulating water system servicing each home. In closing, PHS stated that they "realized there had been problems . . . and they planned to take care of them."⁴⁹

Considering the professional approach PHS personnel had taken once they became involved, it is surprising that the results of their contribution were as disastrous as they were, especially in view of the large amount of literature related to water supply and waste systems in the high latitudes.⁵⁰ Perhaps the problems were the result of site anomalies over which little control could be exercised. Perhaps the problems were the result of insufficient knowledge of utility supply and control in specific (as opposed to theoretical) instances, or perhaps the problems were simply errors in planning and judgment which were compounded and dramatically displayed during Minto's first season of adverse climate. Whatever the reason, the problems encountered point out in a vivid way what might be expected in future rehabilitation and relocation schemes without proper planning.

Problems associated with the houses tended to be less dramatic and more subtle, but they too became apparent in time:

⁴⁹PHS Letter, May 4, 1972.

⁵⁰See Bibliography, infra. for citations.

The houses that the Alaska State Housing Authority put in are adequate, but many of the people complain of the houses sweating and frost building up which creates a problem in that the interior paneling has a tendency to swell up and warp. Most of the houses do not use the oil stoves that were provided because they sweat too much and do not operate the way they should. Next year the village will have running water. If wood stoves are used in the winter the water lines will freeze because there must be warm air in the house 24 hours a day.⁵¹

Basically, the houses, as they exist today, are relatively sound, however small. They serve the people as an adequate means of shelter and are certainly an improvement over the previous situation at the old site.

Figures 22 through 41 depict the village as it appeared in May, 1974.

Agency Overview

Had there been an attempt at coordination of interests in the initial phases of the relocation scheme, it would have become readily apparent that the various agencies had their early reservations about Minto and/or the project itself. Even prior to the May, 1968 relocation meeting sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Public Health Service had gone on record stating:

⁵¹Office of Indian Opportunity, Trip Report to Minto, Alaska, January 12, 1971.



Figure 22. Street Scene, New Minto Alaska, May 1974.



Figure 23. New Minto, the End Product.



Figure 24. Minto Store, Established August, 1973.



Figure 25. Church Constructed with Old Minto Logs.

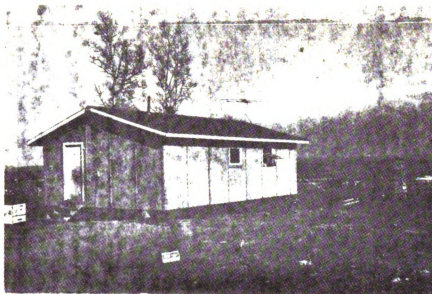


Figure 26. ASHA Grant-Loan Home.

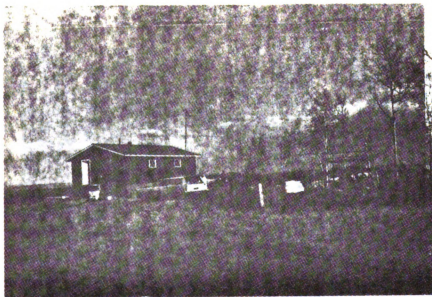


Figure 27. Typical ASHA Residence.

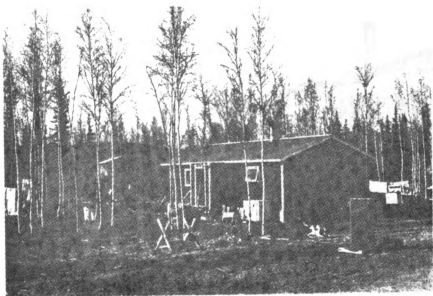


Figure 28. BIA Grant Home.



Figure 29. Typical BIA Residence.

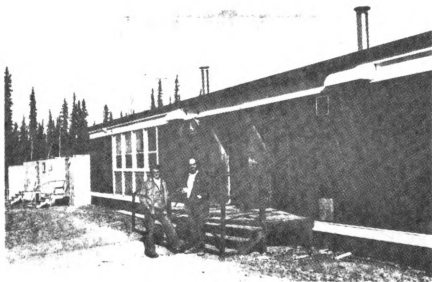


Figure 30. Pre-Fabricated School and Teacher (Right).



Figure 31. Teacher Residence.



Figure 32. Village Scene, New Minto.



Figure 33. Residential Area, New Minto.

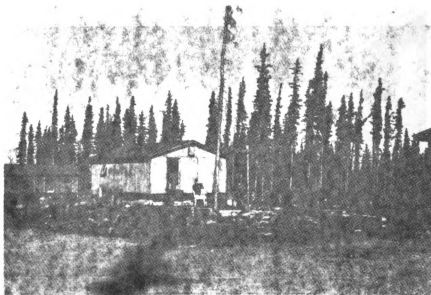


Figure 34. New Minto Street Scene.



Figure 35. Impact of Roads on Native Villages.

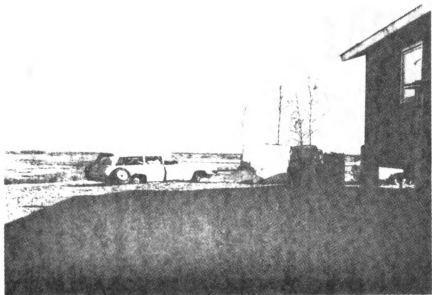


Figure 36. Residential Area.

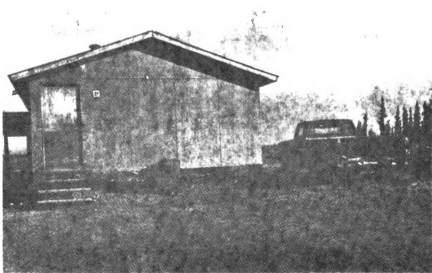


Figure 37. ASHA Residence #21.

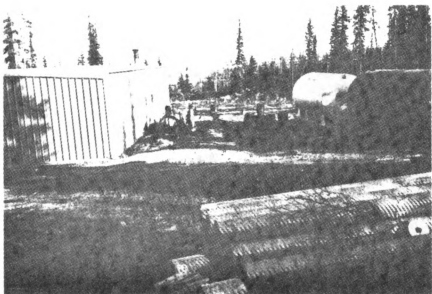


Figure 38. PHS Well House Containing AVEC Generator.



Figure 39. Insulated Water Pipe and Fuel Tanks.



Figure 40. Road Terminus; River Docking Facilities.



Figure 41. Displaced Airstrip and Rerouted Road.

. . . experience with Minto has emphasized the villages inability to accept responsibility in community projects such as the operation of the well and the sawmill.⁵²

In October, 1968, Public Health Service contacted the Alaska State Housing Authority regarding assurance that

⁵²Public Health Service, Field Trip report--Minto, April 10, 1968.

The sawmill referred to in various portions of this study was "on-loan" to the village from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be used for improving the socio-economic status of the community. Apparently the mill was moved to Minto from the village of Kaltag as a direct result of the Kearns and Kozely study which suggested somewhat optimistically that a commercial mill was feasible in the Minto Flats, given certain constraints (see Footnote 9, Part III, supra.).

From the onset the village did not appear to think of the mill as a business venture, but rather as a means to lend support to their then pending land claims. The study provided information and projections upon which the BIA and federal government, under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, supplied funding and training. The result was the establishment of the Minto Cooperative Lumber Co., Inc. in October, 1965. In June, 1966 another loan of \$6,000 was made to the Corporation for set-up and training. By July the funds were exhausted and no cut lumber existed. During the summer, men who had been trained to operate the mill left the community to fight fires. In the summer of 1967 two men were sent to the village to conduct further training, however, no funds were available for the trainees and the men left after two days. The mill has remained inactive since 1966 when a minimal amount of white spruce was cut. It was never used in its construction even though "the BIA will pay for moving the mill. It was supposed to be moved . . . but no one got around to it."

As early as 1964, Kearns indicated some disenchantment with the attitude prevailing in the village: ". . . I had the impression that the villagers expect the government agencies . . . to execute the works that would improve . . . conditions in the village . . . had a difficult time to explain that the initiative must come from the village itself."

During the summer of 1973, the mill was removed from its location near Old Minto by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and was again placed "on-loan" to the community of Huslia, much to the chagrin of the residents of New Minto.

they would receive sufficient land in any new village that was being planned, and in an area that would be suitable to their needs. ASHA responded weakly, asserting only that

. . . very little progress has been made in helping the people of Minto make the move to the new site, or if progress has been made, the information has not been distributed freely. The Bureau of Land Management as well as the State Division of Lands was contacted and neither of these agencies had any information.⁵³

Public Health Service was apparently somewhat insistent in their attempt to gain additional information early in the process of the move. It is unfortunate that more efforts at coordination were not carried to completion because in response to additional PHS enquiries BIA replied:

Minto is one of the villages that proceeds slowly but surely on a course of action according to our past experience, and it has taken a considerable period of time and will probably take a longer time for us to completely communicate between the people of Minto and this office to make them fully aware of the steps they should take in their own interests to secure the maximum cooperation from the various State and Federal agencies. This is somewhat trying at times but we are firmly convinced that patience and continued and repeated discussions will assure the type of understanding that is essential for them to embark on a well planned course of action.⁵⁴

This statement is discouraging because the Bureau of Indian Affairs had been instrumental in the initiation of the early meetings, had insisted on taking the

⁵³Alaska State Housing Authority, Letter to Public Health Service, October 9, 1968. There is, in fact, little to document that ASHA had done any more, at that time, than to attend the initial BIA meeting.

⁵⁴Bureau of Indian Affairs Letter, October 11, 1968.

coordinating role, and must accept responsibility for the actions that could have guided Minto to disaster. Certainly other agencies contributed to the confusion, disenchantment, and the perpetuation of agency self-interests; but the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for whatever reason, turned the village loose on a project that they themselves were ill-equipped to handle, while at the same time overtly recognizing the weak self-discipline of the community.

Misinformation in other areas got an early start as well. Minto's application to the Alaska State Housing Authority requesting inclusion into the Remote Housing Program stated, "there is also a road connecting the new site to Fairbanks. Also the village will have running water to all houses, sewage system, and sanitary land fill."⁵⁵

It must be remembered that the village was advised against certain locations because no road was in existence, nor could one be promised for some time. Public Health Service, at that time, had promised only a central well; household running water was to be a long-term goal. The enthusiastic application of the village does not discount ASHA's responsibility in the matter. The application was submitted and accepted at face value even though ASHA personnel had, by this time, visited the proposed site.

⁵⁵Application of Minto to Alaska State Housing Authority for inclusion into the Alaska Remote Housing Program, November 5, 1968.

In fact, Minto's application was accepted into the ASHA-sponsored program containing questionable stipulations:

Housing assistance has been approved for participation under the 1960 Alaska Remote Housing Program. This approval is subject to your village being able to obtain a grant from the Rural Development Agency to financially assist the move. Minto can qualify for a (RDA) grant if about 95 percent of the people in your village agree to move to the new location.⁵⁶

Not only did ASHA endorse an application known to be in error, they were also responsible for committing another federally-funded state agency to spending their money as well (attention is directed to the fact that OEO funds were spent clearing a site for the new community prior to the Site Selection Committee's recommendations). This dual agency commitment was the result of the same state employee sitting on both ASHA and RDA Boards.

ASHA who was in the business of professionally planning and advising Native families and communities on village and housing problems has one notation in their files concerning their attempts to enter the planning process for Minto:

. . . we made a reproducible of the plat done by the village and sent several copies. . . . We also prepared several sketches of alternative subdivisions which we sent to the village. . . . We received a note from the village saying they liked their original sketch best.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Alaska State Housing Authority Letter to Minto Village Council, January 17, 1969 (Minto's initial application stated that all of the village would relocate).

⁵⁷Alaska State Housing Authority, Memorandum to File, March 25, 1969.

That one memorandum in the ASHA files is the only indication of any effort to justify the planning role they assume for Alaska's rural communities. The "several sketches of alternative subdivisions" are not in existence today and a comparison of ASHA's reproduction of the plat done by the village cannot be made. The quality of the village draft speaks for itself (Appendix B). Discussions with residents of the community do not confirm that the ASHA drawings were ever reviewed by the community. Two village informants who were actively involved in the relocation have no recollection of reviewing additional plans other than one refinement of their own, later provided by PHS (Appendix C).⁵⁸

State-Operated Schools who had so enthusiastically made statements concerning the availability of a school "in some form" as soon as the village was ready had reevaluated their position early in 1969:

State-Operated Schools . . . no specific plans to move the school or put in new facilities at the new site as indications show . . . the town could not move this coming year.⁵⁹

In fact, the establishment of the school took so long that a series of rather heated letters were exchanged between Arctic Health Research Center (PHS) and the Alaska

⁵⁸Arctic Health Research Center (PHS) had taken the original "plan" as submitted by the village and redrawn it with some minor modification.

⁵⁹Letter from Representative John C. Sackett, Alaska State Legislature to Executive Director, Alaska State Housing Authority, March 10, 1969.

Department of Education. The principle question was why had the state been so long in supplying Minto with a school since they had known of the impending need for a considerable period of time. The Department of Education's response was based upon the fact that little faith had been placed in the village's real intent to move. School was being conducted at the Old Minto site and the State Division of Schools had indicated in earlier correspondence that they had no intention of conducting two schools for the villages of Minto.⁶⁰ An earlier ASHA Newsletter stated, however, that a school was being planned and that it would contain two classrooms and have housing facilities for teachers.⁶¹

Despite poor communications, the poor quality of the road to the new site was the primary reason for the final delay in establishing educational facilities in the village. It is evident, however, that some lack of communication, if not planning, took place in providing for the school. Once the school was established, a question concerning its structural integrity arose:

The school . . . looks very good in color and space but the inside construction is very poor. I would say that in a couple of years they will need a permanent

⁶⁰Letter from Alaska Department of Education to Arctic Health Research Center, October 8, 1970.

⁶¹Alaska State Housing Authority Newsletter #2, April 6, 1970.

school because the present one will deteriorate very fast.⁶²

Misinformation concerning a permanent road to the village began with the village application to ASHA and was perpetuated in various ways:

. . . the highway from Fairbanks is not open year round which was one reason the village selected the site . . .⁶³

There are no funds to maintain the road, although the Department of Highways has promised the people when they first wanted to move that they would give them assistance--which never came about.⁶⁴

The people have to fly to Fairbanks to buy groceries (not true). This is one of the reasons the village needs a road open all year round.⁶⁵

Out-of-context comments regarding the road situation were made by a resident of Minto who had been successful in obtaining a position with the Office of Indian Opportunity. No opportunity was lost in an attempt to force year-round maintenance of the roadway into the community; letters to Alaska's Congressional delegation, the Governor, and other agency representatives were routine. In an attempt to

⁶²Office of Indian Opportunity, Agency Speech at New Minto Village (undated).

⁶³Office of Indian Opportunity, Agency Speech at New Minto Village (undated).

⁶⁴Office of Indian Opportunity, Annual Progress Report, 1970-1971.

⁶⁵Office of Indian Opportunity, Memorandum, Trip Report, Minto, Alaska, January 12, 1971.

satisfy one of his voting constituents, a U.S. Senator responded to one of these letters by asking that a State Legislator see that the matter was "looked into." The result was a resolution stating that Minto was being "slighted" by not receiving a roadway that was maintained during the winter months, and the Governor was "respectfully requested to direct the Department of Highways to immediately evaluate the problem."⁶⁶

On July 8, 1972, sixty-eight residents of the new community submitted a petition to keep road access to the village open on a year-round basis. The signers of the petition indicated that since they were citizens of the United States, they were "intitled [sic] to our mail, supplys, [sic] and jobs." This was to be accomplished by keeping the road open and passable.⁶⁷ The State Department

⁶⁶State Concurrent Resolution #43, 7th Legislature, First Session, April 16, 1971.

⁶⁷It is somewhat ironic that in the same month the Alaska Transportation Commission publically disclosed that an application had been submitted by a private individual to provide bus service between Minto and Fairbanks. This would have allowed the greater communication and service the community had expressed a desire to receive. The village of Minto responded by stating:

The people of Minto has had a tridation [sic] for many years now and has been a rule . . . a vote is taken whether or not the Council will accept the business . . . urge you to hold up on the issuance of a certificate.

The village protest went on to state that many people were out of jobs in Minto and that they were capable of providing such service for themselves. Today no bus service exists between Minto and Fairbanks--or between Minto and anywhere else!

of Highways responded by stating that they were giving the petition for winter maintenance "serious consideration" and that the "extension of winter maintenance to all populated areas . . . is the goal of the Department of Highways." During the winter of 1973-1974 the State Department of Highways kept the road open to the village for the first time.⁶⁸

In the fall of 1973, they also announced that the department was accepting bids for the "clearing and grubbing" of a new roadway between New Minto and the existing road north of the village.⁶⁹ Under the Local Service Roads and Trails Program, Minto is to receive a completely new road into the village. Costs will exceed \$1,170,000 for construction alone.⁷⁰ Residents of the village were low bidders and received jobs in the process of clearing the right-of-way, which informants say follows the original route chosen by the villagers prior to their conflict with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and State Highway Department. On March 30, 1974, another announcement was

⁶⁸The original plan was to keep the road open from Olnes, on the Livengood Road (Elliott Highway) to Livengood and then westward to include Minto and the community of Manley Hot Springs sited at the end of the summer road, fifty miles past the new Minto cut-off. It is interesting to note that once the highway department announced their intention to keep the road open all year, the village of Manley petitioned them to keep it closed.

⁶⁹Fairbanks News-Miner, October 17, 1973.

⁷⁰State of Alaska, Department of Highways, "Five Year Highway Construction Program," January, 1974.

made to the effect that a new road was to be constructed that summer and bids for the actual construction were being accepted.

Other agencies had been misinformed or had become disillusioned with the Minto project as well; the Rural Development Agency indicated disenchantment not only with Minto, but the other agencies as well. In an attempt to take final advantage of dwindling agency involvement, now that the relocation was essentially complete, the village contacted RDA concerning movement of the old school building, an abandoned BIA tractor, and oil storage tanks still at Old Minto. The village had requested a grant of \$6,000 for this suggesting that this was the amount the Fairbanks BIA office had told them the materials could be moved for (the actual estimate for moving the two buildings alone came to \$29,800). RDA indicated that through its "Operation Mainstream" their grant money to Minto totaled to over \$65,400, and that no community in their history, regardless of size, had received that amount of money before. However, an offer was made to provide \$10,000 if other agencies could be enticed into providing the remaining \$19,800. Disenchantment with other agencies was indicated when they stated "the other agencies that were so anxious to help you folks make this major move and who are now sitting back and doing nothing, must continue to assist you

in completing your village to be the model village that it is supposed to be."⁷¹

Power to the village site was not provided as rapidly as anticipated. Delay was partly created by the "land freeze" and partly by a late in the year request for service by the village. The two BIA generators were apparently never put into service as had been planned and electrical service was still lacking in April, 1970. Alaska Village Electric Cooperative had stated that they would try to provide service that year, but in January, 1971 the only power in the village was being supplied by a generator owned by the State Department of Education. AVEC's commitment to supply power had been based upon speculation that approval for an expenditure of an additional \$75,000 could be added to their budget for 1970.⁷² Communication with AVEC indicated that "electrification was requested only after the village was established at the new location, and although the request had been received very late in the season, only normal construction problems were encountered."⁷³

⁷¹Rural Development Agency Letter to Minto Village Council, May 17, 1972.

⁷²Alaska State Housing Authority, Inter-Office Memorandum, April 16, 1970.

⁷³Communication, Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, March 28, 1973. One of AVEC's stipulations for servicing a village with power is that they incorporate under state laws to develop a tax base. To date Minto remains unincorporated.

PART V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many questions are raised in reconstructing the chronology of the Minto relocation project. New Minto exists today as a model of a modern rural Native village without equal in interior Alaska. There is no question that the end result is superior to the pre-existing situation and the project must be considered a success. However, both Native and agency participation left much to be desired. A similar event should not be allowed to occur in future schemes.

Need For Planning

Based on the preceeding paragraphs it is apparent that rehabilitation, relocation, or development of new housing and housing related services is a complex matter not being handled efficiently under current methods. It seems reasonable to propose that one agency be given the responsibility for assuring that all aspects of planning and construction are thoroughly investigated and completed in a manner directed toward efficiency and satisfied

clientele. The ultimate goal would be to provide homes with power, access, potable water, and an adequate means of sewage disposal.

A review of agency roles in housing and related programs for rural Alaska indicates that ASHA, BIA, AVEC, and PHS (and the others) have operated independent programs. Even though they recognize the fact that their programs are complementary, there has, as yet, been no coordinated interaction of efforts primarily because cumulative goals are different--to build houses, or a water and sewer system, or a power system. A primary object than would be to aim at integrated development instead of focusing on the development of only one component. Each of the agencies sees the others presence as one of their criteria for serving a village, but integration of their programs into a comprehensive unit has been secondary, and the pattern of their services continues to be random.

There are many reasons for advocating coordination, care, and precision in serving Alaska's remote areas. In this region, everything costs more; drainage and access problems are exaggerated by permafrost, muskeg, and poor or non-existent transportation modes. Special care is essential if utilities are to function in areas of permafrost or extreme cold. Unfortunately, as exemplified by Minto's relocation efforts, agencies involved in rural development so far emphasize singular action and independent agency results at the expense of integrated planning and

engineering. Few rural communities have property maps (site ownership remains a foreign concept and traditional use precludes encroachment by others), or information related to soil or topography. Individual agencies have sketched their own inadequate maps in the field, and homes have later been located where land was available or where, from surface observations, the site seemed high and dry. The relationship between housing location and utility cost has not received enough attention. In existing housing programs, there is no money for acquiring or preparing sites (or developing access), houses have been located on whatever land was available, dry, and level. Under circumstances such as these, utility systems become of lesser consideration even though their location is critical and has a lasting effect on the houses and cost. Not only is the cost of installation increased, but the cost of maintenance and operation is higher in the long run.

Most serious are the lasting costs to the village in terms of quality of the finished product. Improper coordination disrupts the process of construction, reduces agency efficiency, and limits the ability of agencies to serve remote areas. Minto serves only as a model in attempting to prove the need for coordination. A few additional examples of difficulties arising from inadequate coordination are pointed out here because they too, point to the need for change and stress the fact that Minto was not an isolated example; in two villages (Manakotak and

New Stuyahok) uncovered trenches and mucky rutted ground created by the excavation of water and sewer lines acted as road blocks hindering movement of other materials. In other communities PHS incurred added expense after houses were already on their sites. At Hoonah, buried utility lines were broken during subsequent excavation. AVEC's power utilidors (heated enclosed utility systems) have been crushed when heavy equipment moved materials. Other heavy materials have also had to be moved by hand by villagers because housing construction preceeded the use of heavy equipment used for water and sewer construction. In Bethel houses were built on gravel pads without accommodation for drainage. As a result roads have washed out and utilities damaged. Sprague documents further problems encountered in Bethel.¹

In other mutual-help programs ASHA has found it hard to convince people that they should work for nothing in building their homes, especially when PHS (building in the same village at the same time) pays union wages for construction. AVEC has complained about competition for workers as well. In addition, they have found that they suffer financially if power costs for utility systems are beyond the cash resources of the community. Critics of the

¹Chester L. Sprague, Housing in Village Alaska: Background and Alternatives, Department of Architecture (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1971), pp. 73-75.

ASHA program indicate that the homes will not last as long as the 20-year mortgage period since there is no additional funding for ongoing maintenance. ASHA responds by stating that in building their own homes, owners learn to repair them. They say pride and a sense of participation is inspired as a result of building the homes themselves, thereby encouraging the families to maintain the quality of the structure. Visits to the community of New Minto appear to confirm the statement that the new houses will not last twenty years and the mutual-help concept seems questionable.

Another concern is that in mutual-help programs, building places a hardship on Native cash earning potential and subsistence food gathering. ASHA responds by stating that the homes are build during the fall and winter months when most people are not working and when home construction does not interfere with hunting and fishing. They state that participants are also given periodic time off. This of course, was not true with the Minto relocation project and there is no indication that that statement is being followed during the current relocation of the community of Tanacross. Another point of criticism is that housing designs were developed without participation of the recipients. They were asked only for approval, and not to be a part of the planning process. In addition, there have been problems with the foundations, insulation, and heat loss in the ASHA homes (which they feel has now been remedied). Records from Alaska Legal Services indicate that litigation

exists between villages previously serviced by ASHA and the Authority itself, primarily due to inadequate or substandard structures.

Despite receiving grants, many villages still have difficulty finding the necessary cash to pay for homes once received. Much of the cost of housing in rural villages is found in the cost of utilities. Actual payments on the structure are a minor part of the overall cost. When the cost of heating oil (\$40 to \$50/month, with winter peaks to \$90), the cost of electricity (\$20 to \$30/month), and basic house payments (\$10 to \$15/month) are totaled, a minimum projected income of \$1,200 is required for shelter and utilities alone.

There have been attempts to develop cooperation between the Alaska State Housing Authority, the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, and the Public Health Service for installation of utilities concurrent with the construction of housing. Coordination such as this should be encouraged and continued, but utilities to a village result in increased cost to the community which is then reflected in user costs. This in turn increases the basic cost of utilities to the home owners and adversely affects the people with the smallest income--the ones who need improved housing most.

Another major drawback in other village rehabilitation or relocation projects was in the overall lack of funding available for grading and improving the site or

developing local access roads. As a result homes have been located on the highest available ground without consideration of the placement of the home on its lot, road and trail access, or the relationship between houses and other elements within the community. The State's Local Roads and Trails Program should help alleviate this problem if the program receives funding to continue.

Certainly decentralized responsibility and individual fundings for housing and housing related improvements have contributed to the waste and chaos of past projects such as Minto; especially when the various agencies pursue separate goals.

Possible Future Coordination

Conversation and communication with representatives of various agencies who have been involved in attempts to improve housing conditions in village Alaska indicate that while each of the agencies is attempting to improve their own services in some manner, most of the activities involved in developing remote communities will not change dramatically in the near future. It is unrealistic to expect any of the mentioned agencies to pool their resources (especially funds) into one central Relocation and Development Board--primarily for political reasons.

The experiences of ASHA, PHS, BIA, and AVEC in the Minto project have been used as a basis for proposing a more desirable sequence of steps which might improve the

coordination of rural development projects of the future even if one controlling agency cannot be formed.²

There is certainly a need for initial basic mapping. Thorough and accurate mapping of various physical features of the community and existing property lines is essential for effective and accurate communication between agencies and individuals in the development of any community. Without an accurate and preliminary map, coordination is hampered, details of house locations and utility lines cannot be meshed, and communication between local people and the agencies is blurred. Also without basic mapping there is no simple method of recording decisions concerning location. Such a situation leaves the door open to confusion, misunderstanding, and costly mistakes, as witnessed by Minto's required relocation of their airstrip and the pending relocation of the access road from the existing State highway. No figures are available to document the costly nature of these mistakes, however, both were avoidable. Current aerial photography, which exists, is a prerequisite to community mapping.

The following maps should be prepared and distributed by the lead agency prior to any secondary planning phase: (1) A base map of the entire village showing the exact location of planned (or existing) structures, main

²Contributions made by Ms. Darlene Lane, who helped develop the following general recommendations based on continued agency self-sufficiency, is expressly acknowledged.

geographical features, and proposed property lines should be prepared. Coverage should include potential areas for community expansion surrounding the village. (2) A base map with property lines should record various land ownerships and lease rights in the village. Public agency holdings should be noted since property exchange or other transactions might be desirable as well as necessary to obtain housing sites that are most desirable. Despite the settlement of the Native land claims issue, a number of villages have little land in the immediate community because of large public, church, or private holdings. As an example, the village of Holy Cross is owned in its entirety by the Catholic Church and only the perimeter boundaries have been surveyed. Certainly a map showing land tenure is a necessity for basic negotiations on land exchange proposals. (3) A map of the topography (with shallow contour intervals) as well as a map of soil conditions would be of value in planning utility and drainage systems. It is likely that New Minto's utility problems, as a result of permafrost, could have been avoided had such a map been provided. Certainly the cost would have been considerably less than that amount required to replace the entire subsurface system.

In most of Alaska's rural communities, 70 to 90 percent of the homes are substandard, and to achieve a goal of providing decent housing for all of the residents would mean a replacement, if not relocation, of most. This

type of wholesale rearrangement would seriously blight any community unless done with planned consideration of community priorities and future land requirements. Few of the communities in rural Alaska have ever prepared comprehensive development plans and those that have are generally inadequate.³ If the federal and state governments are willing to invest the millions of dollars in rebuilding the communities of rural Alaska, it seems almost trite to state that a comprehensive development plan should preclude that expenditure. However, to date, the community of New Minto has cost the taxpayers in excess of \$750,000 and the only community plan in existence is duplicated in Appendix B.

Planning would offer professionals the opportunity to discuss alternatives with local people as well as providing an opportunity for people in the village to express preferences, develop priorities, and be included in the planning process.

Mapping of lands, correlated with a comprehensive planning phase might indicate the necessity of purchasing privately-owned land and/or the need to arrange for an exchange of publicly-owned land in order to obtain the most favorable sites for housing. The acquisition of the land for New Minto, even though the situation was unique, was haphazard at best and the process of site selection was mockery. Agency landholdings in rural Alaska are often in

³See Footnote 66, Part I, supra.

excess of actual need for the facilities involved. In Kaltag, for example, the airport reserve includes an area one-quarter of a mile wide and includes land next to the school which is unnecessary for either facility, and yet could be highly desirable for residential development. The same is true for the village of Beaver in the Yukon Flats.

Historical Indexes and Master Title Plats, available through the Bureau of Land Management, indicate that in many other communities, land that might be desirable for community development is in private, state, or federal ownership. The cost of acquiring such land should be compared to the cost of utility line extension to more distant sites and to the daily cost and inconvenience over the years caused by making a poor or arbitrary choice initially. In the case of Minto this problem was simplified by the total relocation of the community and the then pending land claims issue. However, it is understandable that in future moves or major rehabilitation schemes, the village might choose to rebuild adjacent to, or on the periphery of, the existing village to take advantage of any existing facilities. This would be especially true if the site were not subject to flooding. Bureau of Land Management records indicate that most of the village townsite subdivisions that now exist, were prepared prior to the initiation of the various programs now available to rural communities. Consequently these subdivisions should be reviewed for current suitability.

In most communities, local people do not have the necessary skills to maintain water, sewer, and power systems. This became readily apparent as PHS attempted to correct their water and sewage problem in Minto. Both AVEC and PHS have found it additionally necessary to train local men to perform this work. Existing training programs should be expanded to provide for the training of local plumbers and electricians to help with the maintenance of new homes. These trainees should be selected early in any program so that they will be learning while assisting in the installation phase. Early selection and training of local people would enhance local involvement and create a sense of responsibility for program success. Minto's method of selection of "carpenter helpers" only reinforced the feeling of inadequacy inherent in the local men when dealing with dominant agencies.

Grading and drainage plans for a new site are essential prior to designing and engineering a water and sewer system. That became apparent following Minto's first winter. In addition, drainage should be planned so that culverts and drainage pipes can be installed before roads are built. The absence of provisions for surface drainage caused erosion problems on the access road to Minto. This, in turn, caused inconvenience for the residents and expense (and reduced effectiveness) for the agencies. Certainly planned drainage should be integrated with the design of the utility systems. The relationship between house location,

utility cost, and effectiveness has been pointed out by Sprague⁴ and mentioned in other ASHA publications.⁵

Once a plan for site development has been completed the area should be surveyed and subdivided. The subdivision should include easements for utility lines, drainage courses and other necessities. The Minto relocation, with surveying following action, vividly illustrates that without adequate surveying it is all but impossible to make an effective connection between planning, engineering, and actual construction.

Heavy equipment is usually needed throughout the process of constructing homes and utilities (especially in rural communities). Initial attempts to provide surplus equipment for Minto resulted not only in inadequate but substandard equipment as well:

The road was in such bad condition that the cat couldn't even get through. I was living in Fairbanks with a good job when I heard that they had all the equipment, cat, trucks, etc. ready for work. I moved back down there willing to go to work. What I found was old broken down trucks that wouldn't even work. The dump truck was stuck between the new site and the road to Fairbanks. The cat was inoperative and they were waiting for parts.⁶

In other attempts at reconstruction, equipment was moved into a community only after PHS initiated installation of a

⁴Chester L. Sprague, Housing in Village Alaska, op. cit.

⁵See Bibliography, infra. for citations.

⁶BIA Memorandum, Minutes of New Minto Village Meeting (quotation excerpted), July 30, 1969.

water or sewer system. With luck this happened before the construction of housing and the equipment involved was used in concert with other activities. In other villages, confusion, or actual destruction, was created when heavy equipment was brought in after the fact.

Work of each agency would be facilitated if heavy equipment and appropriate maps were available prior to construction. Unfortunately in Minto, the separate agency programs were not integrated enough to allow for joint use of these two types of tools. The situation is irrational as well as costly and should not continue. Arrangements should be made early for the joint use of heavy equipment by all agencies. This equipment should be provided to the village in advance of any construction so that it can be used throughout the process of building houses and construction of related services. If roads and underground utilities are properly programmed they can be developed in a single coordinated step with only one earth moving process (the main street on New Minto has been excavated three times and a completely new access road 11.2 miles long is to be reconstructed during the summer of 1974). Once the site has been prepared, houses can be built and connected to the utilities without fanfare.

People unfamiliar with the operation and maintenance of utilities cannot be expected to move into a modern home and keep it in operating condition without some basic instruction. A home maintenance program should be part of

any housing program, perhaps with incentives built into it to encourage proper maintenance. Some of the problems which surfaced after the people relocated to the new site could have been avoided had this been done.

The preceeding general recommendations would not involve a drastic restructuring of agency goals or roles to implement. Implementation would mean, however, relying upon or acquiescing the coordinating function to some one person or agency who has the desire or expertise to act in the role of "lead agency." Little, if any, prestige would be lost and the planning process could be enhanced immeasurably.

Specific Conclusions

As far as the village of Minto is concerned, the practical aspects of comprehensive community planning was a "fly-by-night" operation from its conception. There were no visible means of lasting agency support or procedures for efficient implementation. In addition, the project seriously disrupted the lives of the entire village population for a number of years. It continued to a point where the participants, Native and agency alike, were weary, dismayed, and even hostile toward each other. Yet, at the conclusion of the relocation, and even today, the villagers indicate that the move was a success. When it was stated that this study was chosen for an investigation which met the minimal requirements for the existence of a problem suitable to problem-focused research, it was also stated

that one of the outcomes desired by the decision-makers was a reduction of friction between agency and clientele groups and to hold dissatisfaction to a minimum, or what might also be stated as "satisfied" villagers. In the most gross sense the overall end result has resulted in satisfaction. However, a number of other goals were mentioned; two deserve comment: It was stated that (1) an environment, or context, of the problem existed which consisted of uncontrollable variables such as the actions of other decision-makers, reactions and counter-actions, previous commitments of available resources, and clientele preferences. (2) In addition, a decision-maker would be receptive to a system which might identify potential conflicts before they became full-blown problems. Based upon those two criteria, the study can be deemed worthwhile if the following specific conclusions and recommendations are accepted as reasonable.

Basic reasons for Native and agency disenchantment lie in the involvement of the federal and state government in rural Alaskan community affairs. There is no formal structure for a routine review of overall coordination of the goals and objectives of the various local, state, and federal programs. Historically the federal government, and more recently the state government, has helped compensate for the poverty of rural communities by supplying services (education, health care, airports, etc.) that would normally

be a responsibility of local government.⁷ State and federal expenditures support approximately 85 percent of governmental programs in Alaska.⁸ In some ways this federal-state involvement is a boon to the rural villages because it funnels non-local public resources into the communities. Unfortunately the positive factors are diluted by lack of control and lack of intergovernmental coordination. While federal and state agencies are involved in the day-to-day affairs of rural communities they are not locally accountable for their actions and seek guidance (and funds) from headquarters in Juneau, Anchorage, and Washington, D.C.

⁷Predominate federal agencies include the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Public Health Service, Economic Development Administration, Farmers Home Administration, Office of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, U.S. Forest Service, and the Federal Aviation Administration. At the state level there is the Department of Education, Rural Development Agency, Department of Health & Welfare, Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development, Local Affairs Agency, Department of Public Works, Department of Fish and Game, Alaska State Housing Authority, and others. Quasi-governmental agencies include the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Alaska Legal Services, Community Enterprise Development Corporation, Alaska Village Electrical Cooperative, and others. In addition, there are "agencies within agencies" whose lack of coordination often matches that of the departmental groups at federal and state levels.

⁸Alaska State Housing Authority, Kotzebue Alaska Comprehensive Development Plan (Anchorage: Alaska State Housing Authority, March, 1971), p. 114.

The 85 percent figure understates Federal-State participation and overstates local expenditures since the figures refer to the entire state while the community of Minto remains unincorporated and has no tax base from which to generate funds. Monetary input from the village has been and remains minimal.

As a result, matters that are in reality the concern of the rural residents are often settled by agency personnel who have only transient ties with the community and little or no understanding of the indigenous culture or way of life. In many cases decisions are made by persons totally removed from the village, its setting, and its priorities.

Piece-meal division of responsibility among the many agencies became readily apparent during the review of the relocation project of Minto. This division of responsibility also indicates that decisions are being made without reference to the local activities of the other governmental agencies. It is apparent that nobody in the federal or state government is in a position to coordinate the bits and pieces of governmental decision-making. This disjointed structure of political decision-making has been considered by Harrison.⁹

Politically the people of rural Alaska are powerless to plan and govern their community. People do not have the knowledge or information needed to take stock of the broad picture of public activities in their communities. The Minto model points to the fact that they also do not have the information or authority to exert any lasting influence

⁹Gordon S. Harrison, Alaska Public Policy, Current Problems and Issues, Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research (College, Alaska: University of Alaska, 1973), pp. 285-92.

over public decisions (made in the urban centers) even though their very lifestyles are to be effected.¹⁰

Assuming the best intentions of the agencies involved in Minto's relocation project, reference is made to Part I, where it was stated that the various agencies, federal, state, and local alike (the decision-makers in this instance) should be aware that high ideals and reasonable objectives are not enough to justify the expense of time and money if there is disenchantment on the part of the villagers (clienteles group). Certainly the present structuring of the action groups reflects an inability to form a set of locally determined goals. The study case exhibited their lack of capacity to coordinate the execution of various agency programs as well as an inability to respond

¹⁰With the settlement of the Alaska Native Claims settlement Act, one could surmise that the creation of the various village and 12 regional corporations, the situation might improve considerably. However, Section 14(c) (3) of the Act states "the village corporations shall then convey to any municipal corporation in the Native village or to the state in trust for any municipal corporation established in the Native village in the future, title to the remaining surface estate of the improved land on which the Native village is located and as much additional land as is necessary for community expansion, and appropriate rights of way for public use, and other foreseeable community needs; the amount of lands to be transferred to the municipal corporation or in trust shall be no less than 1280 acres." This subsection of the Act, in fact, dictates that any Native village which refuses to incorporate under the laws of the State of Alaska must submit no less than 1,280 acres (two square miles) surrounding that village to state jurisdiction. At the present time this would encompass the great majority of villages throughout the state.

quickly to changing conditions. Arrangements such as this are not effective nor responsive to decision-maker goals. State and federal control of local administration frustrates the very purpose they themselves seek. Certainly continued assistance is vital to village Alaska, but new ways to plan and furnish that assistance is overdue. Meeting the needs of communities such as Minto will continue to take concentrated and coordinated efforts of local, state, and federal agencies to do the job effectively and efficiently. Each issue of importance discussed here embraces issues that straddle fences between levels of government and individual agencies.

Concluding Recommendations

Minto's experience documents the need for change. Conscientious forethought dictates that change alone will not remedy the fractured process of government operations. Innovations are necessary to improve governmental effectiveness and permit increased local self-determination. As presented earlier, the single step that would most improve performance in village relocation endeavors would be the creation of an intergovernmental board to implement planning and coordination by state and federal agencies at the local level. Suggestions about the make-up and functions of this proposed board are outlined below:

Such a board might be constituted at two levels; a high level Steering Committee representing local, state

and federal interests, and a supporting subordinate inter-agency subcommittee representing individual agencies active in a particular relocation or rehabilitation process. For example, the Village Council (or now the Village Corporation) might appoint a local delegate to the Steering Committee. State participation might come from one of the existing planning and research agencies to provide a state overview of agency activities, and the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, with its responsibilities for coordinating the activities of the state and federal government in Alaska, might nominate a federal representative. Then too, since matters considered could be of a regional concern, the appropriate Native regional corporation might be recognized to speak for their region.

Whether this group should be advisory or exercise authority to adjust submitted plans would not be a critical question initially. To begin with they might serve in purely an advisory role, although all of the federal and state proposals for programs and spending should be presented for review. Most important is the creation of an orderly process of central review oriented to the community and open to the influence of local residents. Ideally, as the Board acquires working experience, ideas for improving operations would arise. Whether advisory or with authoritative powers, once formed, they could implement a wide range of coordinated functions such as:

1. Collect, exchange, and publicize information concerning the plans and activities of various public agencies involved. In Minto's case, poor communication between the community and the various agencies appears to have been a basic obstacle to effective public action.

2. Assemble a regularly updated review of public activities in the area of concern. It is assumed that an overall picture would be useful in pinpointing neglected needs as well as monitoring progress towards meeting them.

3. Provide specific opportunities for local participation in the planning process, recognizing the fact that additional time will be required. Any time lost could be considered contributory to a more effective and responsive local government. The time lost with Minto's project could be considered inefficient at best. Erwin has considered the question of involving residents in the planning of their own community:

There is still much indignation among the permanent residents of the Delta over the fact that they were not consulted to any great extent in the . . . actual planning of the town.¹¹

4. Coordinate the scheduling of public improvements with a view toward their impact on the local employment and income levels of the recipients. Each of Alaska's rural communities is sensitive to "boom or bust" economies caused by erratic public spending from season to season

¹¹A. M. Ervin, New Northern Townsman in Inuvik, p. 2.

and year to year. A large percentage of the people in Minto depend (directly or indirectly) on public expenditures. In a situation such as this, large projects, as in village rehabilitation or relocation, are identical with economic development. Certainly there must be at least a basic understanding of the cultural heritage of the people who are to be the recipients of these public improvements as well as an understanding of the seasonal cycle still so important to persons living in a semi-subsistence economy. An understanding of the difference between people who are project-oriented vs those who are time-oriented can only be accomplished by having some background on cultural variance as presented in Part III.

5. Preplan for joint use of land, facilities, and equipment during the development phase. This would lead to a more productive use of capital funds and other public resources committed to such a project.

6. Review the policies and programs of agencies providing similar services. Such a review might point out inconsistent policies and hidden gaps in service programs. Once this were done it might be possible to design and administer better integrated service programs. The Minto model points out in detail the inconsistencies which result when programs are not reviewed prior to their implementation.

7. Cooperate with the Native regional corporations in developing a "regional development plan." In the long run, natural resource development holds the only real hope

for the economic prosperity of the Native people, but state and federal policies for economic development and transportation improvement hold the key. A blending of regional, state, and federal interests will be the deciding factor whether development leads to a more prosperous way of life. A sound development plan based on the three would be of benefit to the entire state.

Coordinating steps such as these are aimed only at basic issues which obviously need more attention. The Native regional corporations, with their increasing political clout, might consider pressing for the formation of an intergovernmental coordinating Board or Steering Committee along these lines. Initially they could co-sponsor, with the State's Division of Planning and Research and the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, an interagency conference of all relevant public agencies to lay the foundation for a start in forcing change.

Another change seems advisable in the interest of orderly planning. Proposed land use and capital improvement projects sponsored and funded by the state and federal agencies should be made subject to the review and approval of the recipient Village Corporation. This would do two things: (1) encourage participation at the local level, and (2) insure that proposals do not conflict with a village's own development goals. Without such authority most public improvement projects would continue to remain outside the control of the local residents.

The Need for Continued Study

Information gathered during this study, as well as observations of client/decision-maker and decision-maker/decision-maker roles and relationships suggest the need for further study. One problem associated with gathering data of a negative nature is reliability of information received and conclusions drawn. One cannot be totally comfortable, however objective the method, with results derived from interpreting human behavior. This is particularly true when dealing with cross-cultural programs. Most obvious were the variances of thought processes which became apparent during the course of the study. For example, one decision-maker agency appeared to respond in terms of people needing more adequate homes, whereas another tended to think in terms of units constructed per fiscal year. Each met agency expectations on specific issues, while both fell short of satisfying the need for efficient, workable, and integrated social goals. There is an obvious need to direct attention to this problem area before physical, social, and economic irregularities become full-blown social problems.

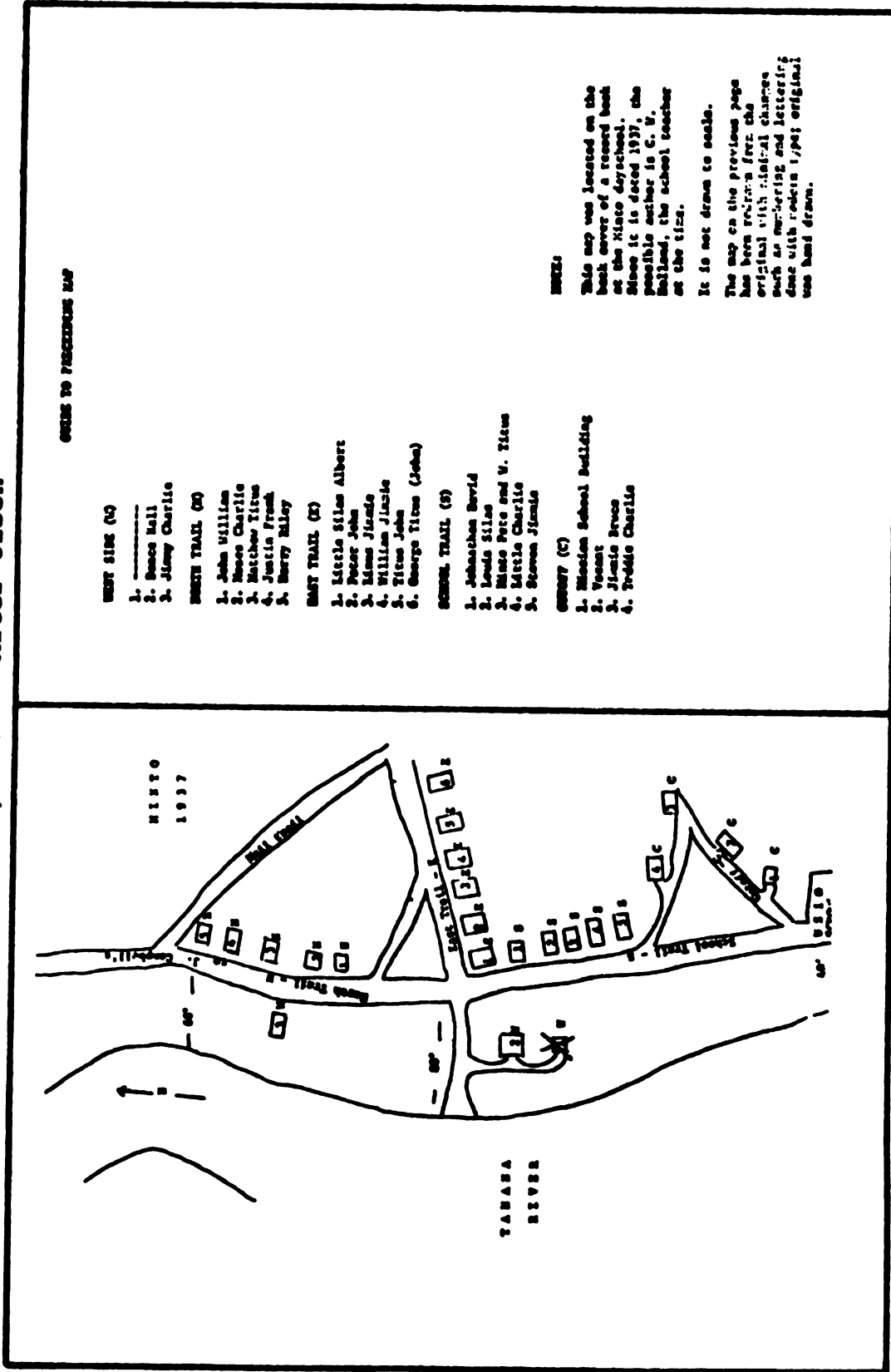
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MINTO AFTER OLSON

APPENDIX A

Minto, 1937 - After Olson



APPENDIX B

NEW MINTO PREPLAN

APPENDIX B

Village Moves Directive
Bureau of Indian Affairs

The following directive from the Alaska Area Director, dated July 21, 1966, is the only documented attempt by the Bureau to provide an orderly transition in the event of village relocation projects. The missive was generated in response to previous village moves and was later deemed suitable for Minto's project:

Village Moves

In response to your suggestion, a conference regarding village moves was held which included the Branches of Tribal Operations, Education, Plant Management, Realty and Housing. In order to determine a course of action in regard to the specific requests of the villages of Clarks Point, Hunapitchuk, and Kwigillingok, it was decided by the group to approach the problem of village moves by formulating a definite plan of action. This plan is to be implemented by certain specific actions within the framework of the policy outlined in the Area Director's letter of August 11, 1964. We feel that this plan can be applicable to all village requests to move, and that this approach will result in a coherent, coordinated action program aimed at determining the need and validity of a village move and in assigning such a move to the maximum extent that our resources will permit. In formulating this plan of action, the group considered and discussed problems and shortcomings of village moves of the past and those presently underway.

It was recognized by the group that there may arise in the future a village move necessitated by circumstances which would require an immediate move with prior consideration only as to a suitable location for the new village. However, in the case of village move requests presently being evaluated, there are no emergency situations to our knowledge. Under the "no emergency" situation, the group feels that we should take, and in fact are required for the benefit of everyone involved,

to take, the following systematic steps in evaluating and, if developments warrant, giving assistance in a village move.

1. Request an Evaluation and Recommendation from the Area Field Representative and his staff in whose district the village is located.

2. Petition from Villages Signed by a Majority of of Adult Population.

Upon receipt of a written request from a village expressing a desire to move, we will immediately request that the village government submit a written petition requesting such a move, signed by not less than 75 percent of the adult population of the village. This petition should state the reasons for desiring a move and should indicate the area to which the village desires to move. In villages where we do not have the current BIA Census, the petition should be accompanied by a list of all adult members of the village. This would be accomplished with guidance from Tribal Operations.

Background: My experience with past and present village moves has shown that many times where there is no dire emergency reason for moving, village requests are not necessarily indicative of the desire of the majority of the village residents. In some cases even a majority of the village population in favor of a move doesn't assure a successful village move.

3. Availability of desired land.

When it has been determined through Step Two that the desire to move is a majority opinion, then it must be determined that the land onto which they desire to move is available. This will be the responsibility of the Branch of Realty and a report on their determination will be submitted for a consolidated report.

4. Feasibility of developing village at new location.

Upon completion of Steps 1, 2, and 3 with actions favorable toward a move, Plant Management will be requested to conduct an engineering survey of the proposed new village site. This survey will include all aspects of site desirability such as location for transportation considerations, drainage, water availability, etc. Such a survey by competent engineers would minimize the many problems and delays experienced by the villages of Shageluk and Toksook Bay.

Also, if necessary, adjacent more desirable sites could be suggested as alternatives if the original site is unsuitable. A complete report of the engineer's survey would be submitted for a consolidated report.

5. Educational Considerations.

The Branch of Education will prepare a complete evaluation of the effects of a village move in regard to their facilities. A report including value and age of present facilities, cost and availability of new facilities at new location, timing, feasibility, etc. will be submitted to be included in a consolidated report.

6. Community Facilities.

All aspects of community development will be explored. U.S. Public Health Service would be contacted for water and sewer; Community Facilities Administration for community buildings; Alaska State Housing Authority for community planning; Farmers Home Administration for possible housing development. All federal and state agencies that might have an interest in, or who could be helpful in such a move, will be contacted. All information developed will be included in a consolidated report.

7. Review and Discussion with Village.

After all information regarding a proposed village move is developed and assembled into a consolidated report, it will be reviewed by interested parties. After review the information would be presented to a general meeting of the people of the village desiring the move. All aspects of the move will be thoroughly explained to the people and their responsibilities clearly outlined, such as the help they may expect to receive, the things they would contribute, etc.

All of the information developed by the branches of BIA and, hopefully, the State agencies and other Federal agencies involved, would be submitted to the Branch of Housing and assembled into the consolidated report referred to above. After review of the entire package is accomplished, then the material could be presented to the village.

We feel that this plan of action is a logical, coordinated approach to the problem of village moves. If you concur with the plan of action outlined by the group

and as set forth in this memorandum, I will prepare answers to correspondence regarding the village moves of Clarks Point, Nunapitchuk, and Kwigillingok, in incorporating our ideas. I will also initiate action as we have outlined to determine the need and validity of a move for each of these villages.

As the text of this report indicates, the majority of these planning points were not followed in Minto's proposed move; however, in March, 1968, a certain strategy did develop:

Minto Move

This is a proposed letter to be signed by (name). It will go to all State, Federal, and other agencies or groups who may help technically or materially.

Please review it; add, delete, tear it apart; and return it to me for final consolidation.

Also please review the list of agencies, etc., and make appropriate (constructive) remarks.

(Name)

AGENCIES TO CONTACT ON MINTO MOVE

FEDERAL

DHS
HUS
Soil Conservation Service
BPR
Arctic Health Research Lab
BIA
BLM
Economic Development Administration
Federal Field Committee
Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training
USGS

(Name)
American Friends Service Committee

POLITICIANS

(Names)

STATE

ASCAP

Cooperative Extension Service (U of A)
Alaska State Employment Service
Alaska State Housing Authority
Department of Health and Welfare
Department of Highways
Rural Development Agency
Department of Economic Development
Department of Education
Director of Economic Opportunity
Division of Lands
Division of Aviation

The mentioned letter follows:

The people of Minto have decided to move from our present location. Our living conditions are very bad, and we do not think that it would be possible to improve our situation in the present location. Every year our town is flooded. All summer the land in our town is wet and muddy. Each year it seems that our town is wetter. The dampness is bad for our children's health. The swampy conditions make it hard to keep our buildings liveable. We do not think it would be very smart to keep living in a swamp when there is better land.

Another bad thing about where Minto is now is that it is not easy to get into or out of Minto. We have only the Tanana River in open season and the airfield. Our people cannot get to jobs, and we cannot start any good businesses in Minto. Transportation is too difficult and expensive. If we remain isolated like this we can never improve ourselves.

We want Minto to be economically and socially a part of modern Alaska. We do not want to be dependent on others for our well-being. We cannot reach this goal where Minto is now.

We looked at several places, and we decided that the best location for a new townsite is on the north side of Rock Island Lake. This is about 16 1/2 miles north-northwest of where Minto is now. It is about three miles northwest of where the Chatanika River joins the Tolovana. There is plenty of good land there for a townsite. It is dry and on a south slope. We can have good dry homes there, with good sanitary facilities. There is a good place for an airfield. There is access

to the river systems. And the Manley Hot Springs Road is only nine miles north over good ground.

At Rock Lake there is good timber that we can use to build our homes. Later we could even sell logs and lumber.

We know that building a new town is a big job. It is too big for us to do it right all by ourselves. While we have chosen a location, we need technical advice as to whether that location is really suitable for a townsite. We also need to be sure that the land is available for a townsite. We should have help on the townsite layout and advice on the actual construction.

We will probably need help getting some of the building materials. We hope to use the sawmill that we have, and also get a turning mill for round logs, for most of our materials. But we will need training and operation support.

One of the main reasons for moving is for a good water supply and sanitation facilities so that we and our children can have good health. We need advice and assistance for this.

We might even need some subsistence help during the time while we are building and moving.

We have set a goal to be moved into the new town by the fall of 1969. We know this is a short time for all that has to be done. If we don't set a goal, though, we may never get moved, and therefore may become a burden, rather than an asset to Alaska.

We want to do all we can ourselves. Can you help us with the things that we can't do?

Sincerely yours,

(Name)

A draft of the Petition to move was also attached for review and comment. In March, 1971, the Alaska Rural Development Council, aware of the Minto relocation frustrations, advanced the following planning "checkpoints" to be considered in the future:

Some Planning Check Points
Village Development

Airport

Boat Dock Commercial

Boat Dock Personnel

Canine Control

Cargo Handling

Commercial Development

Aircraft Charter

Airline Office

Bank Branch

Boat Repair and Supplies

Craft Retail Shop

Garage or Shop

General Store

Guide Service

Greenhouse

Hotel/Motel

Insurance Agent

Lounge

Lumberyard & Building Materials

Restaurant

Service Station

Snow Vehicle Sales and Service

Other Small Business

Communication Facilities

Electrical Power Distribution System

Electric Power Plant and Fuel Storage

Fire Protection

Fuel Storage Distribution

Garden Plots

Industrial Development

Crafts

Food Products

Forest Products

Minerals

Research Projects

Land Right and Titles

Navigation Aids

Parks

Pest Control

Physical Environment

Earthquake Exposure

Flood Exposure

Forest Fire Exposure

Land Slides

Snow Slides

Soil Conditions

Volcanic Activity

Wind Conditions

Public Buildings

- Churches
- Communications Office
- Community Building
- Fire Station
- Fish and Game Office
- Gymnasium
- Health Clinic
- Hobby Shop
- Law Enforcement and Detention Capability
- Library
- Maintenance Equipment Storage & Shop
- Manpower Center Office
- Medical Clinic
- Museum
- National Guard Facility
- Nursery
- Post Office
- Schools
 - Grade
 - High
 - Vocational
 - Extension
- Theatre
- Veterinarian Facility
- Village Office
- Visitor Center

- Recreation--Indoor
- Recreation--Outdoor
- Residential Housing
- Road Construction
- Snow Control and Removal
- Solid Refuse Collection & Disposal
- Street Lighting
- Surface Drainage
- Survey of Local Natural Building Materials
- Survey of Local Natural Food Resources
- Trails
- Utility Right of Ways
- Village Operation and Maintenance Requirements
- Walkways
- Waste Collection & Disposal
- Water Source and Distribution

Source:

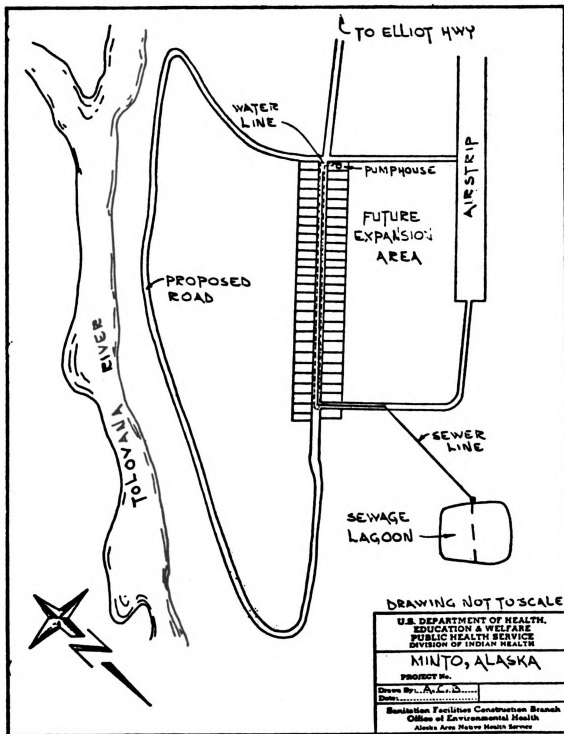
- Minutes, Alaska Rural
- Development Council
- March 9, 19, 1971
- University of Alaska

APPENDIX C

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE VILLAGE PLAN

APPENDIX C

Public Health Service Village Plan



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