An enforced odyssey: The relocation and internment of Aleuts during World War II

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The research for this project includes oral histories and government and military documents. The text is organized chronological, yet each chapter highlights themes that are important to the understanding of the historical significance Aleuts ordeal.

Keywords
History, United States

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An enforced odyssey: The relocation and internment of Aleuts during World War II

Madden, Ryan Howard, Ph.D.
University of New Hampshire, 1993

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AN ENFORCED ODYSSEY:
THE RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF ALEUTS DURING WORLD WAR II

BY

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B.A., University of California, Davis, 1984
M.A., University of Vermont, 1988

DISSERTATION

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the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

December, 1993
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16 November, 1993
Date
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ABSTRACT

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THE RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF ALEUTS DURING WORLD WAR II

by

Ryan Howard Madden
University of New Hampshire, December, 1993

This dissertation describes one of the most tragic, and largely unknown, civil liberties violations of World War II. In June of 1942, World War II came to the Aleutian Islands off coast of Alaska. As a diversionary tactic the Japanese invaded two islands and bombed the American military base at Dutch Harbor. After six months of fighting American forces managed to erase the Japanese presence from the islands. However, the effects of World War II in the Aleutians were not over for the aboriginal people. Aleuts were taken, with only hours warning, from their homes and relocated 1500 miles to Southeastern Alaska.

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The research for this project includes oral histories and government and military documents. The text is organized chronological, yet each chapter highlights themes that are important to the understanding of the historical significance Aleuts ordeal.
INTRODUCTION

June 19, 1942 was a Sunday, and Flore Lekanof and the other St. George Island Aleuts enjoyed their usual communal meal after services in the Russian Orthodox church. Their tranquil routine ended suddenly with the arrival of the USS Delarof. Meanwhile, 300 miles to the south, on Atka Island, Alice Snigaroff and her family had fled their homes in fear of a Japanese attack, only to have them later burned to the ground by United States naval personnel, who ordered them to join their fellow Aleuts aboard the collection ship. Flore's and Alice's roots on the islands were cut forever, as the World War II internment of the Aleut islanders proved to be a major turning point in their people's history.

The June 1942 Japanese invasion of Attu and the air attack on Dutch Harbor marked the beginning of the only World War II campaign fought in North America. The bloody battles and American victory in the Aleutians have been well
told, but historians have ignored the tragic effects of the campaign on the native people of the islands.

Three thousand miles to the South of Alaska, Japanese-Americans were interned in massive numbers in 1942 (110,000) as war hysteria spread along the West coast. Though the Japanese-Americans and Aleuts shared many experiences—muddled management, bureaucratic neglect, poor living conditions, and the status of prisoners in their own country—the justification for the two groups' relocation could not have been more different. Japanese-Americans were interned for their supposed threat to West Coast civilians and the Aleuts were relocated to protect them from the enemy.

The United States government while ostensibly seeking to protect the islanders, ripped them from their ancestral homeland and interned them in filthy, unhealthy camps converted from abandoned fish canneries 1500 miles away on the Alaska mainland. Beyond ignoring their basic human rights, the lack of medical care and inadequate food resulted in the deaths of ten percent of the 880 interned. After the war survivors, returning to the islands, found that the defending soldiers had ransacked their houses and had looted their churches. They were now refugees in their own land, struggling to reestablish their lives on a government resettlement payment of less than $12 a person.

The Aleutian experience followed an old pattern in
relations between the United States government and native peoples. Repeatedly in the past the federal government's policies, however well meaning, were shaped by racism and resulted in the decimation of native peoples and their cultures. President Andrew Jackson had justified relocation of Eastern tribes as protection, even though 8,000 or more died from the unwanted assistance. The Dawes Act of 1887, supposedly seeking integration of natives into white society, stripped them of their communal lands while imposing private ownership. In the process vast tracts of land became available for white settlement, speculation, and natural resource exploitation. Even the so-called Indian New Deal of the 1930s, which aimed as reviving tribalism, had questionable results. The injustice that the Aleuts suffered was not isolated but an all too common event in the history of the United States relations with the native peoples in its territory. The government assumed the role of protector and guardian, but based its policies on political convenience. The one unique aspect of the Aleut case, and ironic for a government of a capitalist country, was that the objective was not to take their land but to secure their labor in hunting seals and foxes. That activity netted millions of dollars for the U.S. Treasure, while Aleuts subsisted in poverty.

Until the 1980 "Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act" (P.L. 916-317), the Aleut tragedy has been
hidden from view. Despite the eventual monetary settlement, the wartime experience of the Aleuts has received little attention from historians. This study will explore the cultural and political background of the United States-Aleut relations, and will examine in detail the internment and post-war experience of the Aleuts. My objective is to treat both the government's actions and the ordeal of the Aleut people.

Chapter One explores the history of the Aleut prior to World War II. In the Pre-European Contact period of Aleut history, the Aleut built a complex society based on the sea for its livelihood. The eighteenth-century Russian invasion changed the islands forever. While the Russians were brutal and exploitative of the Aleuts, they did leave a religion, incorporated by Aleuts, that became a vital part of a changed Aleut culture. Under American control, Aleuts were used by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to exploit the natural resources of the islands for the profit of the American government. The Aleuts' experience serves as a concrete example of the effects forced assimilation into American capitalism had on a people told the economic system would set them free to sell their labor and attain profits, but instead made them virtual slaves to the United States government. The chapter ends with a description of Aleut culture, religion, housing, village life, and demographics, at the point when the
Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

The next two chapters analyze the evolution of the military decision to relocate the Aleut. Chapter Two analyzes American military intelligence concerning the possibility of Japanese attacks on Alaska and American military preparations. I explore Japanese motives for attack and argue that because the United States had broken the Japanese code its leaders knew it was defensive and diversionary rather than the start of a full-scale invasion of North America. Chapter Three looks at the debate among American officials and military men which concluded moving the Aleut would do more harm than good. I argue that wartime panic overrode that reasonable position and led to a hasty relocation for which neither the Aleut nor government officials were prepared. Official sources indicate that the military knew for months that a Japanese attack was coming and yet did not make preparations. This chapter focuses on the Aleut relocation to Southeastern Alaska and examines the unusual case of Unalaska village, where whites were allowed to stay while Aleuts were moved out.

Chapter Four examines the internment camps: Funter Bay, Ward Lake, Burnett Inlet, Killisnoo. As federal officials found themselves determining where 880 Aleuts would spend the war for an indefinite time, their fascinating reports evaluating the suitability of various sites provide the basis for the first part of this chapter. They reveal that
the camps were utilized despite awareness that they were wholly inadequate and could precipitate epidemics. These reports show a disregard for the "Natives" and a misplaced belief that because they were aboriginal people, they could fend for themselves in any environment. Yet for some Aleut, the arrival in Southeastern Alaska marked the first time they had seen trees. Through oral histories and government documents, I recreate the camp conditions and describe how Aleuts tried to cope and survive in alien environments.

Chapter Five focuses on the special case of the Pribilovian Aleuts. Not all Aleuts spent the war's duration in camps. Pribilof Aleut males were returned early to harvest fur seals, coaxed back by promises of bonuses and threats of losing their island homes, but forced to leave their wives and children, many of who were sick, in the camps.

Chapter Six chronicles the return of the Aleut to their Islands and describes what they found. Chapter Seven deals with the effects of the war experience on Aleut life and culture and the eventual fight, in conjunction with Japanese-American who were interned, for recognition and reparations. While interned for different reasons, Aleuts, like Japanese-Americans weathered similar problems and trauma. The conclusion encompasses a comparison of the two internments. The Aleut's World War II ordeal is important as a case study of wartime civil rights abuses and an example
of continued oppression against Native Americans after the policies of the Indian New Deal were in place.
CHAPTER I

"Concerning the Islanders"

Aleut Culture and History before WW II

The land Aleuts came to inhabit is an island chain strung across 900 miles from the Alaska Peninsula to the island of Attu, 300 miles from Russia's Kamacatka Peninsula. The islands are treeless tundra. The Japanese current's northward-flowing tropical air and frigid, dry air from the Arctic collide there, making the islands foggy and windswept much of the year.¹

Between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago the ancestors of the Aleuts migrating from Asia to North America settled on these remote islands. Their descendants spoke unique to the islands.² Most of what we now know about those early Aleuts came from Russian accounts and later ethnologists who

8
interpreted those writings.

The indigenous island people lived in underground houses called "barabaras," some as large as 150 feet long and 25 feet wide with compartments separated by woven grass mats. Each household or barabara had its own male leader. Wealth was measured by the size of one's barabara, the beauty and amount of clothing, the number of sea mammals one captured, and the number of fish smoked for the winter.

The Aleuts' minds and villages focussed on the sea. There were few land mammals in pre-conquest days: only foxes on the western islands, and some bears and deer on the Alaska Peninsula and eastern most islands. Consequently the tidal area along the shore was vital to life. Children, women and the elderly gathered shellfish, sea urchins, octopus, and seaweed from the tidal waters. Both men and women hunted birds and gathered bird eggs. All the people of a village had a role as food gatherers. They were expert whalers who took advantage of the bi-annual whale migration which passed between the islands during the spring and fall. Using poisoned tipped harpoons they hunted from small boats called "bidarkas" seeking to drive the poisoned whale up on shore. Whales provided meat, lamp oil, and bones for house supports and tools.

By fully exploiting the marine and the few land resources Aleuts developed a remarkable material culture.\(^4\)
The barabaras, housing single families, and the more common

Fig. 1. "Pre-Contact Aleut Housing." Courtesy of the Alaska Museum of Fine Arts, Aleut Exhibit, 1984.
Fig. 2. "Aleuts Harvesting from the Sea."
yurts, housing several families, were close together and blended into the rolling terrain. To warm their dwellings, Aleuts used small grass fires or bowl-shaped lamps burning sea lion or whale blubber. Furnishings included delicately designed sleeping mats, baskets, and cradles that women wove from grass. Birds and mammals provided material for clothing and ornaments.

Both men and women wore a dresslike garment reaching to the calf of the leg—the women's of seal or sea-otter skins. For protection from moisture they wore hooded waterproof garments made from sea-lion guts, halibut bladder, or the skin of whale tongues. Aleut women sewed clothes with needles of bird bones and thread of fish guts. They embroidered with braided animal hairs, beaks of sea birds, and strips of sea-otter fur. They tattooed their faces and hands by pricking them with needles and rubbing black clay into the skin. From holes pierced in the nose, lower lips and ears, they wore pieces of tusks, beads, and rings. Necklaces, armlets, and anklets were made from shellfish, walrus ivory, beads and painted hair.5

The resourceful use of materials for boats equalled that of the clothing and ornaments. Baidars, holding thirty to forty persons, were used for long trips and war parties. Bidarkas, similar to the Eskimo kayak and holding one to two persons, were used for hunting and fishing. (see figure 3)
Aleuts constructed the boats from whale ribs tied together

Fig. 3. "Aleut and Bidarka"
with hoops and covered with sea-lion or seal skin. For Bidarkas, a skirt of whale gut, drawn around the body of the fisherman, kept out water.6

Using darts, spears, and throwing boards, men hunted whales, sea lions, sea otter, seals, and birds; using bone hooks, they fished for halibut, cod, greenlings, sculpins, Atka mackerel, herring, and salmon.7 Within this marine environment the Aleut's belief system, values and social organization evolved.

In terms of the distribution of products of the hunt, Aleut society was essentially egalitarian. Nearly all goods were shared on an equal basis. There were few surpluses; in fact, Aleuts faced periodic food shortages, since the means of storing food were limited. Under these circumstances a hunter had more to gain by sharing his products than by hoarding. This egalitarian distribution system was reinforced by norms that honored generosity and mutual aid and that frowned on greed. The most respected adults were those who shared their last food with guests and who shared possessions with anyone expressing a desire to have them.

Ivan Veniaminov, a Russian Orthodox priest who lived in the Aleutians for ten years in the early nineteenth century and kept detailed records of Aleut life and customs. He identified three social classes: honorables, which included chiefs and their families; the middle class, or
ordinary Aleuts and liberated slaves; and the lower class or slaves. The honorables were wealthier than the others, in large part because they received a greater share of the bounty of war—rare stones and slaves. Slaves, coming from other islands or other groups from the Alaskan mainland, represented an important source of wealth since they could be bartered for whatever valuables Aleuts possessed; for example a pair of slaves was worth a bidarka and a good parka. Although the conclusions of the Russian priest should be taken with care, his division of Aleut society into classes may say more about Veniaminov’s world view than actual Aleut society. Also, it is important to recognize that by the time Veniaminov was observing Aleut society there had already been significant contact with Russians—the war-like behavior he noticed could have been a result of Russian influence on trade and inter-island relations. Conflicts among Aleuts that did exist could have been exacerbated, or created, by Russian domination.

However, Veniaminov did notice that wealth was not the sole criterion of status and prestige. The wealthy were respected not only for their possessions, but also for their personal attributes such as skill in hunting and bravery in warfare. A wealthy person who lacked such qualities became the object of mockery. Status depended on demonstrations of the qualities Aleuts valued most highly; generosity, fortitude, patience, industry, self-sufficiency,
cooperation, and daring in hunting.

Within the village, Aleuts placed the highest emphasis on cohesion, harmony, cooperation, generosity, and avoidance of conflict. The system of exchange illustrates the emphasis on conflict avoidance. Trade was conducted through a third party, called a "tayanak," who maintained secret the identity of participants precisely to minimize the possibility of hard feelings. Aleut norms discouraged quarreling, gossip, theft, and other behaviors that might disrupt community harmony. When antagonisms did erupt, Aleuts usually managed them by silence or mocking. In fact, a physical blow was rare, and it was said that Aleuts preferred suicide to receiving one.⁹

Aleuts' religious beliefs before the arrival of Russian Orthodox missionaries were inseparable from their total philosophy. The supernatural was significant in all important activities. Aleuts believed in a creator and in good and evil spirits. They had no temples or idols but there were sacred and forbidden places. Shamans, both male and female, were endowed with the powers to call on the spirits of their ancestors, foretell the future, and cure the sick.¹⁰

Aleuts observed numerous rituals to control the unpredictable forces of nature and to protect life. The whale hunter, for example, rubbed human fat or part of a dead human body or menstrual secretion on the tips of spears
and darts. After wounding a whale and fastening it with inflated sea-lion bladders, the hunter returned to secluded shelter where he remained three days without food or water, emulating the sighs and groans of a wounded whale in an effort to cause the whale to die and float ashore.\textsuperscript{11}

Life cycle events were also accompanied by special observances. At puberty a girl was isolated in a specially built structure for forty days. Only her mother or close female relatives could visit her, and then for only short periods of time. At her second menstruation, the girl was secluded for twenty days, and thereafter, for seven. At the end of confinement the girl had to wash herself for five days. Mourning and birth rites also involved a forty-day observance. The forty days happened to coincide with the Russian ritual period, but Veniaminov designated it as the traditional Aleut period.\textsuperscript{12}

Public celebrations were also an important part of Aleut life when there was a special triumphs or events, especially when there was a store of food. Lasting for days, they included songs, games, drums, dancing along with plays reenacting the cause of celebration.

Sex, marriage and family relations were flexible. Intercourse for males and females was not restricted to one marriage partner. There were no marriage or divorce ceremonies. Elders arranged marriages frequently when the intended were young children. While the bridegroom was
expected to accept the elders' choice without complaint, the bride's wishes were respected. No couples could marry without the consent of relatives. Once the marriage was approved, the bridegroom gave gifts to his wife's relatives or he provided them with meat for a year or two. To terminate a marriage a man could sell or exchange a wife or simply return her to her relatives.\textsuperscript{13}

Both men and women could engage in plural marriage. The majority of Aleuts had one or two partners, although some had as many as six. One wife, the one the husband loved best or who produced the most children, was the "first" wife. Family boundaries were loosely defined and did not necessarily coincide with that of the household. In addition to a man, his wife or wives, and his offspring, the household might also include nephews, older married sons and their families, and younger brothers and their families.\textsuperscript{14}

Child-rearing practices involved both rigorous demands and permissiveness and indulgence. Anthropologist Dorthy Jones theorized that these polar emphases may have served to train the children in the patience and fortitude necessary for survival in a harsh environment and in the cooperation and generosity required to maintain village cohesion. Children were trained in fortitude from infancy. To discourage crying, babies were dunked in icy seawater. Children bathed year-round in the sea. They were taught to walk barefoot on ice, snow, and rocky terrain. During
periods of food shortages they were expected to fast without complaint. But Aleut parents were also noted for their kindness, gentleness, and indulgence with children. Relatives gave children the choicest morsels of meat and the best furs for parkas. And parents taught children to be gentle and to abstain from boasting.\textsuperscript{15}

The cohesion of traditional Aleut society changed with the Russian conquest of the Islands. Of course Aleut culture prior to the Russian invasion was not static and unchanging, but European contact had dramatic results. In 1725 the Russian government outfitted a scientific expedition commanded by Vitus Bering to seek new trade routes and determine if Asia and America joined. Bering sighted the Aleutians on his second voyage in 1741. At the same time, Russian fur hunters, who had already reached the eastern coast of Siberia, extended their operations eastward to the Aleutians. From Bering's sighting of the Aleutians until the end of the eighteenth century a continuous stream of Russians invaded and occupied the islands.\textsuperscript{16}

Aleuts resisted invasion. On Iliaka Island, for example, they fought for decades, employing surprise attacks, until the Russians, in a series of brutal retaliations, finally subdued them. Russian crews, consisting primarily of runaway peasants, ex-convicts, debtors, and drunkards shanghaied by ships' captains, treated the Aleuts ruthlessly: taking hostages, murdering
and kidnapping women, stealing Aleut possessions, demanding tribute, forcing Aleuts to work for them, and sending them on voyages from which most never returned. As with other Native American populations throughout the New World after the contact period, massacres and epidemics decimated the Aleut population, which fell, according to Russian estimates, from 12,000 at the time of Russian contact to 1,500 by 1825.17

In 1799, Russia, to prevent competition among its companies and to protect its claim to Russian America, granted a monopoly on the Alaskan trade to the Russian-American Company. This company would govern Alaska until the American purchase of the territory. The first charter granted to the company included no guidelines concerning the treatment of Aleuts. Because the company's survival depended on Aleut skill in hunting sea-otters, it tried to keep the indigenous people under control.

A second Russian-American company charter in 1821 provided a section called "Concerning the Islanders." This section required the Aleuts to labor for the company, but it also stipulated that the company could commandeer no more than half the males in a village between the ages of eighteen and fifty. The second charter also established a joint system of administration by the chief of the Aleuts and a company superintendent.18

P. A. Tikhmenev, a Russian historian, who was a member
of the board of directors of the Russian-American Company, and Ivan Veniaminov, who may be considered in the indirect employ of the company since it supported his missions, reported amicable relations between the company and the villagers. But S.B. Okun, a contemporary Russian historian, claimed that company brutality and exploitation of Aleuts was unceasing. No government officials were stationed in the colony, and according to Okun the company simply ignored government stipulations regarding the treatments of Aleuts. Okun also wrote that Aleut leaders lacked independence, merely performing policing actions for the company.\textsuperscript{19} It does seem likely that Aleuts had some bargaining power with the company stemming from their monopoly on sea-otter hunting skill. Russian workers never succeeded in learning to pilot bidarkas to hunt otter or to process the furs without damage.

The company needed other types of skilled workers, such as joiners, coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, bookkeepers, navigators, and physicians. It was unable to rely completely on a Russian labor force, primarily because serfdom in the mother country tied peasants to the land. In addition, the government limited residence of Russians in the American settlement to seven years to protect the interests of the nobility, who feared that lifting restrictions might lure serfs to the new colony.\textsuperscript{20}

Russian Orthodox missions schools not only taught the
Russian language and converted the Aleuts, but also taught skills needed by the company. In 1825 Father Veniaminov founded the first Russian Orthodox church-school in the Aleutians at Iliaka and the new religion spread across the 1,500 mile chain of islands. Several factors attracted the Aleuts to the Russian church. First, church membership exempted them from paying tribute for three years. Second, Russian church ceremonies substituted for aboriginal ones, which Russian missionaries suppressed. Third, the church adapted certain procedures to Aleut customs and conducted services in both Russian and Aleut.

While proselytizing and training Aleuts for company employment, Veniaminov also encouraged traditional Aleut interests in art, music, and basketry. Russian missionaries' efforts to convert Aleuts were probably aided by the declining power of the shamans. Russian-introduced diseases proved beyond the shamans' curing abilities and their spiritual power diminished.

In addition to altering the Aleuts' religion, education, and ceremonial life, Russian missionaries had a profound impact on their family organization. Appalled by the Aleuts' sexual promiscuity, polygamy, and the practice of sharing wives with guests, missionaries subjected Aleuts to constant pressures to become monogamous and abstain from sex outside marriage. In the 1830s Veniaminov wrote that "after the acceptance to Christianity by the Aleut, polygamy
and the custom of regaling guests has been stopped," although he noted that the impulse to engage in these acts remained strong.

Pressures to alter family organization also came from other sources. N.P. Rezanov, the chief shareholder in the Russian-American Company, considered the large multifamily units to be unhealthy and ordered Aleuts to build smaller single-family dwellings. Although the nuclear family had been a recognized entity in Aleut culture, it had not been separated by residence. The pressures exerted by missionaries and other Russians led to the widespread adoption of monogamy and the nuclear family residence among the Aleut, although the pressures appear to have had less influence on Aleuts' casual and open attitudes towards sex.²³

Along with the changes in Aleut religion, ceremonial, and family life was the introduction of "kvass," a home brewed beer and wine. Alcohol was unknown in the Aleutians before the Russian contact. Anthropologists theorize that its quick adoption by Aleuts may have been due to the suppression of Aleut ceremonies during this period. Aleut drinking assumed forms that resembled ancestral behavior before ceremonies.²⁴ Drinking was social rather than solitary, occurring periodically, and involving group celebrations. The parties lasted until all the liquor was consumed. Similar to their behavior during ceremonies,
drinking Aleuts indulged impulses and abandoned restraints, but violence was still rare.  

The Russians also disturbed the ancient relationship between production and consumption by introducing the barter system of exchange. Instead of using all products for personal consumption Aleuts were required to exchange furs for money and then purchase merchandise from the company store (at prices set by the company).

Despite these widespread changes during the Russian administration, many aspects of the old culture survived. At the time of the United States purchase of Alaska most Aleuts still lived in barabaras, hunted and fished in bidarkas, and relied on their ancient technology. The sea was still the primary source for food, shelter, boats, and equipment. However, Russia's interest in her American colony was waning as the sea otter population was diminishing.

II

In 1867 the United States purchased Alaska's 375,000,000 acres for $7,200,000. America's first interest in Alaska lay in the Pribilof Island seal rookery. In Washington, Alaska was synonymous with the two small fog—
bound islands of St. Paul and St. George in the south Bering Sea. To these remote spots three million fur seals migrated annually to bear their young, a phenomenon which resulted in the world's largest aggregate of seals at one time. The Russians had forcibly settled these formerly uninhabited islands with Aleuts.\textsuperscript{26} In 1870 the U.S. government granted a twenty-year franchise to the Alaska Commercial Company, a San Francisco firm, to operate the seal rookery. In 1890 this franchise was transferred to the North American Commercial Company, and in 1910 the government assumed direct control of the rookery.\textsuperscript{27} The hunting of sea otters continued after the American purchase of Alaska, but in 1911 a treaty among Japan, Russia, Great Britain (covering Canada) and the United States forbade the taking of otter as they were nearly extinct. The taking of fur seals was limited to the United States government, with the net income from the sale of the furs to be divided among the treaty signers. The killing of fur seals was limited to the Pribilof Islands where all the "employees" were Aleut.\textsuperscript{28}

In 1913 the Aleutian chain was made into a national wildlife refuge. Aleuts on the islands could take any wildlife for subsistence and could catch foxes to sell the fur. Reindeer were bought to Atka, Umnak, and St. Paul by the federal government during the WW I period.\textsuperscript{29} Small reserves of land for schools and a hospital were created by presidential executive order, beginning in Unalaska in 1897,
but there, as elsewhere in Alaska, the whole system of
Indian reservations was not introduced, probably because
there was little white competition for Aleut land.\textsuperscript{30}

Aleuts still had a subsistence economy, but American
employees from the sealing companies and the government
succeeded in reorienting the Aleut to dependence on wage
employment. Traders, teachers, and missionaries played a key
role in bringing about this change. Aleuts came to rely on
the American stores for a wide variety of items, such as
clothes, toys, canned goods, rifles, ammunition, steel
fishing hooks, fishing line and tackle, wooden dories, and
several decades later, outboard engines and oil stoves. A
wooden boat saved Aleuts from weeks of work in building a
skin boat, and rifles were a more efficient means of
hunting.

Aleuts also adopted inefficient frame wooden houses,
largely because whites ridiculed the "filth" of the
barabaras. However, barabaras were still used for temporary
shelters at fish camps. The move to frame houses increased
Aleuts' dependency, because frame houses required coal,
cordwood, and later oil for heating, while a barabara could
be heated by small lamps.\textsuperscript{31}

As Aleuts were being drawn into western material
culture, American teachers, missionaries, and other settlers
sought to change other aspects of Aleut culture. Strong
believers in the Protestant ethic—with its emphasis on
cleanliness, prudence, discipline, hard work, self-improvement, and the avoidance of indulgences—and in the unquestioned superiority of the American culture, these settlers attacked the indigenous people's way of life. In 1886 Sheldon Jackson, missionary and first United States education agent in Alaska, illustrated this orientation: "It [Indian Education] was to instruct a people the greater portion of whom are uncivilized, who need to be taught sanitary conditions, the laws of health, improvement of dwellings, better methods of housekeeping, cooking, and dressing, more remunerative forms of labor, honesty, chastity, the sacredness of the marriage relationship, and everything that elevates man." In 1896, Jackson remarked on the potential benefits of socialized natives: "If the Alaska natives could be taught the English language, be brought under Christian influences by missionaries and trained into the forms of industry suitable for the territory, it seems to follow as a necessary result that the white population of Alaska, composed of immigrants from the States, would be able to employ them in their pursuits..." This orientation was not restricted to the missionary influence or to the nineteenth century. In 1929 a policy statement by the Board of Indian Commissioners for Alaska revealed little change in attitude: "The task of [Indian Education] is to supply the lacks caused by faulty environment so that the Indian child may be brought up to
the standards of cleanliness, order, regularity, and
discipline which the public school presupposes in white
children...the task is the changing of a way of life."³⁴

In contrast to the Russian school, which encouraged the
Aleut language and interests in art and music, the American
school, dedicated to "changing a way of life," discouraged
those interests. Teachers opposed the use of Aleut language,
and some parents, fearing reprisals from teachers, ceased to
speak it at home. Michael Lestenko recalled that, when he
was in school on St. George in the 1920s, if a child spoke
in Aleut in school he or she would have a "tabasco-like" hot
sauce put on their tongue. Needless to say it was an
effective method.³⁵ Teachers ignored Aleut history, and
ridiculed Aleut customs such as eating raw fish and using
fermented ("stinky") fish oil. Convinced that Aleuts were
wasteful, teachers forced them to save money and to budget.
In these ways, teachers chipped away at the old culture,
while trying to implant the values and work orientations of
the new.³⁶

The combined efforts of teachers, missionaries,
traders, forced Aleuts into the wage economy. However, on
the eve of World War II, many still survived on some
subsistence activities. Until the end of the nineteenth
century, Aleuts' income came primarily from sea-otter
hunting. By then sea-otters were disappearing, and Aleuts
had to find other sources of employment. Harvesting and
preparing seal skins became the major occupation on the Pribilof islands. This hunt was run by the U.S. government and Aleut labor was kept under tight control. Aleuts on islands other than the Pribilofs were also being influenced by the U.S. government through BIA-run schools and various government-backed projects to use the sea's resources.37 St. Paul and St. George of the Pribilof Islands were under the control of the Fish and Wildlife service since 1913. The federal agency managed the fur seal kill and marketing of the pelts. They managed Aleuts' lives by weekly inspections of their homes to insure cleanliness and paying them in script that was only redeemable locally. One scholar called the Pribilof Aleuts' "virtually slaves" to the federal government.38

Other Aleut communities experienced cycles of rapid economic development and then severe decline. These cycles were due to outside decisions by various actors, including the federal government, relating to Aleuts' natural resources and the manipulation of them for profit. Such ventures included a whaling operation run out of Unalaska in 1890; fox farming on Unalaska in the 1920s and 30s; a white-owned and operated sheep-raising business started on Unnak Island in 1934 that employed some Aleut; codfish and salmon-packing plants built by whites in the 1880s in the Alaska Peninsula for which some Aleuts worked on a seasonal basis. The seafood industry was later extended westward to Akutan

29
and Unalaska. At Unalaska in the 1930s a herring packing business employed both men and women.

The relationship of Aleuts, and other Native Alaskans, to the federal government was in many ways separate from the official policy regarding Native Americans living in the continental United States.\textsuperscript{39} In Alaska there were no reservations because the government officials believed there was no need to separate the aboriginal people from the sparse white population.\textsuperscript{40} Not until the advent of the Indian New Deal of the 1930s and 1940s were any attempts made to create reservations in Alaska--with the goal of protecting the natural resources of the natives.\textsuperscript{41}

Ernest Gruening, the territorial governor of Alaska, opposed reservations because they segregated the natives from white civilization. He argued the "reservation is a step backward and would mean nothing in the way of advantage or disadvantage."\textsuperscript{42} Gruening realized the New Dealers "had no hesitation in assuming that what in their view was good for the Indians must also be good for the Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians of Alaska."\textsuperscript{43}

The Indian Reorganization Act was extended to Alaska natives in 1936, but it had little effect on the Aleuts, due to the distances between island groups, poor travel conditions, differences in non-natives' influences and in economic opportunity.

The Aleut religious schools taught written Aleut and
Russian until the last one, at Unalaska, was forcibly closed in 1912 by education officials who opposed the use of Aleut and Russian languages. Methodist coeducation schools had been established at Unga in 1886 and at Unalaska in 1890, but in 1911 only Unalaska and Atka had them. By 1930 several Aleut villages had federal schools, King Cove and Unalaska had territorial schools, supplanting the mission ones, and the Pribilof Islands had a school provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Fisheries, which was the successor of the schools established by a private company. In 1940, 76 percent of children ages 5-14 were enrolled in schools.\(^4\)

Medical care and health instruction were less available than formal education. Unless a person west of Unalaska could manage to go to the BIA hospital there (built in the early 1930s and destroyed in 1942) the only professional service came when the ship's surgeon of a Coast Guard cutter visited briefly in the summer. Because Unalaska-Dutch Harbor was the summer port for the Coast Guard and Navy, it had more services available. Otherwise the Aleut people relied on teacher's first aid and provision of common medicines, and on folk medicine and midwifery.

On the eve of World War II one of the most interesting sources that reveals the attitudes of the BIA teachers towards Aleuts and some aspects of Aleut life is a three page essay by Ruby and Ralph Magee. The Magee's "Our Atka
Island Experience 1940-1942," reveals that the "Atka people had no contact with the United States other than through the mail order houses and the few people who happened out that way on boats." For Atkan "Unalaska was almost the only place that some of the people had visited, and that was mostly when they needed hospitalization." However, "about ten or twelve men were taken over to the Pribilof Islands on a Fish and Wildlife vessel each pelting season to work on the seals." The other source of income for Atkans was "to trap blue foxes on three of the near-by islands: Amlia, Adak and Amchitka, which had been allotted to them by the government." Other than those occasions "contact with outsiders was limited to the occasional Coast Guard and other vessels that would stop by once or twice a year." The village store was a cooperative in which Atkans would put subsistence materials for equal distribution.

The Magees noticed that, as for other Aleuts, the Russian Church was the center of the social activity of the village. All the religious holidays were observed by special services conducted by lay-workers in the church. On other occasions, "usually once a year," a priest would come to baptize the babies and perform marriage ceremonies. He stayed only overnight, then would go out to Attu before returning to Unalaska.

For food there was "a good supply of reindeer meat as ...there was a big herd of reindeer on Atka." Fish was
available at all times, and ducks and geese in season. However "the climate and soil was not suitable for gardens." Most of the Aleut food was shipped in by boat.

While impressed with the Aleuts' ability to survive in a harsh environment, the Magees did not think much of, or make an attempt to understand, Aleut intellect or history:

I don't think the people were concerned about the science or theory as to why or how the world or the people in it came about, other than the religious teachings their church offered. We heard nothing of their folk-lore, if they had any. We were kept so busy with all our many jobs that we didn't have time to think about prying into what they knew about their past.45

However, on the whole the Magees did "not find these people very different from other Americans." They argued that Aleuts were "not primitive at all the way isolated Eskimo villages were" and complemented them on having "their own midwives."

The Magees had about 25 children in the BIA school before the war, although no adults attended. The schoolhouse was also used for the monthly community meetings, of which the Christmas activities were the highlight. The Magees recalled the village choir would bring the traditional Russian star to the ceremonies and sing Russian carols.

The Aleuts of Atka "didn't have any special build-up for them to understand. They had the radio for years, and magazines gave them an understanding of how others lived.
They could all read English." The Magees thought that their "little homes were quite livable, with running water piped in from a mountain stream."

On the eve of World War II, then, there were a variety of Aleut relationships to the federal government. On Atka, contact was limited to the BIA teachers and a largely subsistence lifestyle was practiced. In contrast, in the Pribilofs there was a strong federal presence and officials attempted to control Aleut lives. A constant among Aleut communities was a deep reverence for the Russian Orthodox faith and a practice of at least a part-time subsistence diet based on the oil-rich foods of the Bering Sea. However, isolated or not, we shall see in the next chapter that all the Aleuts west of Unmak island would come to feel the ability of the federal government to alter their lives.
Notes Chapter I


2. Margaret Lantis, Arctic Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 5 (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 1984) "There are Eastern and Western branches of Aleut. Of the two Western dialects of Aleut, Atkan was still being spoken in 1980, but Attuan was nearly extinct. The Unalaska or Eastern dialect is spoken in the Fox Islands on the Alaska Peninsula, and in the Shumagin, Sanak, and Pribilof Island group." p. 161.

3. Pre-Contact Aleut Culture: Data Sheet, Alaska Museum of Fine Arts, Anchorage, Alaska.


6. For more on the modern baidarka see George Dyson, Baidarka, (Edmonds, WA: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1986) The boat was so light it could be carried under one arm. Baidarkas are currently enjoying a renaissance among modern sea kayak users. Their split bow and flexibility allow greater speed and maneuverability in rough seas.


9. Jones, Aleuts. p. 14. A different set of values governed relationships with outsiders. Anthropologist Dorthy Jones theorized that the displacement of aggression to enemy villages and slaves appears to have been an important means for ensuring an island's cohesion. When attacking another village, aggression and brutality were lauded as much as cooperation and generosity were within the village. Aleuts raided other villages for revenge or to obtain new wives, slaves, and rare stones for charms and weapons. War parties
conducted surprise attacks on other villages (Aleut and Eskimo) sometimes murdering all the older members and bringing back the younger ones as slaves. Slaves' treatment was diverse. Some became wives or adopted children and were integrated into the community. Others remained in slave status to be used or abused according to the whim of the owner. He might liberate them, add them to a dowry, torture them, or burn them alive.

11. Ibid, p. 130-34.
15. Ibid.
20. Okun, p. 172
21. Ivan P. Barsukov, The Life and Work of Innocent, the Archbishop of Kamchatka, the Kuriles, and the Aleutian Islands, and Later the Metropolitan of Moscow.


33. Ibid.

34. 1929 a policy statement by the Board of Indian Commissioners for Alaska.

35. Father Michael Lestenkof, Interview with the Author, May, 1992. Put in the story of his education and the tabasco-like hot sauce that was put on an Aleuts' child's tongue if they spoke their native language in school.

36. Michael Lestenkof, Interview.

37. These projects included fox farming and salmon and cod fisheries.


40. Ibid, While the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) permitted Native groups to adopt tribal constitutions for self-government and charters of incorporation to develop their natural resources, Alaska Natives were denied the right to form corporations under the IRA. While it was true that the "Indian New Dealers", Harold Ickes, John Collier and Felix Cohen, believed the reservation system was necessary in order to provide economic security to Alaska Natives, they had to persuade Congress to allow the Secretary of the Interior to create reservations in Alaska. Cohen believed the Alaska Natives' property rights could best be protected through the reservation system. From the beginning, Cohen and Collier realized Alaska Natives did not exist as tribes.--Many groups that would otherwise be termed "tribes" live in villages which are the basis of their organizations.

41. Ibid, p. 2.

42. Ibid, p. 83.
43. Ibid, p. 91.

44. After WW II Aleut students were transported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school at Sitka, but later some began attending Anchorage schools. Lantis, p. 181.

CHAPTER II

"Operation M 1"

Invasion of the Aleutian Islands

The American military made preparations on Unalaska throughout 1941 and 1942 causing concern among Unalaskan Aleuts. Questions were asked by Aleuts that went unanswered. The Aleuts Chief and a church committee banded together and approached the military demanding to know the situation as rumors of a possible Japanese attack spread. "National emergency" was the only noncommittal reply. Aleut recommendations and suggestions went unheeded and orders were given without explanation. By June of 1942 Unalaskan Aleuts "simply stopped asking" the military representatives about their fate.¹

As global conflict spread during 1940, U.S. military

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leaders directed their attention to preventing attacks on the Pacific frontier. The defense of the United States' western outposts, Alaska, Hawaii and the Panama Canal, were strengthened. Although Alaska was low on the priority list, by June 30, 1940 the Army had committed at least 5,000 troops to its defense.²

From the beginning of the war the United States began to plan for the defense of Alaska against a possible Japanese attack. Alaska's relative geographical proximity and its rich seas for salmon and fur seals had long attracted the Japanese. In fact by treaty, voided in 1941, the Japanese government was receiving a percentage of the profits from the Pribilof fur seal harvest, on the grounds that the range of the seal included Japanese territorial waters.

By the beginning of 1941, the approaching Pacific war increased the strategic value of the Aleutians. The westernmost Aleutian island, Attu, lay only 600 miles from Japan's northern flank in the Kurile Islands. The Boeing airplane plant and the Bremerton Navy Yard in Seattle were only eight hours' bomber-flight from the Aleutians. The Aleutians were stepping stones which either the United States or Japan could use offensively. They were also important to the United States as passage points on the shipping route for Lend-Lease traffic to the Soviet Union.³

With the above in mind, the Alaska Defense Command
(ADC), with Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner in command, was created in February 1941, as part of the recently formed Western Defense Command, to raise Alaska's priority in military operations. Earlier the Navy had established the Alaska Sector under the Thirteenth Naval District commanded by Rear Admiral Charles S. Freeman. Throughout the summer of 1941, garrisoning accelerated. The Army constructed fortifications on Unalaska Island to defend the naval installations at Dutch Harbor and sent approximately 5,500 troops there.  

During the fall of 1941 construction of air bases strategically located at Cold Bay in the Alaska Peninsula and Umnak Island in the Aleutians moved ahead. They were secretly built under the names of fish cannery companies. The Umnak airstrip was particularly important because it protected Dutch Harbor, which controlled the passage through the Aleutian chain, linking the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea. Therefore, strategic use of the Aleutians hinged largely on possession of Dutch Harbor.

On June 26, 1941 Army intelligence informed the War Plans Division that Japan might take advantage of the war between the Soviet Union and Germany to move against Alaska. It strongly urged the War Department to bring the Alaska garrisons to full strength as soon as possible. Immediately 225 more officers and 5,200 enlisted men moved into Alaskan positions.
After an eighteen month effort to strengthen defenses, General Buckner, had available by November 1941 "a sizable ground force of 20,000 men, four major airfields in southeastern and central Alaska, Army and Navy posts in Sitka, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor." The War Department, on November 28, 1941, warned that it expected Japan to begin hostilities soon and directed General Buckner to put the Alaska Defense Command on full alert. The attack, 10 days later, hit Hawaii, but the threat to Alaska remained.

Following Pearl Harbor the ADC bolstered the Aleutian bases in preparation for a future offensive against Japan. Since the Alaskan naval bases were still under construction and lacked adequate air support the ADC was concerned about a possible attack. The Governor of the Alaskan Territory, Ernest Gruening, wrote to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes that "it was well known to the Japanese that the Alaskan bases, while designed ultimately to be used offensively, are still far from complete, and that if they attacked soon would probably be unable to defend themselves adequately." He lamented that "Dutch Harbor is the base at which the Japanese can strike most easily and which they will probably select first since it is the most difficult of all to defend." In the five months after Pearl Harbor the Army nearly doubled its Alaska garrison to 40,424 men. In mid-March, Army intelligence reported that a Japanese offensive could be expected at any time.
In late April Colonel Jimmy Doolittle successfully bombed Tokyo. The Japanese Imperial Staff had been acting to rapidly secure its newly-acquired possessions and resources in the South Pacific; believing that the destruction of U.S. naval forces was necessary for Japanese hegemony in the South Pacific. Because the Japanese believed, erroneously, that Doolittle had launched his attack from the Aleutians, they acted to protect their exposed northern flank.

On May 5, 1942 in an effort to intercept Lend-Lease traffic to Siberia and to cripple U.S. naval forces in the Pacific, Japan authorized the "M I Operation." This two-phase operation involved establishing both defensive and offensive strategic positions in the Pacific. The Japanese planned to attack the Aleutian Islands as a diversion while simultaneously attacking the more strategically valuable Midway Island. They believed U.S. forces would concentrate in defense of the Aleutians while their main thrust hit Midway and the U.S. fleet divided between the Aleutians and Midway. If victorious, Japan would control the Pacific from the western Aleutians south to Midway.

The attack against the U.S. Pacific Fleet was the largest naval operation in Japanese history. Having broken the secret Japanese code, the U.S. Navy knew the details of their plan and knew an attack force would be launched from Japan around May 20. The Japanese planned to attack the Aleutians and Midway sometime after May 24.
The Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester Nimitz, decided not to split his forces and instead dispatched a small nine-ship force to Alaska. In essence, Nimitz left Attu and Kiska undefended. On May 25, 1942 Nimitz warned Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, Commander of that North Pacific Force that the "Japanese have completed plans for an operation to secure an advanced base in the Aleutian Islands."\(^{15}\)

 Intercepted Japanese messages enabled the U.S. to predict even more precisely when the attack would occur. Military historian Stetson Conn observed that "by May 21 the United States knew fairly accurately what the strength of the Japanese Northern Area Force would be and when it would strike."\(^{16}\) Even so, poor weather made it impossible to locate the enemy attack force until a Navy patrol plane spotted the Japanese on June 2, 400 miles south of Kiska Island.

 On the morning of June 3, 1942 the Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor naval installations and the following day attacked army facilities at Fort Mears. (see photograph below) Nearby Unalaska's air defenses were unable to hold off the enemy attack. Squadrons coming from Cold Bay arrived too late, and the radio communication systems were so inadequate that the secret airfields at Umnak never received word of the Japanese attack. Even though the Japanese were suffering decisive defeat at Midway, their commander ordered
the Aleutian campaign to continue, presumably to secure a

Fig. 4. "Attack on Dutch Harbor."\textsuperscript{17}
defensive position in the northern Pacific.\textsuperscript{18}

Foggy weather and the usual poor radio communications made the roving Japanese fleet difficult for U.S. vessels to find. On June 7 and 8, while Admiral Theobald was searching for it in the Bering Sea near the Pribilof Islands, the Japanese Northern Force landed approximately 2,500 soldiers on Kiska and Attu without opposition. Ten U.S. weather crewmen on Kiska were taken prisoner. The following day in Chigarof village on Attu, 42 Aleuts and two non-Aleut Indian Service employees were captured.\textsuperscript{19}

The radio silence from the two islands made headquarters fear the worst, which was confirmed on June 10 when a break in the weather allowed an American scouting plane to sight the Japanese occupation forces on Kiska.\textsuperscript{20} Long-distance bombings proved ineffective in dislodging the Japanese so an airstrip and command post were constructed on Adak Island in the western Aleutians. Throughout fall 1942 continuous bombing of Japanese installations on Kiska kept the Japanese on the defensive. Secret U.S. airfields on Umnak prevented the Japanese from patrolling the waters of the north Pacific from the Aleutians. Conn noted that "while enemy orders referred to Kiska as the key position on the northern attacking route against the U.S. in the future it is fairly evident that the Japanese had no such design and were attempting only to block the American advance."\textsuperscript{21}
(see map 1 and 2)

Map 1. "The Pacific and Adjacent Theaters, 1942"
Map 2. "Limit of the Japanese Advance."
That fall General Buckner landed small forces on Atka and other islands, including St. Paul in the Pribilofs. To Buckner the Japanese occupation of Kiska and Attu was the only obstacle to launching an offensive against Japan from the Aleutians. By December 1942 Buckner had amassed 150,000 troops in the Alaskan theater and in the following month Admiral Nimitz ordered the North Pacific Force to clear the islands of Japanese troops.\textsuperscript{24}

During the winter of 1943 the North Pacific Force blockaded Attu and Kiska to force the Japanese to surrender these outposts. The blockade was effective, for the last Japanese supply ship reached Attu in March. Equally devastating, the Japanese had lost the air war to the U.S. by the middle of the spring: losing more than 1,000 airplanes at Guadalcanal, the Japanese had no replacements for the Aleutian campaign. Finally, Japanese naval supremacy in the north Pacific ended in March after the U.S. won the battle for the Komandorski Islands west of Attu.\textsuperscript{25}

Fewer than 10,000 Japanese troops on Kiska and Attu awaited the inevitable attack. The first target was Attu. After a bloody nineteen day battle in May, marked by frenzied suicidal counter attacks, the United States regained possession of the island. Out of a force of 15,000 American soldiers, 549 died on Attu, 1,148 were wounded, and
2,100 were felled by disease and non-battle injuries.\textsuperscript{26} The Japanese lost their entire force: 2,350 dead and 29 taken as prisoners. The price of victory was high; Attu ranks as one of the most costly assaults in the Pacific war. For the Japanese Attu's losses were second only to Iwo Jima.\textsuperscript{27} Among the advance scouts were Aleuts from villages on the Pribilofs and along the Aleutian chain.\textsuperscript{28} Ironically during that service their families were interned in southeastern Alaska.

In July 1943 the U.S. successfully launched a bombing attack from Adak against the Japanese Northern Force on Paramushiro in the Kurile Islands. Wisely, the Japanese, faced with a weakening northern flank withdrew their troops from Kiska, in late July, under the cover of fog. When the Americans attacked Kiska in mid-August, their only opponent was the dense fog.\textsuperscript{29} It was clear at this point that the Japanese no longer challenged the United States in the Aleutians. Although military historian George L. MacGarrigle thought that "in one sense the departure of the Japanese from Kiska without a fight was unfortunate," because it gave American commanders an idea of how the Japanese might react to overwhelming odds. Attu, not Kiska, was the prototype for the Pacific war. American troops in the Aleutians shifted over to garrison duty and to watching the sporadic bombing raids launched from the islands.

The coming of war had immediate and long term effects
on the Aleuts. In truth their homes had been invaded by two hostile forces. The catalyst was the Japanese invasion, but it was the American forces that made the greatest impact. From early 1942, Aleuts were confined to their home towns, surrounded by barbed wire. Military police manned checkpoints and enforced curfews, while blackouts and practice alerts were frequent. The army built bomb shelters and drilled the Aleuts in their use.

With the Aleutians cleared and 144,000 American and Canadian troops stationed in the Alaska/Aleutians area, in September 1943, the army re-evaluated Alaska's role in the war. In September 1943 General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, submitted a plan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the invasion of Japan by forces based partially on Attu and Kiska. The plan was never used. Also in September Admiral Nimitz placed the Aleutians in a "Non-Invasion Status." Presumably such status removed any obstacle to the Aleuts returning home, however, as we will see below that was not to be the case. While the military continued to discuss strikes against Japan's Kurile Islands from the Western Aleutians, Washington reduced the Alaska garrisons. By the end of 1943, army forces had been reduced to 113,000 men and General Buckner was instructed to prepare for further cuts to 50,000 men. Possible use of the islands as an offensive base appears to be the rationale for keeping Aleuts away. But, Stetson Conn concluded that by then "any
danger to Alaska and the Western Hemisphere had long since disappeared."\textsuperscript{30}

Clearing the Japanese from the Aleutians eliminated both a military and psychological threat. Japan lost its toe hold in the Western Hemisphere. In June of 1942 Japan had threatened America's northern flank; fourteen months later the threat was against Japan.\textsuperscript{31} Although the 20,000 American troops stayed in Alaska during the last two years of the war. They saw no combat, but they had to be housed--provided another rationale for keeping Aleuts away.\textsuperscript{32}

It is important to evaluate the Aleuts' treatment during the war in light of the military situation. American commanders almost immediately recognized that the Japanese purpose in occupying Attu and Kiska was to prevent their use as bases for Allied air strikes against the home islands. The purely defensive Japanese objectives in the Western Aleutians was conclusively established by the fall of 1942, as the enemy made no effort to launch air strikes against American military installations to the east. Also, the Japanese sacrificed their entire Attu garrison and afterwards withdrew completely from the Aleutian theater. The war in Alaska was over in late August 1943--only 14 months after the Aleuts had been evacuated from their homes. As we shall see in the following chapters the longer that Aleuts were kept in the unsafe conditions of the camps the more deaths would occur. Return to the islands was possible
in 1943, and indeed some Aleuts did return for a few months to conduct sealing operations, and yet arrangements were not made for the other Aleuts to return. The argument of the navy was that Aleuts had to be moved for their own safety, but, as we shall see, after August 1943, their safety was in more jeopardy in Southeastern Alaska than it would have been on the Aleutians.
Notes Chapter II


8. Memo, Ernest Gruening to Harold Ickes, Feb. 14, 1942. In Kirtland, Vol. I, P. 52. Since Alaska was then a territory the governor was appointed by and reported to the Secretary of the Interior.

9. Ibid.


18. PJD, p. 321.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.


25. PJD, p. 322.

26. Ibid.


30. Conn, US Army, p. 80. Conn acknowledged that U.S. military operations did not completely cease. Bombing attacks on Paramushiro were launched from Aleutian bases from 1943 to 1945 to keep constant pressure on Japan's northern flank. These attack tied up one-sixth of Japan's Air Force. By the fall of 1943, however, the threat of Japanese advances and occupation had long since dissipated.

31. George L. MacGarrigle, Aleutian Islands p. 25. MacGarrigle writes in his conclusion that "the idea of using the western Aleutians as steppingstones to Japan had no official approval. General DeWitt and others from time to time urged an assault by this route upon Japan's Kurile Islands, but commitments to other theaters, and the desire of the Soviet Union not to have its neutrality with Japan compromised, thwarted sanction of the proposal."

32. MacGarrigle, Aleutian Islands, p. 26. MacGarrigle states: "The centerpiece of the campaign was the battle of Attu. In terms of numbers engaged, Attu ranks as one of the
most costly assaults in the Pacific. For every 100 enemy
found on the island, about 17 Americans were killed or
wounded. The cost of taking Attu was thus second only to Iwo
Jima...Stung by the brutal fight for Attu, Admiral Kinkad
sought to avert the same mistakes at Kiska. While the full
blown attack three-months later upon the deserted island was
an embarrassment...lessons learned by the Army in preparing
and equipping troops to survive the rigors of combat in
wretched weather and difficult mountain terrain would prove
useful during the upcoming Italian campaign."
CHAPTER III

"It Would be a Great Mistake"

The Relocation of Aleutian Villagers

While global military events were conspiring to bring Japanese and Americans into conflict on the treeless tundra of the Aleutian Islands, the bureaucratic organizations that controlled Aleuts' lives were engaged in debate over the fate of the indigenous peoples. The outcome of that debate was the decision to remove the Aleuts for their own safety. Unhappily, the Aleuts were not given proper warning that they would be moved; nor were they allowed to take valued possessions that would have improved their psychological well being; nor were they allowed a voice regarding transportation or camp locations. Decision making and
Map 3.

Aleut Relocation
1942

Alaska

Pribilof Islands

Bristol Bay

Kodiak Island

Anchorage

Juneau

Gulf of Alaska

Aleut Islands

Miles

0
100
200

Kiska 100 miles
Atu 250 miles

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implementation was done without consulting with those most immediately affected. It was a continuation of unilateral policymaking in Indian affairs despite the Indian New Deal emphasis on tribal sovereignty.

The agencies that shaped the Aleuts' fate included the Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Division of Territories and Island Possessions, the Navy, the Army, and Alaskan territorial officials. The Interior Department assumed responsibility for Aleuts through the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Division of Territories and Island Possessions. The OIA was unique to Alaska, due to the unique relationship the Department of the Interior had with Aleut sealers and it directed Aleut education; the BIA "established primary schools on the islands, and through its Alaska Indian Service appointed a teacher to the larger villages."¹ Because the FWS managed the highly profitable fur seal harvest on the Pribilof Islands, they had responsibility for the general welfare of the Pribilof Aleuts.² The Division of Territories coordinated federal war agencies on the Aleuts' relocation.³

Interestingly, government officials had rejected the possibility of relocating Aleuts before the Japanese attacked, even though they thought an attack could come. On
March 13, 1942, Governor E. L. Bartlett called a conference to discuss evacuation plans for Alaska in the event of attack. The minutes reflect "general agreement" that no attempt should be made to evacuate "Eskimos or other primitive natives from Alaska." However, the Aleut women and children of Unalaska should be moved to other Aleut villages to avoid what the conference members termed "both military and social dangers." (Military meaning Japanese invasion and social meaning interaction with the troops.) Due to its proximity to an existing military base, the Office of Indian Affairs had discussed the possibility of relocation with Aleuts on Unalaska. The Aleuts suggested several sites where they were on good terms with other Aleuts, but their suggestions of those sites were ignored.

The next governor, Ernest Gruening, also opposed the evacuation of the Aleutian Island villages, on the grounds that "bombardment of non-military areas is unlikely" and that the dislocation from a forced evacuation "would be a greater damage and involve greater risks to the ultimate welfare of the people than the probable risks if they remain" in their home villages. Office of Indian Affairs Commissioner John Collier, the author of the Indian New Deal, thought that the military should "leave the Natives where they are, unless the navy insists that they be moved out." John Collier's goal was to encourage Indian tribalism and independence. This could, in part, explain why
there was an insistence that Aleuts from different islands be held in different camps. Collier's memorandum appears consistent with his goal of keeping Indian societies on their land, but in no way were the Aleut given the "status, responsibility and power" the New Deal policy supposedly granted to Native Americans. The final decision over the Aleuts' fate would rest with the navy.6

Major General Simon B. Buckner, commander of the Alaska Defense Command (ADC), also argued against relocating Aleut villagers. Governor Gruening characterized Buckner's position in a June 4th letter to Secretary of the Interior Ickes as being "...that it would be a great mistake to evacuate these natives...[it would be]...pretty close to destroying them." According to Gruening, Buckner feared "that if they were removed they would be subject to the deterioration of contact with the white man, would likely fall prey to drink and disease, and that probably they would never get back to their historic habitat."7 Unfortunately, Buckner's was prophetic; ironically, he would be the one to order the Aleuts' relocation.

John Collier, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, gave his views on Aleut relocation in a April 10, 1942 memo to Ickes. Collier thought it urgent to decide on arranging the evacuation, because, he said, the navy did not plan to extend its protection beyond Dutch Harbor. But, he cautioned, the western Aleuts "show no inclination to

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move."

Collier was frustrated because "the various agencies consulted are not in agreement as to policy." Governor Gruening thought Aleuts should remain, Admiral Freeman thought they should be moved, and the OIA had not reached a decision. Collier worried that the BIA "might be criticized if Dutch Harbor were bombed with incidental loss or death at Unalaska which is separated from Dutch Harbor only by a narrow strait." Collier was uncertain but "inclined to leave the Natives where they are, unless the Navy insists that they be moved."\(^9\)

For his part, Governor Gruening wanted the Aleuts to make the decision as to possible relocation. On June 4, 1942, he wrote to Ickes that "it appears that neither of these communities (Attu and Atka) has had the opportunity to decide whether or not they would want to be moved." The best way to approach the issue, he said, was to have a meeting with the Aleuts where "the pros and cons of...so momentous a decision, the possible risks and alternatives, would be presented to them understandingly, sympathetically and clearly." The Aleuts' would need to know the full "implications of being moved."\(^10\)

Out of consideration for the Aleuts, Gruening recommended that they be consulted before evacuation.\(^11\) The actions of the Japanese precluded this well-intentioned plan, Secretary Ickes, responded to Gruening that "recent
events have changed the situation. Attu is now occupied by the enemy, and the Navy is in the process of evacuating the natives of Atka and the Pribilof Islands."\textsuperscript{12}

Despite all of the officials' reservations, the Navy proceeded to evacuate Aleuts. The officials understood the probable effects on Aleuts, but bowed to the Navy's decision as a priority of wartime. Each island had its particular problems with the relocation, but all suffered from the lack of warning and severe restrictions upon the goods Aleuts could take with them.

On the more geographically isolated Pribilof Islands, located about two hundred miles north of Dutch Harbor in the Bearing Sea, the circumstances of evacuation were to be unique. In 1942 St. Paul and St. George were among the largest Aleut communities. The islands were the principal breeding grounds for the North Pacific fur seal and were a federal preserve administered by the FWS. The Aleuts who lived on the Pribilofs were employed by the FWS to conduct the annual fur seal harvest.

On June 14, 1942, two days after the evacuation of Atka, officers from a navy patrol craft went ashore on St. Paul to notify FWS personnel and the Pribilovians that their communities would be evacuated in the immediate future.\textsuperscript{13} The St. Paul community, consisting of 294 Aleuts and 15 non-Aleut FWS employees, was loaded aboard the Delarof on June 15th. The next day the Delarof anchored off St. George
Island and evacuated 183 Aleuts and 7 non-Aleut FWS employees. Dan Benson, the caretaker on St. George Island, wrote the Superintendent of the FWS in Seattle that initially the military came to the island to remove all the "whites who wished to leave." All decided to leave except Father Theodosy, who "elected to remain with the natives." Later that day a radio message informed them "that the entire population of the Pribilofs was to be evacuated immediately." The Navy instructed Benson to "prepare the village for destruction...by placing a pail of gasoline in each house and building and a charge of dynamite for each other installation such as storage tanks, light plants, trucks, radio transmitters, etc." And, as was to become the rule, everyone was limited to "the packing of absolutely nothing but one suitcase per person and a roll of blankets."

On Sunday June 15, Benson went ashore at 10:00 p.m. and "informed the whites of everything." At 10:30 he "told" the "native gang" to have "their women pack" while they set the charges to blow up the village. The words show an interesting difference in tone. The first priority was to keep the whites well informed. Aleuts were "told" the situation, not "informed" like the whites, and were referred to as a "gang."

Then they waited until Tuesday for the Delarof to arrive to take them away the islanders. It was a dramatic scene as they hauled all the baggage and blankets, as
allowed, down to the beach and loaded the Aleuts. Some Aleuts would, unknowingly, be taking their last look at their home island. (see pictures below)

When the Delarof arrived at Dutch Harbor, on the island Fig. 5.15
of Unalaska, on Wednesday afternoon, the Atka population was
taken aboard, at Dutch Harbor, and the ship headed out early
the next morning for an unknown destination. Benson heard
"many rumors" and even the captain did not know the exact
destination of his ship. Seattle, Cook's Inlet, and Wrangell
were reported as possible destinations at various times.
Finally on June 23 they met a patrol boat which was carrying
orders for the Delarof to proceed to Funter Bay to leave the
Pribilof group, and then to Killisnoo to drop the Atka
people.20 The Atkans, who the Delarof picked up at
Unalaska were also in the first group of Aleuts to be
relocated.

The outbreak of World War II immediately changed life
for the Atkans. As soon as he heard the news over the radio
of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the BIA caretaker Mr. Magee
told the villagers "that they ought to pack up and be
prepared to leave anytime. He thought "surely the Coast
Guard or someone else would come to evacuate us." However
they waited six months to be taken off the island. Life
settled to normality, except for the blackouts. In the
Magees' version of events, a letter came from the Alaska
Native Service office in April 1942 requesting them to talk
with the people about the possibility of having to move to
safety in some other part of the territory. The Magees
thought that the Aleuts "were of course quite willing to
follow." Supposed to be ready at a moment's notice they "all

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packed up a few belongings to take," and waited and waited.

In June when Dutch Harbor was bombed, an American plane landed in Atka bay after flying through many miles of dense fog. The pilot went to the school and informed the Magees of the attack on Dutch Harbor. The pilot had been on patrol when he received word of the attack over the radio and, being low on fuel, landed at Atka in search of fuel. Using one of their bilge pumps the Atkans helped the pilot refuel the plane and within six hours had him on his way. His news left them all shaken. And for two anxious weeks there was no sign of Japanese or American forces.21

When Americans did arrive, a plane tender came into port and laid eighteen buoys in front of the village. The officer in charge told the Magees that they "would be having some action around there before long." Soon thereafter eighteen planes landed and were serviced by the plane tender. The tranquility of Atka changed dramatically. The crews from these planes slept on the schoolhouse floor and in the Magees' quarters. They came in 30 at a time, to sleep for three hours, and then would be awakened to go out on another mission.22

The Magees instructed the people to "move out to their fish camps about three miles from the village, thinking that they might be safer out there in their tents." Soon afterwards the skipper of the plane tender came ashore and told them that they could have twenty minutes to prepare to
leave the village. He had orders to burn all the buildings before the Japanese could take over. A Japanese reconnaissance plane flew over and navy officers told the Magees to get the Aleuts on board the tender to be taken to Dutch Harbor. However, there wasn't time to get word to the fish camp so the Magees were ordered aboard and the navy men torched the village, in the only case of a scorched earth policy being carried out in North America during the war. The two hours or so after the ship left Atka, Japanese bombed what was left of the village and strafed the tents at the fish camp.

Larry Dirks, Sr., one of the Atkan chiefs, had a distinct perspective on the evacuation of Atka. Dirks recalled that many boats and planes were going in and out of Atka harbor and he saw men dead and wounded. For safety reasons, they were at their fish camps, and could see their village was on fire. The church and the school houses provided flames that could be seen from miles away.

The Atkans knew that they needed provisions and went back to the burning village. Upon arrival from their fish camps they were immediately gathered and put aboard and once aboard, were not allowed to leave. The Aleuts were concerned about their boats as they were the key to survival on the islands and Dirks naturally assumed they would need them when relocated. As chief, he was able to convince the navy to allow them to tie their skiffs to the larger vessel, but
the boats were soon released when it was learned that water was coming in from the swells. Dirks and the other Atkans were "in tears seeing" their boats and island left behind. They were also unsure if everyone from Atka had been taken away." The Aleuts were "worried, knowing that very little of the belongings were being taken, that most everything which we owned" was consumed in the fire. Two days later they settled into empty buildings in Unalaska to await the transport Delarof and its Pribilof evacuees.

II

After the initial relocations, government agencies disagreed about the need for further evacuation. By the end of June 1942, the Japanese were only beginning their occupation of the Aleutians. Governor Gruening, as chairman of the Alaska War Council, telegraphed Secretary Ickes on June 20 that the Council feared the Japanese planned to invade the U.S. mainland, using the Aleutians as a base. General Buckner advised the OIA that no more villages in the Aleutian Islands should be evacuated, but Admiral Freeman
felt that other Aleutian villages were in danger.\textsuperscript{26} Freeman prevailed, and issued orders "directing the evacuation of all natives from the Aleutian Islands."\textsuperscript{27}

In a sweep eastward from Atka to Akutan, the Aleut villages of Nikolski on Umnak Island, Makushin, Biorka, Chernofski, and Kashega on Unalaska Island, and Akutan on Akutan Island, were evacuated. Nikolski was the first, one week after Freeman issued his order. The Aleuts of Nikolski were not warned of their impending evacuation, and when the time came they, like the Atkans and Pribilovians, were given only a few hours notice. On July 5, two navy and army ships arrived at Nikolski and removed the entire village of 70 Aleuts plus the OIA teacher in the village, her husband, and the non-Aleut foreman of the Aleutian Livestock Company, a sheep ranch on Umnak.\textsuperscript{28}

The evacuation of the small villages on Unalaska Island and Akutan was documented mainly by personal recollections of the evacuees. According to their testimony, the Nikolski Aleuts together with the villagers from Chernofski, Kashega, and Makushin departed for southeastern Alaska from Chernofski on the \textit{S.S. Columbia}, an Alaskan Steamship Company vessel. The OIA reported that 72 Aleuts from Nikolski, 41 from Akutan, 20 from Kashega, 18 from Biorka, and 9 from Makushin (including one white) were evacuated.\textsuperscript{29} The entire population of these villages was taken to Wrangell Institute, near Juneau, for several weeks
until the OIA located a place to resettle them. Later, they were moved to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp administered by the OIA at Ward Lake near Ketchikan.

The situation at Unalaska Village, the largest Aleut community on Unalaska Island, was tense and confusing in the day preceding the evacuation. Mayor John W. Fletcher, a non-Aleut, believing that the Aleuts were desperate to be moved, telegraphed to Secretary Ickes urging that they be "taken out." Philemon Tutiakoff recalled that Aleuts were indeed alarmed and feared an assault on the town of Unalaska.

Shortly after Secretary Ickes made arrangements with the navy, the evacuation ship, the S.S. Alaska, docked at Unalaska. Commander William N. Updegraf, captain of the Naval station at Dutch Harbor, issued orders that: "all natives, or persons with as much as one eighth native blood were compelled to go..." This order divided families. For example, Charles Hope, a white man, remained in Unalaska while his Aleut wife was required to evacuate. Racial issues, while not causing the evacuation policy, were manifested in interesting ways during the relocation. On some islands, like Atka, Aleuts were almost left behind, while whites were moved out, yet on Unalaska whites remained, while Aleuts were moved out. The way relocation policy was carried out revealed a racial segregation that was applied against Aleuts in both situations.
Philemon Tutiakoff of Unalaska recalled that they were given approximately twenty-four hours notice that they were to be taken away "for their own protection." Military Police visited each home to make sure that baggage was limited to one case per person. Tutiakoff remembered the numerous questions that went unanswered. "Where are we going? How long will we be gone? What will happen to our community and our homes? What will happen to our belongings, our pets, our fish camps, our skiffs and dories? What about our children, our ill, our elderly?" To Tutiakoff it was "galling and demeaning...that those in charge regarded us as incapable of awareness and any form of decision-making." He thought that "at no time throughout this entire process were we given the right to make choices of any kind...the authorities treated the Aleuts as if the people were inanimate objects." 

Although no documents explain why only Aleuts were compelled to leave Unalaska village, several partial explanations can be suggested. The OIA's responsibility extended to persons of one-eighth Native American blood, and its evacuation and relocation efforts were consequently limited to that group and its own employees. This does not explain why non-Aleuts residing in the Dutch Harbor-Unalaska area were not evacuated. Many non-Aleuts probably were not evacuated because of the demand for construction workers at the Siems-Drake Company, which handled most of
the Alaskan defense construction work for the navy and employed over 3,000 civilians.\textsuperscript{38}

Some Aleuts protested against being moved and the navy would not compel them.\textsuperscript{39} Copeland requested permission from Commander Updegraff to compel the Aleuts to go, but Updegraff would not forcibly evacuate them, and eleven Aleuts stayed behind. Nevertheless, the OIA reported that 111 Unalaskans arrived at the Wrangell Institute aboard the \textit{S.S. Alaska} on July 26, 1942.\textsuperscript{40} They remained in Wrangell until late August, after which they were moved to an abandoned cannery at Burnett Inlet on Annette Island in southeastern Alaska.

Immediately, after Unalaska, Admiral Freeman decided that further removal of Aleut villages east of Akutan Island was unnecessary.\textsuperscript{41} A total of 881 Aleuts had been removed by the U.S. Navy.\textsuperscript{42} However, American military forces were not the only military groups to remove Aleuts from their homeland. The Japanese military, after occupying Attu, had to decide how to deal with their Aleut captives.

In May 1942 the U.S. Navy attempted to evacuate the Attu islanders, but adverse seas made it impossible to land on shore. The evacuation vessel's commander asked Mike Hodikoff, the Attuan Aleut chief, if he wanted his people evacuated at that time. He declined.\textsuperscript{43}

This evacuation offer was not made in a manner that allowed the Attuans to make an informed decision about
leaving the island. Governor Gruening had wanted the OIA to discuss these options with the Attuans, and he had pointed out to Secretary Ickes on June 4 that "presenting this matter to the Attuaites involves something of a problem since it could not be done by a mere radio message." In a somewhat condescending tone toward the Aleuts he state that "the pros and cons to them of so momentous a decision, the possible risks and alternatives, would have to be presented to them understandingly, sympathetically and clearly."44

Gruenings recommendations to Ickes came too late and no attempt was made by the Interior Department to discuss evacuation possibilities with the Attuans.

The Japanese invaded on June 8, 1942. As soon as the village was occupied, all the inhabitants were gathered in the schoolhouse for interrogation. The two non-natives Foster Jones, an OIA radio operator, and his wife Etta Jones, were also interrogated. Following the questioning all were put into one of the Aleut homes while the troops searched the village for weapons and other threatening items. Later in the day, after the army had established headquarters in the Jones' house (the BIA schoolhouse), the Aleuts were confined to their homes. The Joneses were forced into an old unused subterranean badara, being beaten by a rifle butt in the process.45

The second day of the occupation, the Joneses cut their wrists. Foster Jones bled to death, but Etta's cut was
superficial and she lived. There are conflicting accounts of the death of Foster Jones. The *Polar Times* of Juneau asserted that the Japanese killed him, but Aleut survivors think that Jones killed himself rather than submit to capture.\(^4^6\) Shortly after the incident, Etta was sent to Yokohama and detained with other non-combat civilians captured in the Pacific theater.

Parascovia Wright was seventeen in 1942. She recalled "all of the shooting...that surrounded the village" when the Japanese attacked. She was holding her child when a bullet tore her clothes. The Japanese than "took all of the people to the schoolyard and took down the American flag and burned it up and they put the other flag in its place." Inside the school her "child was crying so hard that one of the soldiers told me to shut him up." After the interrogation the Japanese put the Aleuts under house arrest for three or four days. Wright remembered thinking: "We can't get out. We can't go to the bathroom."

The Japanese began immediately to garrison the island and to construct housing for their troops. Shortly thereafter they eased restraints on Aleut movement allowing them to fish and go about their routine. In August the "old chief" passed away of natural causes. Representatives of each household gathered in the church for a wake, and he was buried the same day in the church cemetery. As his coffin was lowered into the ground the villagers sang hymns and
prayed. The Japanese noted that the "old chief" was the most important man in the village—and described him as being "rather short and swarthy, almost blind and very taciturn."47

In September 1942 the Japanese temporarily changed their Aleutian strategy and decided to abandon Attu (only to return in October). The troops were moved to Kiska. On September 17 at 9:00 am the forty-one Aleuts were put on the Yoko-maru with whatever possessions they could carry. What remained on the island was burned or destroyed. The Aleuts were taken to Kiska and then transferred to the Osada-maru for shipment to Japan.48 Wright remembered that "they took all of the village to a Japanese ship." Meaning that in the hold of the ship were crammed all Aleut possessions.49 The horrified Attuan were told that "not many people will return to that island." The Japanese feared the Attuans would reveal their military strength to American forces so the forty-one Aleuts were taken to Otaru on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido.50

The Japanese insisted that Aleuts take with them, in the hold of the ship, all their worldly possessions—which included household goods, outboard motors, and boats. Henry Stewart of Waseda University in Japan in his report on the Japanese invasion postulated that the Aleuts were allowed to take these goods because "they were not to be put into prison camps, so consequently they would need them to
survive as there was a critical shortage of such goods in Japan." Stewart thought that the Japanese assumed that the Aleuts would be acculturated and live permanently in Japan. Despite Japanese racism of the time, translated documents show that the Japanese equated the Aleuts to the Japanese-controlled natives living in their northernmost Kurile Islands. Ironically, when the U.S. Army occupied Japan and returned the Aleuts to the United States, it allowed them to keep only a change of clothes, the rest of their possessions stayed behind on Hokkaido.

Apart from the experiences of the Attuans, the other Aleuts were relocated and interned by the American military. The United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment in its 1982 report Personal Justice Denied found "no persuasive showing that evacuation of the Aleuts was motivated by racism or that it was undertaken for any reason but their safety."\(^5\) While racism may not have been the cause of the relocation, the manner in which it was conducted was racist. There was a general milieu of racism toward Aleuts on the islands or with the general attitudes of whites in Alaska toward native peoples. Without doubt, as the testimonies of officials and Aleuts in this chapter reveal, race was a factor, but not the only factor, in the Aleut relocation. Aleut safety surely was on the minds of some of the military, but so were Aleut homes as the following exchange of letters indicates.

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Secretary Ickes, wrote an angry letter to Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, when he heard of the Aleut relocation. He was not concerned about Aleut safety, but rather the "the loss of more than a million dollars by reason of the discontinuance of operations at the Pribilof Islands, where 95,013 fur-seal skins were taken in the summer of 1941 and 834 fox skins were obtained during the preceding winter. In addition, the byproducts plant produced oil and meal of considerable value." He demanded "that arrangements be made to return the natives and supervisory personnel by Naval transport to the Pribilof Islands next April or May to resume sealing and other operations." Ickes wanted to end "their present unsatisfactory status as refugees," and return them to the islands to "improve their health, enable them to earn a livelihood, and at the same time will produce revenue for the Government."52

Stimson defended the "military necessity" behind the Pribilovian's evacuation and asserted that they could not be returned immediately. He explained that the occupation of the Pribilof Islands was made possible by using "the housing of the former occupants, and insufficient housing exists for both troops and the native population." In addition, Stimson thought that the return of civilians would "incur an additional burden on our already overtaxed shipping facilities in that area." His judgement was that the Pribilof Islands constituted an important "stronghold in an
active combat theater, and as long as that theater remains active, it is not deemed desirable to have civilian population in the Pribilof garrison." Regardless of the Aleuts' suffering they would not be returned until "the military situation is such that the action is deemed feasible."\textsuperscript{53}

Flore Lekanoff and Alice Petrevilli, a Pribilof Aleut and an Atkan Aleut respectively, also disagreed with the Commission's findings. While they acknowledged that "safety" played a role in the evacuation, they claimed that the military relocated them to use their homes.\textsuperscript{54} Petrevilli revealed that despite an order to raze her village on Atka, so as to leave nothing for the Japanese, three houses were spared. "Those three houses had indoor plumbing, running water, hot water; those three houses they didn't burn."\textsuperscript{55} She also pointed out that initially the military even after destroying all but three houses planned to leave the more than eighty Atkans on their island and evacuate only the OIA teachers.\textsuperscript{56} To Petrevilli, the fact that the military was willing to leave them on an island with only three usable houses for over eighty people suggested that the safety of Aleuts was not a high priority.\textsuperscript{57}

Because the evacuation was so poorly planned, the Aleuts lost the personal possessions they reluctantly left behind. Testimony from the evacuees established that in most
cases they were given unnecessarily short notice. They were forced to leave behind most personal belongings—including clothing, family albums, musical instruments (highly prized in Aleut culture), icons, crafts, boats and essential hunting and fishing equipment. No provision was made by OIA or the military to care for these possessions. They were left, in most cases, unpacked and secured only by a lock on the front door, quite vulnerable to the theft and deterioration that followed. The invasion by the Japanese and the evacuation of the islands exposed to view a racism against Aleuts that had long existed on the part of whites who inhabited or visited the islands, and in general throughout the territory of Alaska. Alaskan historian Terrence Cole's work has shown that racial segregation and "Jim Crow policies were standard practice throughout much of Alaska" and Native Alaskans were "second class citizens in their own land."58 The manner in which Aleuts were evacuated showed Jim Crow attitudes in Alaska. Condescension and the application of unilateral policy, so typical in U.S. native relations in the past, manifested itself throughout the entire relocation process.

The hasty evacuation revealed a lack of planning even though the need for safe and adequate relocation facilities had been recognized for months prior to the bombing of Dutch Harbor and the conquest of Attu. Chapter IV will relate the price that Aleut people paid for this failure.59
Notes Chapter III


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. The territorial government worked with the military offices that evacuated the Aleuts.

4. Minutes, Acting Governor of Alaska Bartlett's Evacuation Planning Meeting, March 13, 1942. p. 1. In John C. Kirtland and David Coffin Jr. The Relocation and Internment of the Aleuts during World War II, Evidence and Depositions (Anchorage: Aleutian/Pribilof Island Association, 1981), Vol. II, p.1. Hereafter Kirtland. The governor of the territory was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The minutes state that "There is general agreement no general attempt should be made even in case of actual attack, to evacuate Eskimos or other primitive natives from Alaska. It is felt these people could never adjust themselves to life outside of their present environment, whereas they could 'take to the hills' in case of danger and be practically self-sufficient for a considerable period."


6. Francis Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). p. 317 outlines Collier's guiding principles for his administration of Indian affairs, one of which was that "the Indian societies, whether ancient, regenerated, or created anew, must be given status, responsibility and power."


8. Collier to Ickes, April 10, 1942.
9. Collier to Ickes, April 10, 1942.

10. Gruening to Ickes, June 4, 1942.
Gruening went on to state: I feel that before any
decision could be made, a qualified representative of the
OIA proceed to Attu and Atka, if am when it becomes
possible--it would have to be by naval ship or plane--
discuss the matter fully with the natives, and make the
appropriate recommendations to you. Should the decision
then be made that these people be moved, funds would have to
be provided and adequate provisions made for the relocation
of these natives, housing etc. A suitable site in Alaska
should in my judgement then be selected and the evacuation
carried out.


12. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to Alaska
Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening, June 22, 1942. In

13. St. George Island Agent and Caretaker Daniel Benson to
General Superintendent Edward C. Johnston, July 8 1942.

14. "Passenger List, St. Paul and St. George Evacuees,

June 1942." File 12161 RG 80 G - 54.

1942." File 12163 RG 80 G - 54.

June 1942." File 12165 RG 80 G - 54.

June 1942." File 12168 RG 80 G - 54.

June 1942." File 12170 RG 80 G - 54.

20. Benson to McMillin, July 8, 1942. (Writing from Funter
Bay).

21. Ralph and Rudy Magee, "Our Atka Island Experience, 1940-

22. Magees, "Letter."
23. Larry Dirks Sr. "During the Time of the War", 1970s. Translation by Michael Lekanoff Sr. and written by Mr. Bergsland. in Kirtland, Vol. II, p. 18-26. The story was told and written in Western Aleut dialect.

24. Dirks did not go immediately to Killisnoo with the other Atkans, he worked as a painter for the navy, putting war paint on their ships. During his travels he ended up around Juneau where he learned that his people were near Angoon. "There I stayed until we were taken back." I fished with the Tlinget people there and also once went to Sitka to work at the Sitka Saw Mill. The Mill cut up lumber for which was used in building houses. In Sitka I learned that a Russian Orthodox Church was in existence and used to go to church there. Dirk would then go back to Killisnoo for the duration and go back to Atka with his people. Upon his return he was drafted into the army, after fighting fires for the army he became ill and spent a year in the Tacoma Indian Hospital.


27. PJD, p. 332.

28. PJD, p. 332. The Aleutian Livestock Company was completely dependent on Aleut labor and had been assured by the Alaska Defense Command on May 22, 1942 that "no evacuation had been ordered." It had expected to produce 130,000 pounds of wool during 1942 and the Army thought the operation was necessary to the war effort. On August 5, 1942, Carlyle Eubank, the company president, protested to the Western Defense command about losing his ranch's work force. Prior to the evacuation, the Navy had telegraphed Nikolski that: "Nikolski sheep ranchers and four unmarried Aleuts may remain and shear sheep. Inform them that they do so at their own risk and thereby forfeit government transportation." The message arrived too late to prevent the evacuation of ranch workers and under those conditions the Foreman would not return to the island. The livestock company later obtained permission from the Army to return to Nikolski, even though the Japanese still occupied Attu and Kiska. That December the foreman came back to the ranch and the following summer three Aleuts also returned.


33. Forrestal to Ickes, July 12, 1942.

34. Forrestall to Ickes, July 12, 1942.

35. Tutiakoff, p. 8.


37. PJD, p. 334.

38. PJD, p. 335. The shortage of labor was acute at Dutch Harbor. In August 1942 Admiral Freeman complained to General DeWitt that "it has been practically impossible to complete work promptly." The Navy may have been concerned about the labor shortage and so prevented defense workers from leaving the village. At least one Aleut, John Yatchmanoff, was an employee if the Siems-Drake Company and not evacuated for this reason. The order preventing the evacuation of Siems-Drake employees from Unalaska was issued by the Navy even though the workers were not employed by the government, and the Navy's responsibility was limited to processing their applications for work permits.


   The entire population of each village, except Unalaska, was evacuated. All but 50 Aleuts were relocated to southeastern Alaska. The remainder were evacuated to the Seattle area by the Army and Navy after the bombing of Dutch Harbor on June 3; ten were hospitalized in the Indian Hospital at Tacoma, Washington; others were military dependents. In August of 1942 William Zimmerman sent a Memo to the Office of Indian Affairs to account for all the Aleuts that had been removed from the Chain: 477 Pribilof
Natives (St. Paul 294; St. George 183) arrived at Funter Bay on June 24, 1942. 83 Atka Natives arrived at Killisnoo on June 24, 1942. 72 Nikolski Natives arrived at Wrangell Institute, Wrangell on July 13, 1942. 20 Kashega Natives (Unalaska Island) arrived at Wrangell Institute, July 13, 1942. 18 Biorksa Natives (Unalaska Island) arrived Wrangell Institute, July 13, 1942. 9 Makuskin Natives (Unalaska Island) arrived Wrangell Institute, July 13, 1942 (One white married to Native). 111 Unalaska Natives arrived Wrangell Institute, July 26, 1942. 50 Aleutian Natives have been evacuated to Seattle and vicinity by the Army and Navy during the period since bombing of Unalaska. These people obtained work in defense plants and berry farms. Ten of the Seattle group were hospitalized in Tacoma Indian Hospital."

43. PJD, p. 336

44. Grunening to Ickes, June 4, 1942.


47. Stewart, "Preliminary," p. 113-114.


49. Parascovia Wright, Testimony before the "Commission of Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians." Transcripts of the testimonies are held at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Special Collections room. p. 134.

50. Wright, "Testimony."

51. PJD, p. 10.


57. PJD, p. 328, and Petrevilli Interview, p. 8. Both sources point out that 19 Atkan Aleut who were still at their fish camp were left behind for days, June 12-15, until two Navy planes picked them up.


59. Petrevilli, "Interview" p. 9.
CHAPTER IV

"I Have No Language at My Command..."

Aleut Relocation Camps

Anyone who saw picture of the Exxon-Valdez oil spill or who has taken an Alaskan cruise knows that the coast of Southeastern Alaska is intimidating and beautiful. Large snowcapped mountains soar above dense forests that seem to flow into the ocean. The rocky beaches are narrow and the forests appear as walls behind them. Large brown bears roam along the coast in search of spawning salmon. It was into this setting that Aleuts from a world of treeless tundra would be forced to live for three years during World War II.

General problems of survival, adequate shelter, decent food, and proper medical care would need to be solved for Aleuts to subsist in that new environment. Unfortunately, for Aleuts these basics needs were for the most part unmet.
Apart from fundamental needs, Aleuts also had to deal with negative psychological reactions to the new environment, hostile relations with government officials and other whites in Southeastern Alaska, and adjusting to camp life. By exploring all of these aspects of the various relocation camps a picture of Aleut life during this time emerges, and shows the genuine failure of the government's attempt to protect Aleuts.

THE VOYAGE

The hardships suffered by the Aleuts during relocation and internment began on the voyage of the Delarof across the Bering Sea and into the Gulf of Alaska with the combined populations of Atka, St. George and St. Paul. The transport vessel initially proceeded to Dutch Harbor, where cargo was transferred, and the Aleuts from the burned-out village of Atka, having arrived from Nikolski, became additional passengers on a voyage to an as-yet unknown destination.¹

One account of events aboard the Delarof, written by F. Martin March, wife of a doctor on a temporary visit to the Pribilofs when the evacuation occurred, gives some of the
tragic details:

Since once aboard the ship the St. George doctor felt completely free of responsibility for his islanders and had no personal interest in any of these patients of his, he could not be coaxed into the disagreeable crowded hold even before all the Aleuts and many non-Aleuts came down, after our stay-over at Dutch Harbor, with "ships cold," a serious grippe infection. He did not come to assist even at the birth of a St. George baby or its subsequent death of bronchial pneumonia because of our inability (Dr. S.R.B. and mine) to separate mother and child from the other grippe sufferers, and the mother herself was ill. I think I recall this doctor attending the midnight or after funeral of the poor little mite, such a tiny weighted parcel being let down into the deep waters of the Gulf of Alaska against a shoreline of dramatic peaks and blazing sunset sky.²

The child was the infant daughter of Innokenty Kochutin and Haretina R. Kochutin, residents of St. Paul. At the age of three days, the infant Kochutin became the first casualty of the Aleut's dislocation. On January 23, 1978, Haretina R. Kochutin, then 71 years of age, remembered the transport ship Delarof and the hold which had "a mattress to sleep on and one bathroom for everyone...no baths for 2 weeks, the very sick were not separated, we had to live with them."³ Mrs. Kochutin later lost another infant child, a son aged three months, in the camps for the St. Paul Aleuts at Funter Bay.

Mrs. March had praise for the conduct of the Magees, calling them "the brave and intelligent Indian Office teachers on Atka."⁴ She thought that at all times the
conduct of the Magees contrasted sharply with most of the
Pribilof Fish and Wildlife employees. She observed the
psychological devastation that the Pribilovians went through
on the voyage in a paternalistic manner, noting that they
"swung between pathetic hysterical jitters at every
suggestion of alarm and infantile displays of bad temper
over the imperfect accommodations, and even more hysterical
worry over a future since the telegraphed evacuation order
seemed to indicate that no officials were to accompany the
natives when they were to be dropped off on Admiralty Island
at Funter Bay."

March's intense criticism of the FWS officials that
worked on the Pribilos reveals the attitudes that Aleuts
confronted on the voyage. At times she "could hardly
believe" her ears that heard "the passionate protests of
love for the sealers their former supercilious superiors
were spouting." They claimed that they could not desert
these "dear charges of theirs leaving them to cope for
themselves." March was sickened by the obvious falsity of
the FWS officials who told her earlier about those "dirty,
diseased, lazy, untruthful natives" they were of in charge
of on the Pribilos. It was too much for her to listen to
with a straight face and occasionally at meal times she
would tease "them about their changed attitudes." But she
also saw that "those lowly little civil service employees,
most of them very middle-aged, were suffering such acute
terror lest the evacuation mean loss of employment that it made me ashamed for them."  

CAMP SITES

As Flore Lekanof and Alice Snigaroff and the other Aleuts were sailing across the Gulf of Alaska on the Delarof, OIA (Office of Indian Affairs) and FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) officials made frantic efforts to determine where the people could be relocated. The military authorities wanted "immediate and definite instructions from the Indian Office where the refugees can be landed and taken care of." Ultimately the decision to keep the Aleuts in Alaska was made at the federal level, where it was determined that Aleuts should be "housed so that each village keeps its individuality." The OIA chose not to relocate the Aleuts to the eastern part of the Aleutian chain or the Alaska Peninsula. The rationale was unclear, but perhaps those in the agencies wanted the Aleuts as far from the war zone as possible and yet still in Alaska. Instead, Assistant Indian Affairs Commissioner William Zimmerman made the fateful suggestion, that abandoned fish canneries in Southeastern Alaska would be the best location for the refugees. However the selection of specific sites was left to local FWS and OIA officials.
Perhaps this unpreparedness can be partially explained by the lack of coordination among agencies in Alaska. Their headquarters were 300 miles apart, and the exchange of intelligence information was sometimes slow and inaccurate. The evacuation of Aleuts began without a clear policy to define the divisions of responsibilities between the military and civilian branches of government. The Navy passed decision-making responsibility to Interior; the Department of the Interior was unable to reach an internal consensus on what to do with the Aleuts; and the Army, despite its knowledge of an inevitable Japanese attack, took a position which they, like the others, would reverse once the Japanese invasion became a reality.¹⁰ The commanders of the ADC (Alaska Defense Command) and the North Pacific Force often clashed because of personality, and this exacerbated difficulties of coordination.¹¹

Planning for relocation sites apparently started only on June 15, 1942.¹² As the Pribilofs were evacuated General Buckner began working directly with the OIA's Superintendent Hirst to choose relocation sites for the Aleuts. The OIA was chiefly responsible for the decision and its officials determined that Killisnoo Bay village in southeastern Alaska was a potential site for resettlement.¹³ Responsibility for settling the Pribilovians was assumed by Edward C. Johnston, Superintendent of the Seal Division of the FWS, who
contacted Fisheries Chief Ward Bower on June 15 to discuss available housing. First they tried to secure locations in the Seattle, Washington area. A large Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp and the Tulalip Indian Reservation were considered, but the CCC camp was occupied and housing at the reservation would have to be built. Both sites were impractical since time was of the essence; Johnston emphasized that the Pribilovians "must have a location within a week." Initial plans were to leave the Delarof's passengers at Wrangell Institute, the BIA school, while the camps were prepared for occupancy, but due to the crowded conditions at Wrangell, the Delarof proceeded directly from Dutch Harbor to Killisnoo and Funter Bay. Seattle FWS Representative Donald Hagerty was the Interior official who made final decisions on specific sites. On June 16 Hagerty told Zimmerman that arrangements had been made to house the Atkans at an abandoned fish cannery at Killisnoo on Admiralty Island. The OIA was interested in locations where Aleuts could support themselves so job opportunities in nearby canneries made this location seem attractive. On the same day, Hagerty assigned the Pribilof evacuees to another abandoned cannery at Funter Bay on the same Admiralty Island. Across Funter Bay from the cannery, the abandoned facilities of the Alaska Mining Company were also obtained. Eventually the OIA and FWS decided to house the relocated Aleuts in
camps at Funter Bay, Killisnoo, Ward Cove, and Burnett Inlet all in Southeastern Alaska. (See Map 2) Funter Bay would hold the Pribilovians, Killisnoo the Atkans, Ward Cove and Burnett Inlet the Unalaskans.

INITIAL REACTIONS

On the morning of June 24, 1942, the Delarof arrived at Funter Bay and immediately disembarked the St. George and St. Paul Aleuts. A conference was held between the ship's captain and FWS officials aboard the boat. The captain agreed to leave enough mattresses, blankets and food supplies to maintain the Aleuts until a supply ship arrived from Seattle.21

In the meeting the original plan "to take all the white FWS personnel to Seattle and leave the natives to shift for themselves" was modified and eight whites, were left to assist with the work. But both doctors "decided to resign" rather than stay at the camp. The Aleut were not free to make the same choice as the doctors. However, FWS supervisor Hynes thought that even though this "left the evacuees without medical attention" it was "not so serious as it might appear since it was planned to take all of the worst cases to the Juneau hospital" in the future. In what must have been an awkward moment for the resigning
physician, Dr. White, he assured Dan Benson, a white FWS official who was to stay at the camp, that "a doctor would be provided in a few days, together with adequate medical supplies."  

A high-level member of the Alaska Indian Service and FWS officials arrived at Funter Bay aboard the fisheries patrol boat Brant not long after the Delarof had anchored there on June 24. They all met aboard the Delarof and decided that the St. Paul Aleuts would be established in the abandoned cannery facilities at Funter Bay; the St. George people would be located across Funter Bay in the abandoned gold mine; and the Atkans would be taken to Killisnook's abandoned herring plant. No Aleuts were at the meeting.  

The conferees decided that Lee McMillin would be placed in charge of the Pribilof group at Funter Bay and that C. Ralph Magee would be in charge of the Atkans at Killisnook. Both men had worked on the Pribilofs for the FWS.  

Aleuts and on-site officials were shocked at the camps Aleuts were to inhabit. Flore Lekanof, from St. George, remembered that "no one really knew until we arrived at Funter Bay that that's where we were going." He could see that "the Federal Government did not make preparations for us to move to a decent place." There was one case, in which an elderly woman attempted to commit suicide. She could not face the camps, calling them a "horrible thing." Lekanof saw that "the elderly were hurt, they didn't want to leave the
island, they were forced."\(^{25}\)

The Atkan people were also apprehensive and angry when they landed at Killisnoo because they were not sure where they were going. Alice Petrevilli recalled that their arrival on "a beautiful morning" which was "warm and you could smell the wild roses" did not foreshadow the following years. For many, it was a relief after the rough trip aboard the Delarof, but when Petrevilli saw the camp she came to realize that it "was just a run down old thing."\(^{26}\)

The Magees, the BIA school teachers who accompanied the Atkans, could feel that "the people were plenty sick for Atka, where there were no trees to hem them in." The presence of a large forest was for the Aleuts particularly disconcerting. George McGlashan of Akutan recalled that his arrival in Southeastern Alaska was "a dark day to me. There was no light. Too many trees. People weren't used to it. Myself and the whole family, we didn't care for it." William Ermeloff's first impression was also "that it looked awfully dark because we weren't used to the timber." Dorofey Cherchesen was 28 when he was forced to leave Nikolski. His first impression of Ward Cove and the surrounding woods "was that of being in prison." However, for the relocated Aleuts the presence of trees would be not be the only hardship or adjustment they would have to make.
HOUSING CONDITIONS

The most immediate and life threatening problem at the camps was the lack of acceptable shelter. Funter Bay, the site of two internment camps, was situated on the west coast of Admiralty Island, about sixty miles from Juneau and had few buildings suitable for human habitation. An abandoned cannery and a gold mine across a bay from the cannery were selected as camps for the Pribilovian Aleuts from St. Paul and St. George islands. These camps were the largest and best documented camps run by the FWS and the OIA. Aleuts and officials recognized the gross inadequacy housing at the Funter Bay camps.

On site officials noted that the cannery's water supply came from about one mile above the camp. Water pressure in the deteriorated system was too weak for use in fire fighting. Sanitary facilities were no better. There was no sewage disposal system, and the three outdoor toilets depended "on the action of the tide to remove the sewage." Juneau OIA representatives reported that the "toilets are entirely open, and a probable source of insect-borne contamination."\(^\text{27}\)

Across the bay, on the gold mine side of Funter Bay, officials knew the dangers of "the establishment of a large number of people in these facilities" and pointed out that
it "would immediately create danger of water pollution." In their report, the Juneau officials noted that the water supply was "two small streams so situated that none of the living quarters are more than 100 yards from a stream." They thought that the "water from the stream has been used for domestic purposes, although it is not known if a sanitary inspection has been made." They concluded that "all water supplied to the various living quarters would have to be carried, and the establishment of a large number of people in these facilities would immediately create danger of water pollution unless adequate precautions were taken to prevent contamination of these streams." The sewage disposal was reported to be two "somewhat dilapidated pit-type toilets which are mounted on pilings over the beach." A small shack near the mess hall had been converted into a bathing facility, with a single shower unit of "very crude construction." 

Despite the acknowledged problems with the sites, they were leased and adopted for use. An agreement was reached with the P.E. Harris Company for the use of its cannery at Funter Bay "providing that the company will not assume any responsibility for injury received on the premises." And the Admiralty Alaska Gold Mining Company made its abandoned facilities, located across Funter Bay from the P.E. Harris Company cannery, available as well. The cannery owners received $60.00 per month for the use of their
property. These locations became mandatory living quarters for the majority of Pribilovians for most of the war's duration.

After two weeks the problems with the camps were clear. Agent McMillin noted that, "the sanitary engineer that was here said this water system can not under any conditions be made usable for winter and if these people are going to stay here then some other arrangements will have to be made and that should be quick." He went on to tell his superior "if you think this is any fun you should be here." In urgent words McMillin described conditions at Funter Bay as the Aleuts settled in for their two-year internment: "The Territorial Public Health has moved in and says this place has got to be improved very soon...they have placed a Doctor here pending arrival one of our own from Seattle and also a registered nurse transferred by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to take care of the vaccinations."

McMillin begged for "some of the portable houses that are piled up around the coast" that "could be made into fairly good places to live." A visiting engineer said they "would have to put in flush toilets if we stay here and hot water for washing and baths...We cannot dig clams nearer than a mile from the cannery because of the dumping of all garbage and toilets into the bay." They discovered that they could not "build outdoor privies" because at high tide "sewage washes back onto the beach for the flies to walk on
and the children to track around." McMillin added: "There wasn't much left to say except they (the buildings) are so old and rotten it is impossible to do any repairing whatsoever." The only buildings that were capable of being repaired were the two structures where Aleuts slept. All the other houses were absolutely "gone from rot." The result was that "as many as ten and thirteen persons, large and small," were sleeping, "or trying to sleep, in one room." McMillin knew that the novelty had worn off long ago, without brooms, soap or mops or brushes they could not "keep the place suitable for pigs to stay in." McMillin's final analysis was that "it seems funny if our government can drop so many people in a place like this then forget about them altogether."

The Attorney General of the Territory of Alaska, Henry Roden, visited Funter Bay in mid-September 1943. Roden, was appalled by camp conditions, and reported to the Governor that he had no language at his command which could adequately describe what he saw. If he had he was "confident" the Governor would "not believe" his statements. Nevertheless, Roden thought that "one instance" would encapsulate the housing situation for the Governor. He described a "large two story frame building...with uncompleted partitions for some eight or ten rooms." The rooms were about eight by ten square feet. In them, were housed families composed of "from six to ten persons; with
absolutely no privacy." Roden saw that parents and children, both male and female, of all ages, were "huddled together...in this one building, with no sanitary installations of any kind. "In short," stated Roden, "the situation" was "shocking." Roden concluded, "I have seen some tough places in my days in Alaska, but nothing to equal the situation at Funter." Marjorie Ward, and Aleut from St. George, verified Roden's report noting that "travelling on the ship for ten days with no bathing accommodations was bad enough" but the "living conditions at Funter Bay were a nightmare." Her family lived in a building that was not insulated, in which blankets hung for walls. (See drawing below by Anatoly Lekanof Jr. "Ting Wa" is Aleut for "I was here.")

Fig. 10.
Dr. N. Bernta Block wrote the most extensive report on Funter Bay conditions. Her report chronicles a visit from October 2 to 6, 1943. She went to the Bay initially to see if she could help control an outbreak of measles. In her report she noted the horrid health conditions, but with a twinge of ethnocentrism. "I expected to find a group of people interested in their own health and welfare, thrifty and adept in managing their own affairs. I am sorry to say I was a bit disappointed. I am sure that much effort has been expended in order to provide adequate quarters for these people but it goes without saying that there is still room for much improvement."38 Despite her critical paternalism she seemed sincerely to want to help the Aleuts. Still she had little understanding of what the Aleuts had already been through and could find "very little excuse" for the conditions.

Despite Block's attitude, the report provides a vivid description of the Aleut living conditions that resulted from culture shock, transfer and confinement.

As we entered the first bunkhouse the odor of human excreta and waste was so pungent that I could hardly make the grade. After a time we did not notice it so much. The buildings were in total darkness except for a few candles here and there. The overcrowded housing conditions is really beyond description since a mother and as many as three or four children were found in several beds and two or three children in one bunk. Children were found naked and
covered with excreta.\textsuperscript{39}

She also noted that the water supply was "discolored, contaminated and unattractive." For Block the situation was a paradox for which she laid blame not only on the Aleuts themselves but also the public health institutions. She had been to the Aleutians and thought it was "strange that they could have reverted from a state of thrift and cleanliness on the islands to the present state of filth, despair, and complete lack of civic pride."\textsuperscript{40}

On the cannery side, the St. Paul community was found to be suffering from inadequate refuse disposal and extremely crowded living conditions, with "as many as 6 people" living in some of the rooms. The water supply had been found to be polluted on several earlier inspections, and it was recommended that chlorine applications be made as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{41}

After the Pribilovians landed at Funter Bay the \textit{Delarof} proceeded to Killisnoo to discharge the members of the Atka community on the morning of June 25. Along with the OIA teachers (the Magees), eight-two Atkans were taken ashore. The \textit{Delarof} with its escort cutter departed without delay after this task was completed.\textsuperscript{42}

Located on a small island of the same name in Southeastern Alaska, Killisnoo was about three miles from the Tlingit village of Angoon.\textsuperscript{43} Killisnoo was the location of a village that had burned in 1928 and never been

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rebuilt. Those who lived in Killisnoo before the fire moved to Angoon. The fish cannery at Killisnoo, because of the declining herring catch, had been shut for ten years prior to the Aleuts' arrival, occupied only by a caretaker.\textsuperscript{44} V.R. Farrell, Education Director of the Alaska Indian Service, concluded in a Memorandum to FWS Superintendent Hirst that "approximately 75 to 80 people" could be accommodated at the Killisnoo location.\textsuperscript{45}

Farrell's own report shows the sadly inadequate state of the facility. The sanitary facilities consisted of three outdoor pit toilets and one bathtub. The electrical wiring presented a fire hazard. It was doubtful if the dilapidated old generator "could be put back in working order."\textsuperscript{46} Among the buildings at the Killisnoo cannery were five one- or two-room cabins, three small houses, a bunkhouse, laundry building, carpenter shop, wood storage shed, cold storage building, mess hall and warehouse. There was also a storage building, and an unusable structure that had been an office when the cannery operated. When the Aleuts were settled there, the Killisnoo water supply was limited to a small spring with a maximum capacity of about twenty-four barrels per day. Arrangements were soon made with A.J. Hatlund of Portland Oregon, for the lease of his abandoned fish cannery at Killisnoo to the Federal government.

After the first wave of Aleut relocations and resettlement in June, evacuations continued along the chain.
In July, the Aleut people of Nikolski, Akutan, and three small Unalaska Island villages arrived at Wrangell Institute, the Indian Service boarding school. They remained there for some weeks as materials were assembled for the construction of shelters in which they would later live at Ward Cove. While at Wrangell they lived in tents and school buildings.⁴⁷

After building a barge to transport construction materials and their personal effects, the Aleuts were shipped to Ward Cove, a CCC constructed facility near Ketchikan, where they were to remain for nearly three years. At Ward Cove the villagers assembled "ten 16 x 16 feet buildings for the small families" and occupied some of the abandoned houses nearby.⁴⁸

The Aleut community of Unalaska was interned from August 1942 until April 1945 in an abandoned cannery facility located at Burnett Inlet on Etolin Island, near Wrangell in Southeastern Alaska. There were similar stories of poor housing and unclean water at these camps as well.

Aleuts' memories of the housing at the various camps confirm the grim tales in the inspection reports. Mike Lekanof lived in an old bunkhouse at Funter Bay, a two-story structure, approximately 100 feet by forty feet in size. Approximately 100 people stayed there for two years. The building had wide cracks in the floors, the roof leaked, there were no partitions in the building. Families hung
blankets in order to create a "little privacy." The
cannery management, according to Lekanof, used "the best
houses available at Funter Bay."

Father Lestenkoff remembered that at Funter there was
only one shower for everyone and that the facilities were
"out of commission. Everything was out of commission."
William Merculief said that at Funter Bay "everything was
poor" and "they never attempted to fix it."

William Shane thought Funter Bay was "terrible." They
dumped us off at the cannery side and in one room we were
eight to ten packed like sardines on the floor. There was no
privacy, you could hear everybody talking, babies
crying.

Ann McGlashen from St. George was 18 when she was
evacuated and was "young enough to be excited to see how the
other people lived. Instead we ended up at that dilapidated
mine site." Sergie Shaishnikoff from St. Paul was 38 at the
time of the relocation. He recalled that when he got to
Funter Bay he found that there were rotten houses, broken
down buildings among which he found one room in which to put
his family. In the room he fixed a bed using two by fours
and chicken wire especially for "my daughter Mary, and then
I fixed a place for my wife and myself with mattresses so we
could sleep."

At Killisnoo the hardships the inadequate shelter
caused are well remembered. William Dirks recalled that
eight people shared his quarters at the cannery and a warehouse was built by the people as a community church. Spiridon Zauchney was always "cold and damp," in a camp itself had "no plumbing, no electricity, no doctor." Vera Snigaroff remembered that her family stayed in one bedroom for three years.

At Ward Cove there were three large buildings. One was the school, the other a church and the third one the laundry and showers—the only building with running water. The other cabins were built by the men and did not have running water or indoor toilets. Bunks beds, tables and stools were also constructed. There was a large outhouse. In it was a long trough with no seats whatsoever, open all the way across. Lavara Dushkin saw that "all that stuff exposed was not healthy, it made bugs a problem." His father made a makeshift home from a fish hatchery building when they got to Ward Cove, but it had no "running water, it had no toilet." Ermeloff built a cabin with material furnished by the BIA. It was about twelve by sixteen feet with a plain tar paper roof and no siding.

At Burnett Inlet the "overcrowded conditions were an abomination" with "twenty-eight of us forced to live in one, designated 15 x 20 foot house." They found "no church, no school, no medical facility, no store, no community water or sewage system, no recreation or community facility, no skiffs or dories, no fishing gear and no hunting
SICKNESS AND DISEASE

As noted in several of the reports the sanitation, or lack thereof, and the shoddy shelter made Aleuts vulnerable to disease. And, as predicted, disease became rampant at the camp causing many deaths. Influenza was widespread, and tuberculosis, already a problem on the Aleutian islands, quickly spread among the community.

Inspectors noted that, "coughs are numerous" and that "this is an ideal set-up for the spread of tuberculosis but the results may not be evident for some time." FWS employees themselves thought that "there is more than a possibility that the death toll from tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza and other diseases will so decimate the ranks of the natives that few will survive to return to the islands." With the onset of disease the FWS officials found it "more and more difficult to defend our position."

Scarcely a day passed when a well meaning person did not descend upon the FWS "with recrimination" for its "heartless methods." Censorship kept the press off the FWS's "necks" but they feared that "line of defense" was "weakening rapidly."

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To illustrate his dilemma Hynes related to Bower the events of two days hence when he was "advised by one of the physicians who had inspected the camps and aided in emergency work there," that he was preparing a report to the Surgeon General of the United States and also to Secretary Ickes and had no intention of "pulling any punches." Hynes' feared that "it was only a matter of time until some publication, such as Life Magazine, would get hold of the story and play it up, much to the disadvantage of the Service and the Department of the Interior as a whole."\textsuperscript{58}

The Aleuts themselves tried to manage with the epidemics. Every time one of the St. George side got sick, they were taken "across over the water in an open dory to the St. Paul side" where the medical facility, such as it was, existed. Then all they could do was wait and hope that they would not be notified of another death.

The climate of Southeastern Alaska, colder and wetter than the Aleutian islands, exacerbated the tubercular condition suffered by many interned Aleuts. Poor drinking water also played a role in spreading disease. William Dirks remembered that at Killisnoo a dead lake supplied the water, it "had bugs and people died from it."\textsuperscript{59} At Killisnoo, there was no medical care except for a visiting nurse. Petrevelli remembers that "we all got measles, and God, we got lice, we got sores, we got everything, some people got
TB." For her it seemed as though, "they dropped us there and forgot about us."60

Lavera Dushkin from Nikolski was 15 years old when she was evacuated and has vivid memories of the experience. She recalled that in the first week, everyone from the villages had to have a medical checkup by the Army, Navy and civilian doctors. They were sick already from tuberculosis, virus, pneumonia and shock, but, despite diagnosis, medical treatment was not given. Dushkin was appointed the interpreter and helper to the medical group. She remembers the humiliation and disorientation of the children and some adults when their hair was cut short to the scalp because of lice and such. Kerosene was rubbed into it and left on for 12 hours, then the hair was washed. For the Aleut taking a shower was a shock, as many had never taken one before. At Nikolski they had bathed in a small tub and had taken steam baths in "banyas." At Burnett Inlet medical care was limited to the service of midwives, augmented by one doctor who removed tonsils and adenoids and gave cursory examinations.61

Martha Krukoff was 31 at the time of the relocation and she remembered that "it was in that cold, heatless place that I gave birth to my son Harry. All my family were sick in bed with measles including myself." In all the time she was pregnant, she never received a checkup. Only once did a "lady doctor from Juneau" come to help the people who were

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sick with the measles. She remembered that "it was terrible being sick and not having any kind of heat in the room."62

The inevitable result of untreated disease and poor shelter was an early death for some Aleuts. When Inspector Hall ended his report on the cannery side of the Funter Bay camp he noted, with a touch of irony, "only 8 deaths have occurred which seems to be a good record. (Compared to 20 among 184 people at Ward Cove)."

Part of Father Lestenkoff's duties when he was at Funter Bay, for $20 dollars a month, was the grisly task of burying the dead. The gravesite was "next to a creek, if someone died, you started to dig the grave, you cut into roots of trees, and when you got down three feet or less water started to come up. When you put the body in there a couple of guys would get down there and bail it out as quick as they can bail."63 Natalie Misikian recalled that the graveyard was terrible--"I lost my cousin Polly there, we buried her--in that soggy bog."64

The Indian Service schoolteacher, Ruby J. Magee, and her husband, C. Ralph Magee wrote to a friend in Greenbelt, Maryland, describing the situation up to June 1943 at Killisnoo. One of the first to die at Killisnoo was Larry Nevzoroff. The Magees' called him "the boat builder, who was the best and oldest man of the village. He was buried the very day we left." They thought he died because "he took some Angoon Indian medicine which we think poisoned him."
They were saddened "to think he wasn't able to return to Atka to spend his last days." Another man who died of tuberculosis, was buried the same day. For the Atkans it was already "the worst winter in fifty years" in terms of deaths.\textsuperscript{65}

Alice Petrevilli testified that of the 82 people moved to Killisnoo, seventeen passed away. "Some of it was due to pneumonia. Mostly we do not know why a lot of them died but I think it was due to bad water. Some elderly people died I think shock or something."\textsuperscript{66} Leonty Savoroff was thirty when he was evacuated. He remembers seeing one of his friends John Kruhoff one morning before he went to work looking well, but by the time he came home from work in the afternoon he was dead from an unknown cause. Savoroff himself lay in a bed at Ward Cove for six months with double pneumonia, but he was never taken to the city hospital. In fact, despite the deaths and disease in the camp, he recalled only one visit by a doctor during the three year span.\textsuperscript{67}

The Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association has compiled an incomplete list of those Aleuts assigned to the Funter Bay camps who died during the internment years. They have identified by name forty persons from the St. George and St. Paul communities who perished following the evacuation.\textsuperscript{68} (see Appendix) The death rate is in part corroborated by FWS official records that report twenty-five deaths in the
calendar year 1943 alone. Almost all those who died are buried at Funter Bay in a cemetery near the cannery.

In the case of Killisnoo, the depositions of survivors document at least ten deaths among the Atkans assigned to the camp. The records of the Nikolski community are more extensive, and are drawn primarily from Russian Orthodox church records. At least nineteen Nikolski people died while assigned to the Ward Cove Camp.69 And as noted previously, the Ketchikan newspaper reported in May of 1943 that twenty Aleuts had already perished at Ward Cove. Those who survived recalled at least two Aleuts from Akutan who died there, along with five from Kashega and two from Makushin.70 Burnett Inlet was the least life threatening. Still, there were four deaths recorded there during the internment years.

FOOD

Relocation meant a drastic change in the diet of Aleuts. When they arrived at Wrangell from Nikolski, they were fed mostly chum salmon, known also as dog salmon. Aleuts thought it had an awful smell to it, not "like the food salmon of Nikolski."

Not only was the food different but many basic
"facilities for boiling and the cooling of water" were not available. Mike Lekanof recalled that "the eating facilities were inadequate and unorganized." They ate mostly "beans and clams." At Ward Cove, some food and a few pots and pans were issued to the Aleuts, but only for a while, then they were left on their own.

Flore Lekanof was bitter that "the white people who were at Funter Bay with us got much better food than the native people." Father Michael Lestenkov remembered that while they were in Funter Bay "the food situation was very poor. Clams, clams every day." He had an infant who was about "six months old." One night his wife went to the kitchen to fill a nursing bottle with hot water, on the way one of the "government leaders" sent her home because "he said you could not walk in this time of the night, so the baby was not fed."

Natalie Misikian, who was six-years old at the time of the relocation, remembered the food: "What they would feed us wasn't worth eating. You could feed it to the rats for all I cared. You know, scrambled powdered eggs, scrambled eggs. I hate it." Toward the end many remember the food getting worse instead of better. The eggs seemed to be a strong memory for many Aleuts. To this day, fifty years later, it makes Ann McGlashan sick to remember the meals of "powdered eggs, scrambled with salted, fried bacon three times a day." The Aleuts had no cooking stoves, unlike the
FWS employees, and had no choice but to eat at the mess hall. If they were late, at the Funter Bay mess hall, they would go without, with "everything was locked up."  

At Killisnoo they tried to live off the land, but "food froze solid during the coldest weather. Meat was scarce. Deer were hard to get, and little to them when they were found." William Dirks recalled that food was short, except in the summertime when they went down to the beach and "picked what they could." At Killisnoo the people of Angoon came to the aid of the Aleuts. Petrevilli recalled that "every day in the summertime from their fishing village they'd drop by and drop off fish or share meat with us." She thought this help was crucial to those who survived the camps, because "we just couldn't find the goods in wartime. Food was hardest to come by. Because we didn't have any guns, we didn't have any boat, we didn't have any fishing gear, they just dumped us!"

ADJUSTMENTS

Coping with camp conditions by the Aleuts met with varying degrees of success. For some relocation was an adventure, for others a nightmare. Most Aleuts assumed the situation was temporary, but that assumption was
uncertain. Examples from Killisnoo and Burnett Inlet illustrate Aleuts' adaptations. At Killisnoo, after the first year the people pulled together and made two boats and bought a net and the government sent some guns. The Angoon people showed Aleuts where to go salmon fishing and deer hunting. Alice Petrevilli remembered Killisnoo after the first year "still had bad homes, bad drinking water, bad medicine, but we did have enough food to eat." They "ate off the land," once they learned where everything was. Also, Angoon had a small Russian Orthodox church. On holidays Aleuts could go there and visit the "one room with a few icons." But it served as a reminder of their home church and reinforced their religious feelings.

The Magees could also see that with time the Aleuts "were reconciled to the change." But that adjustment was not easy nor always successful. A crucial element of Aleut culture was the making of grass woven baskets of intricate design and great detail. At Killisnoo according to the Magees "a few women tried making baskets from the grass, but it was of a different quality, harder to work with so they soon gave up." The Magee also noted that a "few of the girls went 'wild'--especially Martha, the one who made such pretty baskets." Her husband had fallen off a Juneau dock while intoxicated the previous spring and drowned. Martha's experience demonstrates the depths of frustration, anxiety, and displacement suffered by many Aleuts. Not making baskets
may seem inconsequential, but it was a task that was important to Aleut women and their identity as Aleuts. For women like Martha, who made the "pretty baskets," that Aleut identity was shaken.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ALASKANS

One crucial aspect of the relocation experience for Aleuts was their new relationship with other Alaskans. Pribilovians had long interacted with government officials, but for Aleuts from the other islands, the experience was new. The relations with other Alaskans and government officials were dominated by paternalism toward Aleuts, some outright racism, and some empathy. The experience of the Ward Cove Aleuts is a striking example of these trends. The majority of these Aleuts had never been far from their isolated island homes. Although adept at survival in a rugged environment, they were unprepared for life in the "wilderness" they found in Ketchikan. A frontier town of fishermen and lumberjacks, it had a population of roughly 5,000 whites and natives. The Aleuts were coming from villages that for the most part consisted of a few dozen friends and family.
With the exception of tuberculosis the Aleuts arrived in Ketchikan in good health.79 Soon, however, they became, in the words of the Chief of the Akutan Village Mark Petikoff, victims of "bootleggers and white exploiters."80 The sad result was that the Ward Cove Aleuts were struck with epidemics of venereal disease and alcohol abuse. Although the Aleuts were "free from venereal disease when they left Wrangell for Ward Cove," within months the camp was ravaged by gonorrhea.81

The Police of Ketchikan were not happy with the selection of a site near their town for the relocated Aleuts, which Harry McCain, Chairman of Police, Health and Sanitation, made clear in a strident letter to Governor Ernest Gruening. McCain thought that the Aleuts "were rotten with gonorrhea especially, and also syphilis." When a quarantine was lifted, McCain thought "they would immediately flock to town in droves and infest the public places." McCain used as an example: "One girl who had been suffering from a virulent case of gonorrhea immediately disappeared in town and up to an hour ago had not been located. As a result of her activities, it is probable that twelve to fifteen people have already been infected." McCain also noted that Aleuts were "also badly honeycombed with tuberculosis, from which a considerable number have died since they were place at Ward Cove." McCain could not "conceive how they could be located in a worse place than at
Ward Cove, in the very heart of the Ward Cove Recreation Area. 82

However, as the letter continues it becomes apparent that McCain's motive for writing is not the health of the Aleut, but rather to remove what he deems a menace from his town. McCain's hostile attitude, if shared by the rest of the police department, explains the constant arrests of Aleuts without provocation.

McCain thought sending "people rotten" with disease into one of the most beautiful natural recreation areas in Alaska was a waste of "many, many thousands of dollars" the government spent improving the area. In his mind, it would be impossible "to expect them [the Aleuts] to last ...as a part of the community." One story summed up community relations for McCain. The proprietor of the Totem Lunch asked McCain whether or not she could refuse the patronage of the Aleuts "for the reason that they were unsanitary and diseased and thus obnoxious to her regular customers besides requiring an unusual amount of trouble in sterilizing of their dishes." McCain noted that the same attitude exist in other business places, "even the bars would prefer not to have their patronage." 83

McCain's solution was not to call for an upgrade in camp conditions but instead to relocate the Aleuts yet again, preferably, "some suitable location where they would not have immediate contacts with large numbers of people."
Toward the end of this revealing letter, McCain finally states what was obvious: "there should be some way in which the welfare of the Aleuts can be properly cared for without menacing established communities of white people. We shall sincerely appreciate any assistance that you can lend us in ridding Ketchikan of this dangerous menace." McCain ended his letter by notifying the Governor that he was about to present his suggestion to the city council.

The council meeting took place the evening of the 19th and McCain presented his ideas. The council meeting and McCain's letter to the Governor created a heated debate among townspeople that McCain would lose. In fact, after the council meeting, McCain penned a very different letter to Governor Gruening.

In an amazing change of heart McCain told the governor that he "realized that my suggestions were too harsh and give a color that I did not want to lend to my feelings." He now knew that "these people are not here at their request and are unwilling victims of a condition which they cannot prevent. As a matter of fact, they desire to return to their homes." McCain learned that "20 of them have died since they came to Ward Cove while six others have been sent out for TB care. That is a terrible toll out of about 150 and shows a condition that should be cared for." McCain's sudden revelations caused him to tell the governor that "we do not desire to shirk our duty in regard to such evacuees.
nor place undue burden upon them."\textsuperscript{85}

Despite McCain's change his initial suggestions made at the city council meeting filtered back to the Aleuts. The chief of Akutan village wrote a letter that appeared in the Ketchikan paper on May 21, 1943, in which he pondered "why we as American citizens were moved to Ward Cove by the military, for war safety measures, should be made a football of and kicked around is not quite clear." The Aleuts were told that they were "undesirable" because some of their "people are said to have venereal diseases." The Aleut chief asked the Ketchikan people: "Are we the only group of Alaska citizens so affected? Are the other groups kicked about for that reason?" Many Aleut men were already in the armed forces. Others were employed in and around Ketchikan and buying their share of war bonds. The Aleuts "did not come to Ward Cove" of their own will, but "fell in readily with war plans of those over us." The Chief now demanded "the same treatment as any other group of citizens," "not asking any special favors."

For the Aleut Chief the problem was that those who were "so anxious now to kick us out of our homes at Ward Cove" had not shown the same "zeal in keeping away the whiskey bootleggers and white exploiters when our men, women, and children first landed there, from greatly changed environments." Speaking for his people, the Aleut Chief resented "any un-American efforts to kick us about from
pillar to post." An editorial in the same newspaper, three days after Petikoff's appeal, revealed that there were those in Ketchikan who were sympathetic to the plight of the Ward Cove Aleuts:

Then crawled the serpent...in the form of bootleggers and others with whiskey, demoralizing and spreading venereal diseases, and also aggravating incipient germs of tuberculosis so that 20 of their loved ones died, others being taken away, with more now stricken, and being classed as a menace and undesirable. It was their friendly spirit in greeting and welcoming all comers that betrayed them and turned their camp into mourning over the loss of loved ones. Too late it is now to begin passing the buck as to the responsibility of their condition. What is needed is immediate emergency care. Moving the camp will not provide a cure.

Harassment of Aleuts did not end, however, after those initial confrontations. Dorofy Chercasen's most vivid memory is of the Ketchikan City Police, who according to him, "many times picked up us Aleuts for no reason." These were times when they "would not even have had a single drink." One time after work he went to the bake shop and bought a pie to take back to the camp. On the way to the bus a policeman picked him up and took him and his pie, which he believes the judge ate, to the city jail. He was there from Friday until Monday morning when the trial came up. He was fined $10.00 for loitering. But, since he had no money, his
employer came and paid his fine. For Chrecasen, it was immensely frustrating to be "put in jail and fined left and right. It was hard enough earning money to feed ourselves and our families without having it squeezed out of us by the law."88

Another aspect of the Aleuts' relocation was their relations with government officials in that time of crisis. Events at Burnett Inlet provide insight into that relationship. Martha Newell, part Aleut and married to a white, wrote from Burnett Inlet on March 18, 1943 to her husband working in Seattle: "If I am able to go back I'll walk the ocean...We're all anxious to go home. I can't stand thinking of staying another winter, and most of the folks feel the same as there's no work and we are paying for our food." She pointed out that "the Japs in the States" were not paying for food, and she thought they were "probably treated better than we are."89

A week later she wrote to her husband. She asked him to write to Washington D.C. and "ask them why we have to pay for our food and other things when we have no way to make a living." She wanted to know why "if it's clear, and not so dangerous in Unalaska," they could not return. She told her husband "we're all fed up here. They practically treat us as if we were so dumb, or as aliens."90

Kenneth Newell followed his wife's request and wrote to Anthony Dimond, Alaska Territories Delegate to Congress, in
Washington D.C. His letter pointed out that there was no need to keep the Aleuts away from Unalaska for military security and that it was unfair for the Japanese internees to receive housing and food while "our own citizens must take what they can get...this really smells rotten...At least treat our own citizens with as much respect as we show the Japs--at least that much." Of course, Newell was overlooking the fact that the majority of interned Japanese were American citizens.

Edythe Long, the OIA representative at Burnett Inlet, shared the condescending attitude of many OIA bureaucrats. She resented Martha Newell's complaints and tried to make sure they would be ignored. She wrote to the Alaska Indian Service...

Mrs. Newell has a firm conviction that the more complaints she registers and the more dissatisfaction and discontent she can arouse amongst the evacuees here the sooner the Authorities will be obliged to move her back to Unalaska. Her entire being is centered on that one purpose--to go back to her home this spring, and it seems she will go to any lengths even gross misrepresentation to attain this end. She turns deaf ears to any account of reasoning and refuses to face the fact that Unalaska is a war zone and that no women and children can be returned there at present. She not only complains for herself but goes from house to house spreading discontent, she ridicules anyone who tries to make their homes attractive and liveable for the duration, criticizes everything, and even advises others to write to their families that the food and homes are intolerable.  

Long went on in the letter to criticize the Chief of
Unalaska, Zaharoff, saying that "he has proved himself to be a problem also...with his childish attitude." Apparently the Chief also complained that his people did not have the money to purchase all their food and he thought the continued relocation was unnecessary. Long's solution for the Chief's attitude was to ignore it as "he has suffered personal loss and grief." As for Martha Newell, she was to be given her food at no cost so she could save enough to pay for transportation to some other part of the state "where she may be able to be more content for the duration." No location was suggested by Long. Interestingly, Long mentions in passing in the letter that in the past she had "held Mrs. Newell in rather high esteem, and felt she was rather a friend." Apparently the separation anxiety of the Unalaska Aleuts such as Martha Newell created a greater rift between the OIA teachers and the Aleuts than had existed on the island. Edythe Long seemed incapable of understanding this anxiety and discontent.\textsuperscript{93} Martha Newell died of pneumonia at the Burnett camp. Her final request, that her body be returned to Unalaska for burial, was granted.

Philemon M. Tutiakoff, now Chairman of the Board of the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, gave a statement in 1980 that summed up relations with government officials: "The most galling and demeaning feature that many of us recall explicitly is that those in charge regarded us as incapable...of any form of decision-making. At no time
throughout this entire process were we given the right to make choices of any kind." Sergie Shaishnikoff, who was at Funter Bay, felt that the agents "treated us like children. It was ridiculous."²⁹⁴

This examination of the Aleut internment camps shows that Aleuts did not passively accept their fate. In the face of numerous epidemics, the anxiety of displacement, and racism, Aleuts protested the paternalism of on-site government officials and teachers, wrote letters to newspapers and relatives, renovated the dilapidated buildings, cared for the sick and dying, and worked when they could find jobs. By bringing together many Aleut into confined spaces the army, navy, FWS and OIA created ideal conditions for the spread of tuberculoses and other deadly infectious diseases. (see Appendix) The situation was further exacerbated by allowing the ill to live in camps without adequate heat, food, water, or medical care. Clearly, as we have seen in the organization of this chapter, the basic necessities of life were denied Aleuts. Aleuts died under the government's care. Despite what some officials thought, the cause of the failures of the government-run camps was not the Aleut, but the officials themselves.
Notes Chapter IV


4. March, "Narrative."

5. The exceptions, according to Mrs. March were the Rev. Baranoff and his wife and the St. George priest, and her husband, Dr. Samuel R. Berenberg.

6. March, "Narrative."


8. Telegram, Donald Hagerty to Assistant Commissioner William Zimmerman, June 15, 1942.


11. Conn, p. 266-7, and U.S. Congress, 102d Congress, 2d Session. Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Committee Print No. 6, (GPO: 1992) p. 328. Had the Alaska War Council been established earlier, it might have provided an effective focus for military and civilian evacuation planning. By the time the Council was established in June,
however, the ADC and OIA were already searching for a place
to relocate villagers evacuated from Atka and the Pribilofs.

12. Telegram, Donald T. Hagerty to William Zimmerman, June

13. PJD, p. 331.

14. Telegram, Johnston to Bower, June 15, 1942, in Kirtland,

15. Telegram, Johnston to Bower, June 15, 1942.

16. Telegram, General Superintendent Claude M. Hirst to
Assistant Indian Affairs Commissioner William Zimmerman,

17. Telegram, Hagerty to Zimmerman, June 16, 1942. NARS. RG
126 (CWRIC AL6156)

18. Telegram, Bower to Johnston, June 17, 1942; letter,
Hirst to Gruening, June 29, 1942, both in Kirtland, Vol.

19. Radio message, Hagerty to Commissioner of OIA, June 17,
1942. NARS. RG 126 (CWRIC AL6154); lease between P. E.
Harris and Company and the United States Government , June

20. Telegram, Johnston to Hirst, July 16, 1942; letter,
Hirst to Gruening, June 29, 1942, both in Kirtland, Vol.

21. Memo for file, F.W. Hynes, Assistant Fisheries
Management Supervisor, June 25, 1942, in Kirtland, Vol. II,
p. 161.

22. Memo for file, F.W. Hynes, Assistant Fisheries
Management Supervisor, June 25, 1942., for paragraph. In

23. Those officials attending the meeting included: Edward
Johnston, General Superintendent of the FWS Seal Division.
Lee McMillin, Agent and Caretaker, St. Paul Island. Dan
Benson, Agent and Caretaker, St. George Island. Claude
Hirst, General Superintendent, Alaska Indian Service. Dr.
Langon White, Medical Director, Alaska Indian Service. V.R.
Farrell, Educational Director, Alaska Indian Service. George
Barrett, Principal, Wrangell Institute, Alaska Indian
Service. F.W. Hynes, Assistant Fisheries Supervisor, FWS.
Hugh Wade, Territorial Director, Social Security Board.
Source:Letter, Hirst to Governor Gruening, June 29, 1942, in
24. Hirst to Gruening, June 29, 1942.


30. Telegram, Hagerty to Zimmerman, June 17, 1942.


33. McMillin noted that "the sanitary engineer that was here said this water system can not under any conditions be made usable for winter and if these people are going to stay here then some other arrangements will have to be made and that should be quick."

34. McMillin to Johnston, July 11, 1942.

35. McMillin to Johnston, July 11, 1942.


37. Sketch by Anatoly Lekanof Jr. 1945. Courtesy of the Aleut Corporation. The Aleut corporation is currently in the process of compiling a library of Aleut materials and art work.


41. Memo, John Hall to Hoverson, September 3, 1943.

42. Hall to Hoverson, Sept. 3, 1943.

43. Tlingit are Athabascan-related people of the Northern Northwest Coast.


45. The Alaska Indian Service was under the control of the OIA.

46. Farrell, "Report."


48. Charcasen and Merculief, "Narrative."


57. Inspection Report, John Hall, Funter Bay, September 3-4, 1943. After receiving copies of Hall's critical reports, Alaska Fisheries Division Chief Ward T. Bower admitted "the need to use drastic measures if the natives are to remain another winter." Bower recognized the injustice and promised that "nothing will be left undone to rectify the situation." Ward T. Power to Frank Hynes, FWS Seattle, September 16, 1943. In Kirtland, Vol. III, p. 27.


64. "Statement of Natalie Misikian" Report, p. 79-84.

65. Deposition, William Dirks. Margie Dirks, perished at Killisnoo and is buried there. According to Vera Nevzoroff, "at least ten people" died at Killisnoo, and were buried on the island. Deposition, Vera Nevzoroff.


70. Personal Narrative, Dorofey Chercesan and Fr. Paul Merculief.

71. Block, "Report."


77. "Statement of Walter Dyakanoff" Report, p. 71. Walter Dyakanoff was 19 when he went to Burnett Inlet. His adjustment to relocation was quite different from Martha's. For him it was an adventure, he "had a good time repairing
the abandoned cannery" but around him he could see that it wasn't very enjoyable for the older people. They had been dislocated "from their homes, their way of living and the southeastern rains was there all the time."

78. The Magees had strong opinions, but little sympathy, about how the relocation seemed to affect the Atkans. They noted that firewood was easy to get and that logs would drift right on the beach in front of the village. But, "this convenience they did not seem to appreciate." The Magees wrote that "all their lives they had to use their dories equipped with four-horse engines to go many miles to the south side of Atka to get their wood." Somehow the Magees thought that "this easy life" of collecting wood from the beach "soon made a change in the men." "Discontent was very noticeable among them. The people hated this tiny tree-covered island with poor rocky beaches. There was no place to go hiking, as on large, grassy Atka. Many of the older men became sick and passed on. The younger people became acquainted with the Angoon Indians on Admiralty Island. Drinking became excessive and this led to much trouble."

79. Statement of Captain F.A. Zeusler before the Ketchikan City Council, as reported in the Alaska Fishing News, May 24, 1943.


83. Editorial, Fishing.

84. Editorial, Fishing.

85. Harry McCain to Governor Ernest Gruening. May 22, 1943.

86. Letter to the Editor, Alaska Fishing News, May 21, 1943.


88. Editorial, Fishing.

90. Martha Newell to Kenneth Newell. March 26, 1943.


93. A similar incident to the Burnett Inlet problem occurred at Killisnoo. After the Magees had live in the relocation camp for six months they noted that "most of the able-bodied men got work at Excursion Inlet repairing boats for the government." Since the Atkans had some income, the Magees changed their policy and started charging the Atkans for any food or clothing they would get from the stores that the Magees controlled. The change did not go over well with the Atkans. The Magees were also irate at the anger of the Atkans as they noted: "They seem to think that they should continue to receive the food and clothing free so they could use their money for mail order business and the many drinking parties they felt they owed the Angoon Indians."

CHAPTER V

"Seals First, Aleuts Second"

The Case of the Pribilof Sealers

The wartime experiences of the Pribilovians warrants separate attention as it was unique in American-Native American affairs. The federal authorities paid more attention to and controlled more of the Pribilovan's lives than the other Aleut communities. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) used the Pribilovians themselves as a labor force on their island, keeping them in near-slave conditions. Chapter One examined the roots of the rule of the U.S. government which go back to the early twentieth-century when it took direct control of the seal harvest on the Pribilofs. By treaty, only Aleuts could club the seals;
however, the profit from the seal harvest--millions of dollars a year--filled federal coffers, not the pockets of Pribilovians.

The paternalistic bureaucracy that controlled the Pribilofs endured during World War II. In fact, the desire of Federal officials to continue the seal harvest during the war had drastic effects on the Pribilovians. Officials separated the communities of St. Paul and St. George Islands in strikingly new ways. Through manipulation, federal officials, persuaded Aleuts to return to the Pribilofs for sealing and then back to Funter Bay after the skinning was finished. The split of the communities occurred, during a time of epidemic illness, stress, and hardship.

Edward C. Johnston, an FWS official, in a letter to Mr. G. Donald Ginnins of the Folke Fur Company in St. Louis, which handled the Pribilovan furs, made it clear that the goal of the FWS was to continue the hunt despite the relocation and internment of the Pribilovians. Johnston had "been trying to keep our people in as close a unit as we can in case it is possible to return to the Islands within a reasonable time." There were about eight who had left to work in Juneau, but Johnston acknowledged that "practically all the younger men want to get away to work but, so far, we have not let them go."

Lee McMillin displayed an attitude typical of the FWS officials. When writing about the possible employment
situation of Pribilovians he thought them incapable of performing any tasks aside from sealing. McMillin thought that if they left Funter Bay for employment, "they will be so badly outclassed no one will keep them." However, as we will see later, those who did employ Pribilovians outside of Funter Bay found them to be quite competent.

In a telling remark McMillin said that most of the jobs at Funter Bay were "for the men only." To keep them at the camp he suggested that the FWS "pay them a small monthly wage and keep them here where we know they will be alright [sic]. Although there are some here that I would certainly be glad to get rid of." In McMillin's opinion, the camp work was for men, yet plans to return the Pribilof men for sealing and leave the women and children behind went ahead.

Although in the minds of FWS officials the decision to go back to the Pribilofs was firm, the Aleuts tried to resist. When Johnston arrived at Funter Bay from Seattle with the news that a hunt would proceed, the Aleuts called a meeting and said they would not go unless "they received $1.00 per skin and that they wanted to receive their evacuation wages up until the sealing began." The increased payments were approved, but the FWS told the Pribilovians that the women and children would stay at Funter.

Some of the Pribilovian Aleuts who had escaped to Juneau to work befriended whites in the community. Those individuals came away with quite a different impression of
the Aleuts than that held by the FWS officials. Mary Jane Gaither of Juneau wrote a fascinating letter to Anthony Dimond, Alaska's Delegate in Washington D.C., which showed the thinking of some Aleuts and whites in Southeastern Alaska. She employed a Pribilof native through whom she became "acquainted with what I consider very shameful facts concerning these people." She thought that the Pribilovians were "in virtual slavery on the islands, having had to receive the 'permission' of the Government agents for practically everything they did." In her opinion they were taught only what the agents wanted them to know, even though they were "intelligent and quick, and would respond to higher education, if they could get it."

Learning that the FWS wanted to send the men back to the Pribilofs to kill and skin the seals and to care for the fox, "regardless of the fact that they will be" endangered. Even those who were inducted into the Army would be sent back as "the women aren't capable of handling" the sealing job. Gaither said that the FWS told Pribilovians "that if they don't go back now they never can go back."

Pribilovan men were told to quit their jobs, and Gaither objected that the "natives do not know any better. They have been told what to do all their lives by the agents and the Church and naturally they believe them." Observantly, she asserted that the case was unique in American-Indian relations, because the controlling agency was the Bureau of
Fisheries and Wildlife Service. She wondered: "Why do they have control over these natives, when the Office of Indian Affairs should have it? The Office of Indian Affairs has the control of all the other natives in the Territory, why not of the Pribilof Natives?"

After the death of two Pribilovians at Funter Bay came to Gaither's attention, she investigated and found that they had no medical care, except what they "themselves could afford to pay." If they had been under the proper authority, Gaither thought, they could at least have received medical care. When the Bureau (FWS) was asked if it planned to pay the burial expenses "the answer was no." The islanders themselves had no funds for burial expenses.  

Gaither pleaded with Representative John Dimond to "see that [the Pribilovians] are at least placed under the proper agency," one that will be looking out for the welfare of the natives themselves rather than for the "welfare of some politician or money grabber." Gaither became a crusader for the Aleuts and wrote to the Editorial Department of Empire Printing in Anchorage, which controlled the *Anchorage Times*. She called it an "open letter to the public...to present the true facts." Her goal was to do something "to protect these people." She appealed to America's ideals: "For many years it has been our understanding, and that of many others, that this was a free country, where racial freedom and equality was practiced. How many of us have
taken the time and trouble to look into our own "back yards"? Here in the Territory can be found one of the most shameful instances of "slavery" and of the absence of equality!"

The people of the Pribilof Islands, she wrote, who were evacuated by the U.S. Government so that they would be safe from Japanese invasion, are "now, however,... in far greater danger than ever before." According to her the Pribilovians were "told that if they do not go back now, they can never go back." Her solution to the Pribilovan's dilemma was mass protest. She thought that it wasn't "going to do any good for just one or two of us to write or talk about this... it has to be everyone, especially those of us who have had any contact with these natives and who knows anything about them." Her final appeal was for the people of Alaska to "all HOLLER and HOLLER LOUD and LONG until our own back yards are clean!" 8

Gaither's letter raised quite a stir in the FWS when Dimond forwarded copies. Apparently Gaither's editorial was censored by the Anchorage Times and sent to the FWS. FWS Chief Ward Bower's response was that someone should contact Mrs. Gaither, "giving her a better understanding of conditions affecting the work identified with the Pribilof Islands." 9

Bower presented Dimond with a wholly different interpretation of the Pribilovan's relationship with the
FWS, the Pribilovians themselves, and their relocation. He declared that at Funter Bay they were provided with excellent food, good housing, clothing, medical attention, and school facilities. Their schooling was as extensive as they desired "or can be persuaded to accept." Contrary to oral testimony and other reports, Bower said that "any native who wants an opportunity for higher education can obtain it." As to the relocation and internment, Bower misrepresented the situation when he stated that conditions at Funter Bay "have been more or less of a make-shift nature, but nevertheless the natives have suffered no real hardships, although some inconveniences have been unavoidable." Further describing conditions at Funter Bay, Bower said:

Quite a number of the natives who were evacuated to Funter Bay elected to leave that place and obtain employment in Juneau and elsewhere in Southeastern Alaska. They were given permission to leave Funter Bay if they so desired, but while away they naturally were looking out for themselves. They have the privilege at all times of returning to Funter Bay and, while there, have the benefit at Government expenses of food fuel, clothing, housing, medical attention, and other facilities, and in addition the workman are paid a nominal cash allowance, although the chief emolument consists of the necessaries of life furnished without cost.

The FWS man then went on to state incorrectly that "arrangements have been made with the military authorities whereby all of the St. George Island natives will resume residence there this season." In fact, the arrangements were
made only for the sealers returned to work for the season.

In response to the Gaither's criticisms of the FWS, Bowers thought that she "evidently does not realize that the fur-sealing and the foxing operation at the Pribilof Islands are conducted by the Government and that the proceeds of sales of skins are covered into the Treasury of the United States." Although Gaither's letter makes it clear that she understood where the money was going, her main point was that the funds were not being used for the benefit of the Pribilovians.

Gaither raised the question as to why the natives were not under the jurisdiction of the Office of Indian Affairs instead of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Bower responded that the primary work at the Pribilof Islands was the management of the Alaska fur-seal herd numbering 2-1/2 million animals and the taking of fur-seals and fox skins was "purely as a Government enterprise."\(^10\) This specialized work, he said, was "outside the normal functions and activities of the Office of Indian Affairs."

Essentially, Bower was admitting that the priority of the FWS was the fur-seals and the Pribilovians came second. He boasted, however, that "the support and maintenance of the natives of the Pribilof Islands will compare favorably with efforts of the Office of Indian Affairs elsewhere in Alaska."\(^11\)

Another FWS official questioned Gaither's motives. He
pointed out that the Gaithers (Mrs. Gaither and her mother) employed a girl from the Pribilofs, Sophia Prokopiof, as house maid and nurse, and that such help was extremely difficult to procure. He believed that because "the St. George women and children are scheduled to remain at Funter" and the Gaithers were not in "danger of losing the services of Sophia, it is unlikely that anything further will be heard from them."

However, Gaither was not the only critic of the FWS. Grover Winn, a local Juneau attorney "was most vociferous in his denunciation" of the proposed sealing expedition, and advised the FWS that it was his intention to "blow the lid off" the whole plan through the medium of two nationally known writers (Corey Ford and Joe Driscoll, of the New York Herald-Tribune). FWS also painted Mr. Winn's interests as more financial than humanitarian, as he was leasing some shacks to the evacuees employed in Juneau. When Winn's attacks on the FWS ceased, officials theorized that perhaps he learned that press releases are closely censored and that even the Ford and Driscoll class of writers cannot "be allowed to hamper the war effort." It appears that FWS officials hid behind censorship of material that was detrimental to their operations.

As their response to Winn suggests, the appeal to the "war effort" provided a powerful rhetorical defense for FWS officials. In all discussions of the Pribilof operations
with their critics, officials placed particular stress upon the production of oil, meal and glycerin bearing fats from the seals. This strategy aligned them with national efforts to save fats and oils and helped make the wartime return of the Pribilovians seem important to the war effort. In peace time the oil, meal and fats of the seals were given little attention.

The FWS was not the only group concerned about the continuation of the fur seal hunt. The Fouke Fur Company, which handled the Pribilovian's furs, was anxious about the source of their livelihood, the Pribilof Aleuts. In November 1942 a representative of Fouke Fur wrote to the FWS office in Seattle to express some of his company's concerns. He noted that in their recent auction, the market was starting to open up and "now there is a small boom in fur coat manufacturing and sales, and sealskin is enjoying its full share." However, he was concerned that some of the manufacturers were considering using another line of fur in "view of the lack of information about the catch." For that reason Folke hoped it was possible before long for the government to be able at least to show them that in Alaska "there will be as near to normal sealing operations as is possible." Folke Fur Company had their wishes granted when the Pribilovians returned to the Islands in 1943.

Once the transportation plans were in place, the FWS had the job of getting all the Pribilovians in southeastern
Alaska together to return to the Islands. The task was not an easy one, and the FWS used various methods, from blackmail to intimidation, to coax them into returning. Ward Bower, in considering the work required to harvest a record catch, decided that along with all able bodied adult Pribilovians, some of the older schoolboys who had sealed before should "be sent to St. Paul for sealing operations and then returned to Funter, presumably along in August." During their absence the FWS decided to leave about twelve of the older and less capable men, to "look after necessary duties at Funter" with the women and children.\textsuperscript{15}

Without most of the able-bodied men, life in the Funter Bay internment camp worsened--made more burdensome by debilitating diseases. John Hall, Public Health Engineer for the Alaskan Territory, made plain the problems in his inspection of Funter Bay on September 3-4, 1943 while the sealing group was away. He stated that a "shortage of men prevents necessary work being done." He thought that the real fault lay higher up as most of the Agents, as well as the doctor, had gone to the islands with all the able bodied men and left the supervision of the 300 women and children to Mr. Hoverson and Mr. Merriot, who did not seem up to those "duties." Hall argued that the 300 women and children remaining at Funter Bay needed the doctor's services more than the 150 sealers who had returned to the islands.\textsuperscript{16} Army medical service was available on the Pribilofs for the
sealers; therefore, there was no need for the doctor to have left Funter Bay. Hall had harsh words for the departed doctor, suggesting that while he (the Doctor) was at Funter Bay he seemed to be more interested in an Alaskan "vacation than anything else." There was little or no medical service with the sealers gone, Hall thought that Miss Porter, a Fish and Wildlife hospital nurse, did "her best with meager facilities."

With the separation of Pribilovians, Hall sensibly realized that there was a need for recreation and morale-building activities. But, he observed, "all efforts in this latter direction apparently broke down months ago." "Bad administration" was in evidence. With the men away, difficulties with fishermen were numerous and the white supervisors manned night patrols to prevent introduction of "alcohol and complications with the women." Hall realized the need to return the people to their homes as soon as possible and he wired the army urging that course before the winter set in.\(^\text{17}\)

After reading Hall's report, Ward Bower, Chief of Alaska Fisheries, wrote to Frank Hynes of the FWS to let him know that, although he had never been to the camps, he "did not doubt the unsatisfactory state of affairs." He knew that "the reduction in the forces of supervisory personnel and the absence of the able-bodied natives who were detailed to sealing operation this summer at the Pribilof Islands, no
doubt have contributed much to the unsatisfactory sanitary and other conditions.\textsuperscript{18} Bower's word directly contradicted what he had written to Rep. Dimond earlier, when he claimed that "the natives have suffered no real hardships."

When the Pribilof men returned after five months, they were greeted with a measles epidemic that had rendered many of the Aleut women and children incapable of caring for themselves. Apparently the island was safe during sealing and no problems occurred. In the men's absence, the camp's conditions, as noted in the previous chapter, became even more deplorable. However, in response to critical reports, FWS officials were quick to promise improvement and to shift blame away from themselves and on to the Aleuts. Ward Bowers' words are typical. He thought that "it may well be that the natives of the Pribilof Islands have been coddled too much and the time has come to bring home to them forcefully the need to look after themselves in more decent ways than seems to be the case, with notable exceptions, at Funten Bay." Chillingly, Bower believed that "if they do not respond to ordinary instructions and suggestions along this line, more drastic measures will be necessary."\textsuperscript{19}

The most frank and revealing statement concerning the Pribilof Aleuts, the relocation camps, and the Pribilof Aleuts' relationship with the Federal government came from FWS official Hynes in a letter to Bower after the sealers

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had been returned to the languishing camps. Hynes had made the trip to the islands with the Pribilovians. The letter is worthy of careful analysis.

Hynes knew that the Funter Bay situation was growing more and more tense and he thought Bower should have a comprehensive picture of the entire problem "in the hope that it will aid you in taking the necessary steps to rectify it and put the evacuation camps on a workable basis before another winter." Hynes had hoped until recently that repatriation of the Pribilof natives would be accomplished after the close of sealing operations. But the military would not allow Pribilovians back on a permanent basis as yet. To Hynes it seemed unlikely that they would return to their homes that year and "possibly not until after the war is over." He concluded that there was "no longer any point in waiting and hoping for the end of a bad situation; the facts must be faced and every effort made to correct conditions before it is too late." 20

It had long been apparent that the camps were not operating successfully, even as temporary refuges, and Hynes was convinced that unless adequate measures were taken to improve conditions before the "arduous winter months begin there is more than a possibility that the death toll from tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza and other disease will so decimate the ranks of the natives that few will survive to return to the islands." Only through the efforts of the
Public Health Service were wholesale deaths averted during the recent measles epidemic, when nearly all of the non-sealers remaining at the camps were stricken. Such crises had become almost routine at Funter, according to Hynes, and he thought they would continue "until facilities are vastly improved."

Hynes, however, still had the interest of the FWS in mind when he told Bower that returning to the Islands in September would have been the ideal solution to cover up the failure of the camps. That month the Pribilovians were opposed to making the trip because of the lateness of the season. They knew about the prolonged bad weather conditions and had also had adverse reports from the returning sealers concerning the conditions of their homes and scarcity of supplies. In considering the situation, Hynes believed it would be a great advantage to concentrate on and correct the Funter conditions rather than to create new ones which would "arise in attempting to rehabilitate St. George Island at this time."21

Ward Bower still blamed the victim for conditions at Funter Bay. Bower thought that Hynes had "drawn the picture correctly and, as a result, further efforts must be made to sharply improve the housing and health conditions of our people at Funter."22 Bower agreed that the Aleuts should be repatriated but the lack of transportation and other matters were beyond the FWS control. Regardless of what led
up to this situation, the FWS was now confronted with the reality that the place of abode for Pribilovians would be Funter and not the Pribilof Islands for the winter of 1943-44. Harold Smith, the Acting Regional Forester, acknowledged what others had been afraid to say when he wrote: "You will note that there has been one burial at Funter Bay and no doubt others will follow if the Aleuts who are now there remain for any considerable length of time." He knew that for the Pribilovan to remain was a death sentence for some of them.

But, for his part, Bower remained steadfast. He thought "there has been altogether too much leniency heretofore in dealing with the natives along this line, and unless there is profound improvement, the charge of inefficiency certainly will lie against those who are responsible. The time has come to deal severely with these Pribilof natives who need such action." What Bower had in mind can perhaps be extrapolated from the anecdote he relayed to Hynes. In the story a Pribilovan at Funter Bay refused to obey a reasonable, simple order of Mr. Merriott, or was "otherwise impudent." Merriott grabbed him and shook him, "with the result that thereafter he behaved himself." Bower "was very favorably impressed" by Merriott's physicality.

Ruth Gruber, a field representative for the Secretary of the Interior, sent a confidential file back to Washington D.C. regarding the situation at Funter after the Sealers
returned. Gruber concluded that the problems of the Pribilof Aleuts were even more critical than before, "since measles are greatly among the children in the evacuation camp, the men who had been taken to the Pribilofs for the summer sealing, were brought back to the camp and exposed." Edward Johnston, the superintendent of the Pribilof Island for the FWS acknowledged in a 1944 report that 1943 had been a bad year for the Pribilovians, because twenty-five of the 400 had died.

For the surviving Pribilovian sealers, the 1943 season was one of their worst memories of the war era. Flore Lekanof was sixteen when he was relocated to Funter Bay from St. George Island. He was expected "to work like a man." The reason given to Lekanof and the others for the return to sealing was, again, the "war effort argument. Officials told them that seal oil which did not gel in cold weather was needed by the military for their equipment. Some of us bought it," said Lekanof, "and some of us didn't." Lekanof believed that the true reason for the hunt was the Federal government's concern about the profits from the fur seals. If the seal herd became too large, they could trample over each other and kill the little ones and "it may not be very good...for the herd."

Some of the Pribilovians travelled to Juneau to get jobs and then moved their families there. Lekanof knew that they were "forced to come back...some of them would have
loved to stay in Juneau and work, they would have liked to stay there forever." But they were told by a representative of the federal government, "look if you don't come back with us, you're going to lose your house at St. Paul or St. George....that's what they told these people. In spite of it I think a couple of families stayed back."\(^{28}\)

Therefore to avoid depletion of the herd, they had "us come up there to harvest the seals. You see the season before there was no harvest, in 42 there was no harvest, we were evacuated. In 43 we were taken back, we took 125,000 seals, three and four year-old seals. That was a big take." Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) records do indeed reveal that was "a big take." In fact, it was the largest ever recorded for the Pribilofs.\(^{29}\)

Lekanof theorized that "taking us back early after two years, before the Aleutian chain people came back, was essential to look after the fur seal industry. It was the Federal government's industry. That's how they supported their operation out there. Self-supporting operation, and all the profit went to the Federal government."\(^{30}\) The sealer "got a little bit of a bonus, which [they] really had to beg for, and it didn't amount to much."\(^{31}\)

For Lekanof, who would later go on to attain a masters degree, the situation with the sealers "was terrible." He thought that it was a shameful part of "the history of the United States" similar to the Japanese internment, even
though the "Japanese were treated much better during their internment."

Michael Lestenko\ufff5, who later became an ordained Russian Orthodox priest, was one of the Pribilovians who had found work in Juneau and for a time had been able to move his family away from the misery at Punter Bay. While working with metal Lestenko\ufff5 injured his thumb which became infected. Edward Johnston sent him, along with his family and wards, to Juneau to have it treated. In Juneau Lestenko\ufff5 became a "janitor for a Federal building for $48 a month."32 "That seemed big money" and he was able to rent a house for his family for $15 a month. He knew that other families were not allowed to go to Juneau because the FWS wanted to keep them in one spot to return for the sealing. His injured thumb turned out to be a temporary blessing. Lestenko\ufff5 believed that "they all would have moved if they could."

The authoritarian treatment of the Pribilof sealers was something that Lestenko\ufff5 realized went "way back. That's why the education was low in the islands. They allowed only so much grade. So they could keep us at a level where we wouldn't have a good mind and try to get away from sealing." He knew that the Federal government made "millions. That's why they controlled us. No white man was supposed to club the seals as a rule. That was in effect long before I come to be a sealer too. I was in school until I was fifteen
years-old, my level was sixth grade." Lestenkoff used humor as a way of coping with his past: "But since they didn't have any book for sixth grade I stayed in fifth grade twice." He recalled that during the war and before "we used to think that everything was true and right, because as I tell you--no education, no education. Everything they did didn't seem to bother you because you're not well educated. Well I had a little bit of pride and they used to complain. They didn't like me for that."

Lestenkoff remembered the meeting held in Juneau among Pribilovians, who had managed to escape Funter Bay and FWS officials. An official told them "because we lose the seals last year there will be a bigger killing, including this year's and last year's. So you guys come and get a very good bonus on it, four or five hundred dollars." Lekanof and two others "couldn't see any reason to go back for that little bit of money," and they tried to stay in Juneau. Then he received a letter from his in-laws telling him to "stop your foolishness and take your family and my grandchildren back to St. George." He found out later that they did not write the letter, his "wife's mother and father never used to write a letter." Someone wrote it for them, although he was never able to find out who it was. The letter did its intended job and Lekanof returned with the sealers. His family "stayed in Funter Bay for the summer, just the sealing gang was sent."
Lestenkoff recalls telling an official "that's a war zone! That's a war zone!" "We were evacuated from there, how could we go back in that war zone again?" To Lestenkoff the answer was simple "they wanted the money from the seals."

On May 22, 1943, Lestenkoff and ten of the others landed on St. George to open up the village. He recalled working day and night to get the motors, the trucks, the engines and the houses into shape before the other people arrived. Lestenkoff was there from May until November, "almost seven months," while his family was down at Funter Bay and "very ill, sick with the measles, flu." In August Lestenkoff tried to go back to them but "they would not let" him go. FWS officials told him that he would soon see his family when they returned to the islands. But Lestenkoff realized "that was not happening" and on November 11, they took him back to Funter Bay again. For Lestenkoff "it looked like we were just hostages kept there for seven months for no reason. We were only about 14 men or 15 men and one 15-year-old boy who was with us too, [the 15-year-old] tried to get back to Funter Bay to start his school but they told him there would be a lady coming to be his teacher. Oh, he was crying because he was only 15-years-old." The young boy must have been Flore Lekanof.

When Lestenkoff and the others got back to Funter Bay their families came to the float to meet them. Lestenkoff was shocked at the condition of his wife and family. He
recalled "she was so sick that she didn't care. She just come over and greeted me...and went right back to her room again because she was very ill." His two children just didn't know that he "was there, they were very sick with measles and flu." Lestenkoff's testimony corroborates the detrimental effects of the separation of the St. George community.33

Stefan A. Lekanof, Flore's brother, was working as a cannery in Juneau when he received a letter from the FWS asking him to go back to the Pribilofs. The letter made it plain that if he did not return he would not see his "home again." Stefan Lekanof felt he "had no choice." Consequently he gave up a good job and went home. After the hard season of sealing he went back to Funter Bay and "got sick as soon as I got there with German measles." When he was back on the island they did not provide enough food so "some nights we would sneak into [the] armed forces stores and steal some canned foods so we can have something to eat, which wasn't right but we were hungry we had to do it." Stefan Lekanof had suffred in the relocation, and when he found gainful employment he was blackmailed him into returning to the Pribilofs. The only measurable results were the loss his job, difficult conditions during the sealing, and contraction of measles on his return.

William Shane's memories were similar. He worked for the Army Engineers in Juneau until May 1943 "when the agent
got to Juneau and...[told] us come back to St. George for sealing which I didn't like but I had to do it for the Government." When the FWS took them to St. George he realized that their wives did not have any money and the government was not about to provide it. He could not imagine how his wife would manage. At St. George for the 1943 harvesting Shane found his "house was very clean, closets and everything," meaning not "tidy" but "cleared out." In their "housecleaning" the military took all the clothing and curtains to the town dump and burned them.34

Martha Krukoff was one of the women who stayed behind at Funter Bay. She recalled "Most of the men from both St. Paul and St. George didn't get back until November."35 For her the results of the separation were painfully obvious: "twenty-five people died during that time and my dad was one of them."

The excruciating year of the Pribilovians' community separation manifested the government bureaucracy continued pursuit of narrow goals in spite of the inhumane consequences for the Aleuts. At Funter Bay, horrendous camp conditions persisted because FWS management, fighting for its survival, kept a single-minded eye on restoring the seal harvest as quickly as possible--despite Aleut suffering.36 Pribilovians had no wish to return to an active war zone: some had good jobs in Juneau and others did not want to leave behind their wives and children in a time of need. In
1942 the argument employed by the military that Aleuts needed to be moved for their own safety, seemed superfluous to the FWS in 1943. As one Pribilovian succinctly put it "we always knew it was seals first, Aleuts second."\textsuperscript{37}
Notes Chapter V


2. McMillin to Johnston, July 11, 1942. Kirtland, Vol. IV, p. 8-9 "The employment bureau...I understand has permission from you to register all these men. I hope you realize what this will mean. Anyone else in here will ask them what they did on the Island and you will have them scattered all over the territory with request to pick them up and bring them back here."

3. McMillin letter: "What then would you do with the families and what arrangements about paying the men that stay here and cook for them, cut the wood, carry water and other laundry duties."


5. Gaither to Dimond, April 7, 1943. In Kirtland, Vol. V, p. 180. Gaither wrote: "They received well under $5.00 for each seal that they skinned and killed, and about $5.00 for each fox they raised to maturity. Look at the market prices!" In fact Gaither's figures were low, they received only 75 cents per skin, and $1.00 during the wartime harvest.


8. Gaither to Empire Printing, April 6, 1943.


10. The FWS had run the fur seal harvest on the Pribilofs since the early twentieth-century and since that time it had been a self-sustaining federal enterprise.

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16. Letter, Dr. and Mrs. Berenberg to Magees. October 22, 1943. In Kirtland, IV, p. 57-58. The Berenberg's wrote that the Helbaums, the teachers from St. Paul, had recently quit the service, "thoroughly disgusted at the inhuman conditions there" and were truly "discouraged and unhappy." They noted that even the FWS employee "Mr. Hoverson has been pleading to be transferred with no success." The Berenberg's could see that if even "the more favored gov. employees are so unhappy the state of mind of the others must be chaotically confused. Living in barracks between blankets partitions for so long must account for much illness and spread of illness as well as general unhappiness."


20. Johnston to Morton, May 2, 1943. In Kirtland, Vol. IV, p. 16-17. Edward Johnston was in direct control of the Pribilovians going back to the Islands for the 43 hunt. In a revealing letter to Seattle from Funter Bay on May of 1943. The letter begins with a description of the troubles that the Aleuts were having with the one stove at the camp that was unusable. Johnston tells his colleague that if replacement parts cannot be found they should purchase a new stove because, "Public interest has already affected out plans for this summer. Should our cooking facilities give out and the matter be taken up publicly we might receive some severe criticism." Another stove was crucial because the "old 2-oven range which was the first one used last summer...must be taken back to St. Paul for the sealing gang."


23. Memo, Stacy to McMillin, January 30, 1943. In Kirtland, Vol. IV, p. 59. The cemetery site for dead Pribilovians was a delicate matter for McMillin. "The matter pertaining to your question regarding the burial at Funter Bay of Viass Pankoff and others from time to time, has been taken up with Forest Service officials. Mr Smith of that Service states he does not feel that under the circumstances that exist at Funter Bay, any trouble would be encountered in handling future deaths as you have in the past. Mr. Baith stated it would be permissible to establish a small cemetery there as long as it is located on land other than a homestead site, patented mining claim, cannery leased property, etc. If the cemetery is located on cannery property, permission should be obtained."


25. Smith to Acting Division Supervisor, Admiralty Division, February 2, 1943.


27. Report, Johnston, February 11, 1944. Kirtland, Vol. IV, p. 62-63. Johnston: "some of whom were away from the camp at the time of death. The chief cause of death was flu, followed by pneumonia." Johnston seems to reassure himself by continuing "conditions in this respect, according to Territorial Health reports, were much better than among natives evacuated from the Aleutians to other southeastern Alaska places." He further attempts to make the situation seem better by pointing out that "there were 13 births during the year. These vital statistics show a reduction of 12 in the population."


31. Lekanof p. 12. At this point in the interview Lekanof related some of the conditions in which he was raised pertaining to the seal industry. "I remember my father getting for one year for a family of eight, eight people he supported, got $200. That was when I was a teenager. We had to live off of that. Mother took that and looked through the Sears Roebuck catalog and did what she could. Of course, in those days you could get more with $200, but even then it wasn't a fair type of payment. He made maybe another $100 in the wintertime trapping and working on the blue fox industry. Which was also a federal government operation. They got bonus for that, they just called it "bonus". The rest of the time what they lived on was the federal government provided housing as crowded as some of these houses were in those days. Ours was always crowded. We had three bedrooms with eight people, you know, you can imagine how it was. No restroom, there was no bathroom in those houses. We had to use outhouses, no running water, no electricity."


34. Shane Testimony. My uncle, he have a daughter and also a son, and his mother did a lot of crocheting and embroidering. She had a trunk full of that stuff which I can't estimate the cost of it. This is gone too. Like I say, some of the Army guys keep it or ship it out to their home."

35. "Testimony of Serge Shaishnikoff," U.S. Commission on Wartime Internment of Civilians. Transcripts are held at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Special Collections Room. He remembered that the following year after he arrived at Funter Bay, a notice came that the men would be brought back to the Pribilofs to harvest the seals. Prior to leaving Funter Bay for the Pribilofs, he asked the agent that the price of the pelts for bonus purposes be raised to a dollar a pelt. After the sealing season he came back to Funter Bay prior to the winter. Shaishnikoff found many "people ill, stricken with measles and other diseases."

36. Dorothy Jones theorized that in the end the war experience of Pribilovians may have been positive;" given the pressure of a war against fascism and increasing surveillance by outsiders, management had to make some changes. It sought to change the form rather than the substance of its relationship with the Aleut people by replacing overt, blatant discrimination with more subtle,
less visible tactics for control. After the repatriation, when managers felt protected by the isolation of the islands, they renewed their efforts to restore the colonial-type relationship, unaware as they were that, indeed, a new era was dawning in the Pribilofs."

CHAPTER VI

"Our Village Looked Dead"

The Return to the Islands

Paul Merculief spent three of his teenage years in a relocation camp in Southeastern Alaska. His return to the Aleutians of his birth filled him with intense joy. He was like a "young antelope prancing around the village." The grass and the green wide open spaces so contrasted to the claustrophobia of the trees on the mainland. Although, his reaction was surely felt in some measure by all Aleuts, disappointment would soon follow when they saw their previous homes. As with the relocation and internment of the Aleuts during World War II, the return of Aleuts varied with each community. In the timing of their return, the
conditions they encountered, and new relationships with the government and military, each group faced unique circumstances.

The official version of the 1945 Aleut resettlement put forward for public and military consumption was given in an article written for *Vank* by Sergeant Ray Duncan.¹ Duncan found it hard to believe that "the natives of the Chain are eager to get back to their villages on the dismal tundra slopes that GI's hate." Duncan seemed to find it amusing that when Aleuts first heard that they were going home in 1944 they packed their bags at once. Duncan wrote "that was because they didn't know the Army." As if to emphasize that Aleuts were different Duncan noted that Aleuts are impatient to get back "ever since the Army moved them out they've been homesick for their barren, wind-beaten, fog-bound islands." For Duncan (and other G.I.'s) Aleuts were a "strange people anyhow." G.I.'s wondered why these people ever drifted out on the Chain and, "once there, why they stayed."²

Duncan did, however, acknowledge that Aleutian weather and three years of neglect reduced the Aleut villages to ruins, and "GI moonlight requisitioners and souvenir hunters did the rest." Soldiers discovered that natives houses were lined with plywood, and they "requisitioned" it to line
Fig. 12. "Residents of Atka waiting for Transportation."
their foxholes while "souvenir hunters grabbed other choice items."\textsuperscript{4} Duncan was surprised by the fine pre-war Aleut homes noting that "they often had linoleum and modern stoves and chrome ashtrays and running water and gas illumination."\textsuperscript{5} Duncan conceded that the camps in southeastern Alaska were "a come-down from their cozy island homes," but felt constrained to emphasize that the Aleuts had been moved to "a much more pleasant part of Alaska by white man's standards."\textsuperscript{6}

Contrary to the reports and observations of many (especially in Ketchikan) Duncan suggested that "the Aleuts made a big hit with mainland Alaskans."\textsuperscript{7} He thought that "since they're one of the most cheerful people in all Alaska, the Aleuts have never been bitter about their exile. They understood the reasons for it and never complained." According to Duncan the one thing bothering them was that they had "to leave behind the graves of their people who have died during their stay on the mainland. Their religion will make that a difficult parting."\textsuperscript{8}

However, Duncan had faith that "the Aleuts will do all right," as the Army and Navy, working through the Alaska Indian Service, were going to rebuild every damaged village "down to the last stick furniture." It was the Army-Navy aim to make the Aleut cry out their equivalent of "we never had it better."\textsuperscript{9}

Duncan knew that the Aleuts who returned to Atka were
due for the "surprise of their lives." Planes will be flying low over the village as they circle to come in for a landing and a complicated network of roads was installed over the island. "The Aleuts may or may not like these changes, but anyhow they'll be amazed."\textsuperscript{10}

The article distorted almost every aspect of the Aleut relocation and return, all to the benefit of the government. Documents from the agencies involved in the repatriation and Aleuts' recollections tell a different story. They reveal the emotions associated with returning to devastated communities. The themes of the reports and memories after the initial shock relate to the condition of the housing, the lost and stolen goods, the limited rebuilding, the continuation of restrictions, and the legacies of the Aleuts' relocation.

By March, 1944 it was apparent to federal officials that there was no further reason to keep Aleuts in southeastern Alaska. The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of War agreed that Aleuts could safely be returned to their homes. The return and rehabilitation of the natives of Atka and Akutan were the responsibility of the navy. The other islanders would be returned at the expense of the War Department.\textsuperscript{11}

In the previous chapter we saw how the Pribilof Aleuts returned early for the seal hunt, only to be sent back to Funter Bay for a second winter. Nevertheless, due to the
drive by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to continue the seal hunt and take to the Pribilovians back to a more remote spot, where FWS activities and policies could be continued in isolation, the Pribilovians were the first Aleuts to return to the islands.

By February 1944 detailed plans were being made by the FWS to return the Pribilovians in time to conduct that year's fur seal harvest. Work continued for several days in preparation for resettlement of the Pribilofs. On Friday, April 28, most of the children who had been at boarding school in Wrangell returned aboard the Penguin, together with fifty-four Aleut men recruited from Killisnoo, Ward Cove and Burnett Inlet to assist in closing down Funter Bay camp. Finally, on April 30, 1944, the Army transport ship William L. Thompson arrived from Seattle to provide transportation for the Pribilovians and cargo back to the home islands.

Aleuts of the Aleutian Island Chain had to wait another year before being repatriated to their homes—not only a year later than the Pribilovians, but also a year later than promised by officials of all departments involved. When they did return Aleuts throughout the Aleutian Island Chain found their homes and property considerably vandalized by personnel of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The reasons for the delay in the return of Aleuts along the Chain lay in decisions of the military and the Office of
Indian Affairs (OIA). To these agencies, their return was more difficult than returning the Pribilovians (of course the other Aleuts had no seal hunt to hasten their return). In April 1944, Navy and OIA officials met and decided that in view of the impracticability of obtaining school teachers who could act as Bureau of Indian Affairs representatives, the difficulty of supplying the villages, and impossibility of "prevention of intermingling with military personnel" they were not desirous of returning Aleuts to the Aleutian Chain.\textsuperscript{16} Thus Aleuts did not leave southeastern Alaska until April of 1945.\textsuperscript{17}

Aleut memories of repatriation were dominated by the happiness of being back at their homes and away from the horrible camps, but also by the shock of finding their houses and communities in ruins. But, Paul Merculief noted that upon their arrival in 1945, people were appalled at the condition of their homes, and in "dismay, yet with joy of getting home." When Martha Krukoff's arrived at her house it was bare, all she found was in her cupboard "a man's shorts big enough to fit a giant."\textsuperscript{18} Dorofey Chercasen thought "our village, Nikolski, looked dead." The houses were numbered with orange paint. The Army was there when they left, but were gone when they arrived. The Coast Guard was now stationed here.\textsuperscript{19}

Vasha Golodoff of Atka remembered that "we were happy to come home but came home to nothing." Most of the Atka
houses had been burned down. Vera Nevzoroff, went directly back to her home. When she arrived there was "nothing left of our village. Everything was gone it was "just an empty shell." The church was gone, also "burned down."

The most immediate problem upon the return was the condition of the Aleuts' homes. The Pribilovian's village was in very poor shape—all dwellings were dirty and littered; furnaces, radiators and pipes had broken through freezing; the water system's tanks had been burned down; lights were off in many buildings because of broken lines. The Aleut homes were all in an extremely dirty and upset condition, with many doors and windows broken, and much furniture and furnishings "ruined and in bad shape." The FWS cottages were in much the same state. The company house was still occupied by Army personnel. The Aleutian bunkhouse was vacant but it too had been left in bad shape, with all sewers clogged and most windows broken. All of the buildings had broken "doors and windows and were littered badly."

On May 24, 1944, the William L. Thompson sailed to St. George for its rehabilitation. U.S. Army forces on St. George Island during 1942-1944 occupied the Supervisors' cottages, as well as a building known as "company house," the office building, schoolhouse and community hall and left them in similar conditions to the buildings on St. Paul.

Natalie Misikian was a child upon her return to St.
Paul, her most vivid memory returning to her home where her mother "cried, oh, where's my furniture and everything, you know, and me I was worried about my Shirley Temple doll." Before the war, Akutan village consisted of sixteen homes, a Russian Orthodox Church, and an Alaska Indian Service school. In addition to the homes, there were several small warehouses, two boat shops, a small fish saltery, a store and post office building, a dance hall and various small outbuildings.

While the Aleuts were in Ward Cove camp, Akutan was occupied by U.S. Navy personnel who operated a fueling station in Akutan harbor. The Navy reported "extensive damage to houses and personal property, resulting from acts of vandalism committed by Navy personnel." Matrona Stepetin recalled that her house was damaged, doors were broken up, windows were broken, the house was bare. "Nothing was left there when we came home. There was no beds, nothing, no pots, pans or anything like that."

One story that helps illustrate Aleuts' thoughts about their homes and their fear of what a military occupation had done to them is the account of the Aleuts at the Burnett Inlet relocation camp. Writing from Burnett Inlet on October 23, 1943 the "Unalaska Community Members" wrote to Governor Gruening concerning the conditions of their homes back in Unalaska: "We the undersigned have received notice that some of our homes at Unalaska, Alaska have been damaged.
since the Evacuation. Whatever homes that had been damaged; we would like your assistance to see that they are repaired before our arrival there." The letter was signed by 39 Unalaskans. Apparently the plea fell on deaf ears as the Unalaskans came home to circumstances similar to those in the other villages.

The Unalaska community was located across a narrow bay from Dutch Harbor where thousands of army and navy forces and command headquarters were located during World War II. Because of the availability of quarters in the area, troops were not billeted in Unalaska village during the time the Aleuts were interned at Burnett Inlet. The homes of Unalaska village stood vacant, and were subject to vandalism and looting by both civilian and military personnel.

The U.S. military occupation of the Aleut community of Atka began with the determined effort of the Gillis landing party to burn the village to the ground. Some of the Aleut homes survived the fires, and were occupied on September 16, 1942 by U.S. troops under the command of Colonel Jesses B. Graham. A report "Survey of Atka Village" in April of 1944 noted that a medical detachment was established in one of the abandoned native houses. The remaining houses with the exception of two were used by troops as offices, mess, kitchen, store rooms and quarters. Certain dwellings were dismantled for building material. Ranges, dishes, cooking utensils, furniture, tools and other gear and equipment
found in the vacant houses were used by the troops. Nothing was left in the Atka homes. They had been completely stripped of all furniture, personal belongings, and other equipment.

Probably the most painful aspect of the return for many Aleuts was the loss of their personal and religious effects. The village of Nikolski provides an excellent example of how Aleuts had their property lost or stolen. The village was occupied by U.S. Military personnel almost continuously while the Aleuts of that community were interned at Ward Cove. A company of the Army's 42nd Engineers was stationed in the village from March 25, 1942--before the Aleuts were removed--until October 30, 1942. Other units at Nikolski included a platoon of the Army's 677th Signal Aircraft Warning Company, from July 5, 1942; civilian crews of the Army Transport Service, from July 5, 1942; and personnel of an Air Force Weather Detachment, from September 9, 1942. There were Navy personnel stationed from time to time at Nikolski as well.

The destruction at Nikolski was so extensive that a Board of Officers was convened to investigate, among other things, the "looting of private property" in that place. The findings were that: "Certain property and equipment chargeable to Alaska Indian Service and individuals was appropriated by the Armed Forces for use, and that an incomplete accounting was made of property and equipment so
used. Extensive pilfering and looting of private property occurred in the homes of Nikolski natives. It has been impossible to fix responsibility for such pilfering and looting. Certain efforts were made to prevent pilfering and looting, such as policing and boarding up homes to prevent breaking and entering, but these precautions were not established soon enough or were in general ineffective.

The Board of Officers directed a survey party to evaluate the destruction of Nikolski. Among others, the survey party included Dan Krukoff and George Charcasen, Aleut residents of the village. The survey was conducted on April 12, 1944: "In many homes, pilfering and looting was extreme, very little usable personal property remaining. Much of the contents of the homes was demolished or damaged beyond repair. After cognizance of these conditions was taken by army officers, some action was taken before Aleuts returned and orders given to place Aleut property in boxes. The execution of this order resulted in making standard size boxes, one for each house, and cramming all sorts of odds and ends into these boxes, without reference to value, so that many materials of considerable value were still left exposed to further damage from pilfering and wanton destruction.

The destruction of personal property was not limited to Nikolski. Frances Emanoff of St. Paul lost her chickens, clothing, housegoods, furniture—things vital to her and her
families well-being and survival on the island. Her father lost all of his photographs and photography equipment. Ann S. McGlashan of St. George remembered that what hurt her the most was to come back home to find "our artifacts were broken in pieces and put back on shelves" and her gold and silver icons missing from her home.

George McGlashan testified that when they brought them back to Akutan, they just "dumped people off." They felt lost, houses damaged; "torn in, used for parties, people slept in there when they had the Russians—they had Russians in there." Russian ships came to Akutan for refueling. Naturally the Russian knew the value of the icons and "things that we lost we will never get back...probably in Russia somewhere." For McGlashen the crucial things for survival on the island, "the valuable stuff," dorys and outboards were gone. The eventual replacement dorys "weren't like the dorys we lost or outboards."

The story of Atka was repeated: the doors were torn, windows broken. Things that they had packed and stored, were scattered, lost, or damaged, and in most cases the people found a large box with belongings thrown in and covered. Sergie Savoroff said that a new range that he had bought, a coal range, was gone from his house, "a big heavy thing." It was found at an officers' quarters in Umnak, about 80 miles north of Nikolski.

John Nevzoroff knew that they would never "get what we
lost in the Aleutian Islands...the bells and the icons and the bibles." For Nevzoroff his father made "those things live...handmade things." He recalled that his late father "was a boat builder."

William Ermeloff remembered being told in the spring of 1945 that they would be returned home to Nikolski soon. In April of 1945 they were loaded aboard the Army transport Branch and taken as far as Captain's Bay on Unalaska. From there they were taken to their village. When he arrived he found all his clothes and personal property scattered. Even his Russian Orthodox marriage license was gone. Significantly, hunting gear and guns, used for subsistence, were gone.23 Like Ermeloff, Chercasen's marriage certificate that hung on the wall in a frame was gone. He could not understand "why anyone would have taken it."

Although authorities at Dutch Harbor had noticed as early as June 29, 1942 that the Aleuts would soon be evacuated from Unalaska village, there was no planning whatsoever to ensure protection of the Aleuts' property while they were away. Items such as rifles, radios, and phonographs were unguarded. Except for a few houses having prepared shutters, none were boarded up by the departing residents. A detail from the Post went around later and nailed the doors shut and put slats over the windows. But those men did not recall posting trespassing signs.

Trespassers had come from all branches of the service
represented in the Aleutians and from servicemen passing through on boats. Perhaps the greatest loss to personal property occurred at the time the Army conducted its cleanup of the village in June of 1943. Large numbers of soldiers were in the area at that time removing rubbish and outbuildings, and many of them entered houses to take souvenirs and other articles. Large numbers of men were also in the area during the salmon run in Unalaska creek in the autumn of 1942, and during a Naval task forces visit in the summer of 1943. Unalaska village became "a natural congregating place for men off duty." 24

Policing of the area by military police, the efforts of the U.S. Deputy Marshal, and private citizens to prevent vandalism was ineffective. The Statement of Verne Robinson, Deputy United States Marshal for Unalaska, sheds light on the activities of the military while the Aleuts were away and on conditions upon their return. 25 Robinson recalled that the people returned to "practically nothing." Despite the conditions, Robinson reported an incident that revealed the low priority given the Aleuts. He represented the Red Cross at the time and had blankets and cots and some clothing. He wired to the head office in Seward for permission to give this material to the Aleuts, but they told him no as the material were only to be used for cases of disaster. Robinson figured it "was a disaster" so he took the lock off the warehouse and told the Unalaskans that he
was going downtown and would not be back for at least two or three hours. When he came back there was nothing left, but "nothing was said about the supposed theft of Red Cross material." When Robinson, who also represented the International News Service during the war, "took pictures of the houses, the homes, the damage that was done," the U.S. Army confiscated the pictures. For Robinson the shambles that the Aleuts came back to was unforgivable, "one of the worst" things he had ever seen.26

The rebuilding to the Aleut communities was often limited. William Shane felt that his community had to start from scratch again to replace what was throw away. The task seemed impossible with the "little money" from the sealing and foxing that did not even "last between the spaces there from summer to winter."

Katherine Grimes remembered being hungry and seeing her demolished home on Unalaska when she returned as a child. At one point a Time or Life magazine reporter was on the island and he told her "little girl, pick up your doll and look sad." She thought, "how can I help it. It was just gone." Her father died after the return in 1947. Grimes recalled that "he was ill most of the that time," despite the illness he started to build a new home.27

A total of twenty-four homes were rebuilt in the village of Atka--eighteen for the returning Atkans from Killisnoo, and six for the Attu people who were liberated
from Japanese detention on Hokkiado after V-J Day. In addition it was necessary to rebuild community buildings, warehouses and the church.  

Restriction continued to hound Aleuts even after their return home. A prime example is what happened on Unalaska when Aleuts attempted to resume their traditional berry picking. Because of restrictions by the military during that summer, Unalaskans were not able to pick salmon berries, blueberries, and moss berries. They were told that they "had to have better reasons than that to go on the military reservation surrounding the town of Unalaska."

The psychological reactions of Aleuts varied. In one tragic case, Francis Emanoff's mother had "lost her mind completely and never recovered." George McGlashen told his son "our homes wouldn't be the same when we get there," and that perhaps thing would be worse than Ketchikan.  

Olga Mensoff was born and raised at Kashega. For her the relocation and internment meant the end of her village. None of her family returned, except her brother and her son. The navy take did not drop them "at our own village, they dropped us off at Akutan." Kashega was 90 miles from Akutan and even 40 years later Mensoff did not "know why they didn't take us back to our village," which to was never reincorporated.  

Paul Merculif felt that when the Aleuts returned, it took them a long while to get back to a "normal type of
living that they had experienced in their village," after
the disorientation and indignities of life in Ketchikan. 31
It took him a "heck of a lot of work to put my house back in
shape." But, the village was not the same because of the
people from the village who died in Southeastern Alaska
forever. 32

Philemon Tutiakoff's entire house had to be razed
because of the vandalism and damage by the weather.
Invaluable pictures, heirlooms and memorabilia, and a now
valuable upright wind victrola are among the things he lost.
For him "the psychological damage" done was "immeasurable by
any known means of evaluation." 33 Unalaska also had to
embrace those people displaced and brought to Unalaska from
the villages of Biorka, Kashega and Makushin.

The environmental impact of the army's occupation was
deeply felt by all Aleut, but Unalaska and Atka serve as a
good examples. One of the most historic spots for red
salmon, the feeder stream that feeds the lakes and streams
where the salmon spawn, was "destroyed by the construction
of the roads." 34 The sea lions were not present
immediately upon the Unalaskans return, though eventually
they did return. Tutiakoff thought they came back because
"the islands are their homes like the islands are homes to
us."

Henry Dirks, the Atkan Chief, did not know when he
returned to Atka as "dates do not mean anything" to him. He

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recalled that the retreat of the military had dangerous repercussions for the Atkans, as the army left 50 caliber machine guns shells near the village. The kids used to go out "there and take the tips off the shells and get into the powder and put it in the beer cans and make a couple of holes in the side and light them up and play with them."

One day a child was out by the mess hall occupied by the military playing with matches when some machine gun shell tips exploded. From that time on, the men in the families "went out there and we hunted down what we could find."

Even after the repatriation of Aleuts was complete, life was far from normal for Aleuts. An environmental legacy of military weapons, equipment, and pollution would create problems for years to come. Also, the health of many Aleuts was uncertain. Despite the fact that over 10 percent had already died in the last three years still more of the elderly would pass on within the next two years from lingering illnesses contracted or inflamed during the relocation and internment. Psychological damage, although difficult to quantify, was without doubt present for a people who had been through so many changes and atrocities in the past three or four years. In the next chapter we will analyze the effects of these traumas on Aleuts.
Notes Chapter VI


2. Duncan, *Yank*.


4. Duncan, *Yank*.

5. Duncan, *Yank*.

6. Duncan, *Yank*.

7. Duncan, *Yank*.

8. Duncan, *Yank*.


10. Duncan, *Yank*.

11. Ickes to Knox, March 7, 1944. In John C. Kirtland and David Coffin Jr. *The Relocation and Internment of the Aleuts during World War II, Evidence and Depositions* (Anchorage: Aleutian/ Pribilof Island Association, 1981) Vol. VI, p. 48. Hereafter Kirtland. Although there is evidence that as early as December of 1943 the various federal and military agencies were discussing the return of the Aleuts and who would pay for their return. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, on November 26, 1943, proposed that further consideration be given to the repatriation of all Aleuts who had been relocated in Southeastern Alaska camps since mid-1942. Among the reasons given to the War Department was that "funds which are still available to the Interior Department for expenses incident to the maintenance of the natives will probably not be available after 30 June 1944." Ultimately, Secretary of War Stimson gave his approval on December 13, 1943 for the repatriation, consistent with military requirements, of all Aleut villagers.
12. Sealing Division Superintendent Johnston provided the Army Transport Service, Seattle, with information in early March about the cargo transportation requirements for rehabilitation of the Pribilof Islands and the resettlement of up to 468 Aleuts and 22 white personnel there. Johnston was apologetic in communications with P.E. Harris Company—the owner of the abandoned canneries at Funter Bay—and reassured Hans Floe of that Company that the Aleuts would soon be gone: "Arrangements have been made for an Army transport and plans are under way to move the Pribilof evacuees from Funter Bay about May 1. Both this office and the natives themselves are anxious to complete the rehabilitation at the earliest possible date. We fully appreciate the trouble and inconvenience our natives have caused you and will do all we can to prevent delay in our departure date."

13. Some of the Aleut children of school age spent a year or two at the Wrangell Institute—a school established to educated Native Alaskans.

14. The women and children were put aboard the ship on May 2nd; the workmen completed loading the vessel by midnight on May 3rd; and at 8:50 a.m. on May 4, 1944 the William L. Thompson sailed for the Pribilofs. The Pribilovians had been at Funter Bay for . . . . . Nine days later, May 13th, it anchored in Village Cove, St. Paul Island. On Sunday, May 14th, all passengers were offloaded on St. Paul, except for a few workman, and a temporary mess was established in the Aleutian bunkhouse. On St. Paul Island, all Aleut homes were occupied by military personnel, except those which had been used as storehouses.

15. Also, nearly a year and one-half after the basic policy decision had been made by Stimson that the military situation permitted repatriation of the dislocated and interned civilians of the region.

16. Radio Message, April 13, 1944 in Kirtland, Vol. VI, p. 52. Personal Justice Denied p. 354 stated that "within two weeks the Alaska Indian Service had changed its mind." Despite this apparent agreement, a commitment to move ahead, and funds to finance rehabilitation, no Aleutian Islanders were returned to the islands that summer, that fall, or any time during 1944.

17. "Statement of Walter Dyakanoff," Commission on the Wartime Internment of Civilians. Transcripts are held at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Special Collections Room. Walter Dyakanoff remembered that "the Army transport brought
us back on April 22nd of 1945. Quite a while later than the people from St. Paul when those guys returned home."

18. "Statement of Martha Krukoff" Commission. "As I started looking all over for my things. I found my mangle (a machine for smoothing and pressing fabrics by passing them between rollers) at the hospital basement. The top was gone. My washer was at the power house which was broken. All my furniture and my cooking utensils were gone. Also lost my red fox collar which I left behind. We used to have live chickens before the war, but we had let them all loose before we left."

19. "Statement of Dorofey Chercasen," Commission. He said: "My house was in bad shape. All the wallpaper was peeled off, hanging down. The stove and pipes were all rusted. The rest of our belongings we were not permitted to take, that we had packed in trunks, were opened and scattered. Clothing was moldy."


22. FWS officials requested replacement or restitution from the Army for supplies and equipment worn out or lost during the military occupation of the Pribilos. These included furnishings for the Aleuts' cottages with a value of $8,811 and dishes with a value of $713."

On August 7, 1944, President Roosevelt responded affirmatively to the joint request of the Secretaries of War, the Navy and the Interior for an allocation of $200,000 from the President's Emergency Fund "for the return to their villages and rehabilitation of Aleut natives and certain white inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska, who had been evacuated therefrom during the current war..." The payments were limited to an amount of $10,000 per individual.


24. Memo, Naval Operating Base, Dutch Harbor, undated. Kirtland Vol VI, p. 191. The report listed many "examples of inexcusable damage and extreme acts of vandalism" in the following manner:

   (a) Fixtures torn from wall and trampled.

   (b) China and glassware having been apparently swept
from shelves and trampled.

(c) Furniture and stoves being overturned and damaged beyond repair.

(d) Window panes being broken from the inside after they were boarded on outside.

(e) Locked closets and desks being forced open by ripping the doors from the hinges.

(f) Locked chests, trunks, and suitcases being forced open and damaged beyond repair; with contents damaged and scattered over the deck.

(h) Personal effects, consisting largely of clothing being removed from drawers and chests, torn beyond repair and scattered about the deck.

(i) School supplies being removed from shelves and cupboard, tossed on deck and trampled.

(j) Ink splashed over school room, bulkheads, and ceiling.

(k) School books and records mutilated.

(l) Church records, books, and religious objects mutilated, and in several cases torn from their mounts.

(m) Church windows broken from inside after being boarded up on outside.

(n) Church door hacked, probably with an axe or hatchet, in an attempt to break in.

25. "Statement of Verne Robinson," Commission. During the time that the Aleuts were gone, "their homes were vandalized... souvenir of any kind, anything of value, was taken... windows were broken and personal effects scattered on the floors... it was just a shambles." Robinson tried to board their homes up and that was an immediate thing the Gis "tore open again, thinking probably there was something of value in it." Eventually he just "left them the way they were."

26. Robinson, "Statement." He said: "And I understand that the people of Kashega and Nikolski came back to the same situation. The church bells in Makushin were taken."
27. "Statement of Katherine Grimes," Commission. She noted that: "In January of 1946 the Army moved in 35 'cabanas' into Unalaska village to supplement housing destroyed, they were 16'20 in size."

28. Because of the burning of the Atka homes, the dismantling of others that survived the fire, and the destruction of the remaining properties, it became necessary to rebuild the entire village and replace essential household furnishings with an allocation of $108,347 from the President's fund--nearly one-half the entire fund available for such repair of all Aleut homes on the Aleutian Island Chain.


30. Olga Mensoff, "Statement."

31. Father Paul Merculief, "Statement."

32. Dorofey Chercasen, "Statement."

33. Tutiakoff, "Statement."

34. Tutiakoff, "Statement." He noted: "The spawning grounds specifically Captain's Bay, where there used to be five stream where red salmon, chum, where today there is only one stream and everybody had noticed it---the Unalaskans living here, that commercial fisherman coming from the east."
CHAPTER VII

"There Was a Change"

The consequences of the Aleut Relocation,
Internment, and Repatriation

For Alice Petrevilli it was during the war years that she realized she was "different" that she was what whites referred to as a "native." The unwelcome introduction to prejudice made her start to question who she was, maybe she was not intelligent, not normal. She felt the sting of a racism that told her where she could go and when. Paul Merculief saw that the it was not only the Aleut youth that were affected, he notice a "change that was remarked upon by the older men." Flore Lekanof simply said "the world changed" the islands "were never the same again after World
The above words of three Aleuts who were relocated during World War II suggest the extent to which life on the Aleutian Islands was altered by the removal of the indigenous people and the subsequent military occupation. This chapter examines the results of the Aleut experience during World War II. Certain themes run through Aleuts' representation of their confinement: the loss of the elders that resulted in cultural change, the geographic dispersion, the pain of racism, the altered environment on the islands, the continued health problems, the emotional and psychological damage, and the new relationship with the federal government that emerged.

The death of a significant number of elderly Aleuts was one of the most profound consequences of the wartime relocation. Alice Petrevilli saw that the years in southeastern Alaska affected Aleut culture because of the traditions (such as basket weaving, bidarka making, medical healing) that died with "all the elders." The very young and the very old particularly suffered from insufficient food and medical care. Petrevilli thought that the older people felt frustrated because in her society, "the parents were absolute boss...they tell you and you did something." Aleut adults thought that control of their lives and subsistence was taken away from them. They felt guilt because they were not able to provide for their children and many of them who
left to work for the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) were forced to leave their children unsupervised. They were in a secure place on the islands and all of a "sudden you're outside of that secure place and your exposed to all kinds of different ideas, different ways of life. When you're old its kinda confusing."

"That there was a change was remarked upon by the older men," according to Father Paul Merculief, and they "felt sorry for it." The older people adopted a pessimistic attitude, "that had grown on others that didn't have it prior to that," an attitude they attributed to the evacuation period. Communication with the outer world came at a much accelerated rate during the war. Men who were inducted into the Army service were exposed to a quite different life. The changes were "quite sudden and accelerated" and it was "more than they were prepared for." The younger people were a little more geared for it but for the "older people, it was very hard for them to change their way of life."

Sherry Spitler, was born in a camp in 1942 and, after completing her education, came back to be a teacher on the Aleutian Chain. According to Spitler, the older people represented a mechanism for cultural survival as they were the "containers of knowledge and in the case of the Aleut have been from time immemorial." Important leaders were "lost which played a very large part in Aleut society before
the war. They lost old people, children and women of childbearing age."³ Her culture was passed from generation to generation by old people. That was the segment of the Aleut population which suffered the most, and "with them went the knowledge and cultural heritage."

Spitler touches on the geographic dispersement of Aleuts resulting from relocation and internment. Lillie McGarvey, Vice President of Aleut Corporation, focused on the dispersion of Aleut communities in her recollections.⁴ Among Aleuts who were evacuated, some married out of their "ethnic group and found marriage partners at the BIA Boarding schools, to which they were sent or other places of employment." Some entered the Armed Services and their wives often followed them. Others received an education for various jobs which did not exist on the islands; thus they did not return to their native villages or left soon after they returned. Consequently, Aleuts became "scattered all over Alaska and the lower ⁴⁸."⁵

The effects of racism were felt by all the relocated Aleuts, but a few examples give a general idea of its results. Prejudice against Alaskan Natives existed prior to the war years, but for most Aleuts contact with mainland Alaska prior to the war was limited. Alice Petrevilli recalled in 1991 what the relocation years meant to her and other Aleuts. Despite the fifty-year interval between World
War II and the interview, Petrevilli remarked "after all these years, it still hurts." When she was forced to leave Atka she was 13 and felt she was coming of age but then in Southeastern Alaska "I realized we were different, then the craziness. I was a native, I couldn't go here, I couldn't go there. I don't know if you ever came across it. That's, you know, when you really start questioning who you are, what you are, you start to think, 'gee maybe I am sub-normal, sub-intelligent, than that other person.' So it's kinda hard." She was exposed to "a condescending attitude, like you were kind of a bother that we didn't really matter." They were annoyed that they had to "help us and save us...we were just keeping them from doing what they were supposed to do. We were a distraction, I guess to them." But, she learned to live with it, deciding that one "can't get bitter about it, when you think about it. It's just destructive." She tried hating, "it just didn't work. You pass it on and it's not good."

In the end Flore Lekanof knew that during those war years they were treated differently because they were aboriginal Americans. He noticed prejudice even after the evacuation when he attended a boarding school off of St. George. There was a certain "American way of thinking in those days, that the Indian people and Alaskan natives were a little lower than the average person and treated as such." That was the impression given to him. They "weren't treated
the same as any other person."

Father Michael Lestenkoff's feels angry at times over the Aleuts' past treatment. "How could someone treat us like that? How could they do it?" But, he tried not to be bitter. Because the "FWS people stayed there so long they became friends too. "They had a job." Meaning they had a job to do and Lestenkoff saw their identities as people and officials as separate."

Ruth Shaishnikoff, born in 1951, knew that the trauma of the relocation years continued for many Aleuts. Many Aleuts, like many of the relocated Japanese, "just put it in the back of their minds and tried to forget about it." After they came back from Southeastern Alaska, it was "kind of disgraceful; it was almost as if they were ashamed to be Aleuts." People who say they are Aleuts now, did not want to "admit that they were Aleuts until land claims. They weren't treated as Americans for so many years." Shame developed for Aleuts even though they were not considered prisoners or threats like the Japanese. Aleuts were told that they were relocated for their own safety, but it appears that the severity of the camp conditions brought about a sense of wrongdoing and shame on their part.

The altered physical environment that Aleuts returned to after the war had its own long term effects. World War II debris still rests on their land, according to Larry Merculieff, an Unalaskan Aleut, "thousands of rusting
quonset huts, hundreds of broken war materials, and some dormant bombs." He could not understand why Aleuts had "to suffer this when the U.S. Government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on reconstruction of Europe and Japan."

For him, one of the worst results of World War II was that "Aleut villages were allowed to simply die because it was uneconomical to reconstruct" them.

The traditional economies of the villages suffered due to environmental damage. Herring salting and fox hunting provided the basis of some villages' economies prior to the evacuation. Fishing and tidal food harvesting, caribou hunting and seal hunting were the subsistence essentials and sustained villages throughout the year. Foxes, caribous and seals were killed by great numbers by servicemen and ships crews, mostly out of boredom, for a pastime. Foxes were annihilated for the same reason. Then the price of "fox skins hit rock bottom. Herrings, pond and tidal harvest foods were literally wiped out by the oil spills perpetually lining the beaches with a foot of black goo from the numerous ships plying the waters in the vicinity of the Aleutians."

Dilapidated military structures such as quonset huts and hangars, leaky oil and chemical drums, boilers, diesel engines, generators, partially destroyed vehicles, weapon magazines, live munitions and various other pieces of debris were constant, ugly reminders that World War II touched the
islands. As late as 1982, large concentrations of debris remain at twelve sites of major military operations or installations during and shortly after World War II; lesser quantities litter sixteen other sites. Ten of the 28 sites are inhabited areas. On Atka, as Chief Dirks related in the last chapter, children used to entertain themselves by placing the powder from unused 50-caliber machine gun shells in empty beer cans and igniting them.

The long term health problems of relocated Aleuts can be best summed up by the experiences of Flore Lekanof after the war. In a 1991 interview, Flore Lekanof pondered the 26 graves that exist in Funter Bay today of people who died in there and others who died and were buried in Juneau. Some of the survivors like Lekanof "were never the same afterwards either." The camp years created long-term health problems for many relocated Aleuts. When Lekanof himself had an opportunity to go to boarding school at the Wrangell Institute the nurse took an x-ray of him and detected a spot on his lung. He had contracted tuberculosis during his stay at Funter Bay. The nurse called him into her office and told him, "I've got bad news for you." She said, "Look you have TB and if you're lucky, drink a lot of milk, get a lot of rest, you might live to be forty."

Of course he lived beyond that, in 1991 he joked "I'm living on borrowed time now according to her." She's gone too." But, the TB he contracted at Funter Bay was a serious
matter in 1945. When he went back to St. George he was
isolated from his family in a shack because of the TB, and
his mother was instructed to sterilize all his eating
utensils. But, the FWS "did not stop me from working. They
put me to work anyway...they didn't put me to bed or
anything." The doctor just said "well, look I can give you
some tonic and cure you." Lekanof "begged and begged that
doctor to send me outside to a sanitorium." He knew many
people were dying "off of TB in those days and it was still
fearful." He said "look I am a TB patient. I've been told
this and I know I am so send me out there where people are
sent to a sanitarium." In response to Lekanof's persistent
requests, the doctor finally sent him to a hospital.

Not everyone has viewed the evacuation experience as
completely negative. Anthropologist Dorothy Jones is one of
the few scholars to study the modern Aleut, specifically the
Pribilovians. She recognized the horror and trauma of the
Pribilovians World War II experiences, but she saw a silver
lining, in that the experience laid the groundwork for
meaningful changes in the FWS management of the Pribilofs.
Aleuts, too, realized that the war years laid the foundation
for a different relationship with the federal government.
For Jones, the fact that the evacuation brought the Pribilof
story to the attention of others was important, but more
importantly it brought the outside world to the attention of
Aleuts. During the Pribilovian's time in Funter Bay and
Juneau they had a comparative basis for assessing their condition. The experience was a catalyst for Aleuts' political energies, making them determined to fight for more equal conditions.

After America fought a war against fascism abroad, inequalities at home became even more noticeable and civil rights groups began demanding that Americans live up to the rhetoric of the war years. The Native American Rights movement expanded after the war, energized by the magnified political consciousness of some Native American war veterans, the urbanization of Native Americans, and development of pan-Indian organizations.\textsuperscript{11} Also of importance to the Aleuts was that, due to the war in the Aleutians and the building of the Alaska Highway, national attitudes toward Alaska changed and an Alaskan statehood effort gathered strength and impetus. The defense build-up in Alaska during the war brought transportation and communication developments, the emergence of a resident-based construction industry, and major population increases. These developments set the stage for the final drive to statehood. Alaska's growing population demanded the rights, privileges, and economic opportunities enjoyed by residents in other states.

In this political climate the Aleuts and their supporters found some interested ears. Among their supporters, Fredericka Martin (who was with Aleuts aboard
the Delarof) was their most staunch advocate. Martin had served with an American Abraham Lincoln brigade in Spain in the 1930s and saw the Pribilof struggle as a continuation of the fight against totalitarianism. In the first years after the war, Martin wrote articles describing the Pribilof management as "feudalistic paternalism" and carried the Pribilof story to one group after another-- to the National Congress of American Indians, the President's Advisory Commission on Indian Rights, the Navajo Institute, the United Nations' Ad Hoc Committee on Slavery, the International Labor Organization, and many others. The National Congress of American Indians took a leading role in organizing protests against the inequalities on the Pribilofs. In one of its first efforts in the Aleuts behalf, the National Congress in 1947 won the interest of two important Washington D.C. attorneys--James Curry and Felix Cohen. Cohen, formerly a solicitor for the Department of the Interior, was considered the foremost authority on Indian law in the nation and had been the major architect of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. A third attorney, an Indian from Southeastern Alaska, William Paul, joined Curry and Cohen in representing the Pribilovians. Paul had spearheaded the founding of the first native political organization in Alaska in 1912, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the companion Sisterhood.\textsuperscript{12}

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the FWS
encountered little outside interference in the way they ran the Pribilofs. They made sure that the Pribilovians had minimal interchange with the larger environment except for those groups interested in fur seal products. None of this had much to do with the well-being of the Pribilof people except as such well-being affected the economic outcome of the fur seal harvest. For most of its history, then, the federal administration system of the Pribilofs was largely insulated from the external environment.

After the war the Pribilof administration faced a serious challenge. During the evacuation, a St. Paul Aleut leader joined the Alaska Native Brotherhood, and after repatriation he managed to attend the organization's conventions in Juneau. Inspired by these contacts, the Aleut leader, along with his half brother and one or two others, set out to organize a local chapter in St. Paul. Also, in 1947 Felix Cohen applied to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for approval to represent the Pribilovians, because of his feeling that they "suffered great injustices," and he hoped he "could help to remedy the worst of these injustices."13

One of the main reasons Aleuts obtained legal counsel was to secure their right to local self-government. FWS Managers were not happy with this development. A proposed Aleut constitution for tribal government included provisions that threatened administrative preferences and the old
system for controlling Aleuts. The charter called for rights to land and the power to hold, manage, and dispose of all community property; to borrow money from the revolving Indian credit fund; to enter into business, and, most importantly, to sue. FWS managers resisted incorporation, though in a different way than in the past. Too many eyes were now watching, too many ears listening. FWS officials tried to stop the Aleuts from considering independence with the threat of ceasing shipping of goods to the islands. The tactics seemed to have the opposite effect, for Aleut leaders' determination became stronger as a result of such resistance.

In the past the Pribilovians demanded small increases in supplies or seal bonus. Now they were asking for some basic changes, not only in the area of government, but in economic and educational areas as well. In a petition to President Truman, Congress, and the Secretary of the Interior, the Aleuts called not only for substantial increases in the seal bonus (from 90 cents on St. Paul and $1.20 on St. George to $1.50 on both islands) and additional supplies, but also for a share of the profits from the seal industry, less governmental control, and transferral of schools from supervision of the FWS to the BIA. They wanted the schools transferred because of the BIA policy to advance Indian opportunities and educate Indians for posts in the government.
The Aleuts and their supporters made one demand after another, but no significant action was forthcoming throughout the late 1940s. Thwarted by repeated stalls, petty excuses, silences, and inaction, the Aleuts considered more militant approaches. In early 1949, the sealers announced a strike. This one made the national press, and was averted by the government agreeing to establish a new wage system. Though consistently thwarted by FWS management, the Aleuts were also beginning to see chinks in its armor as the forces for change grew and became more clamorous. They were sensing their own potential for cracking that armor. They used more aggressive and militant leadership styles, styles very different from those of the chiefs of the past whose primary job had been to preserve harmony and avoid rocking the boat. International organizations were also having an impact. Investigations by the International Labor Organization and the Committee of Inquiry into Forced Labor culminated later in a United Nations' charge of slavery on the Pribilof.¹⁶

The Aleut's awakening political consciousness, the changing political climate, the modified national attitudes toward Alaska and its native inhabitants, and the proliferation of Indian Rights groups were the springboard for significant changes in the Pribilof management system. Changes would have been much slower to occur without the Pribilovians who went into the military and had exposure to
others in southeastern Alaska. Aleuts persevered to gain some positive results from the negative war years.

Alice Petrevilli saw that "there was a good side and a bad side." The good side was education, and the "exposure to different things." One of the reasons Flore Lekanof wanted to leave the island, was the opportunity to go "outside" so that he could have an opportunity to go to school and finish high school, and then perhaps go on to higher education. Persistence on his "part to be sent to a sanitarium" worked out well. He spent three and one half years in the hospital in Seattle. He not only got well, but was able to get a college education and a master's degree and came back to Alaska to teach school.17

Lekanof was the first Aleut from St. George to ever graduate from college or high school. He felt that in some ways he "opened the door telling them if I can do it you can do it. None of this inferiority complex stuff that's been pushed down your throats." For Lekanof "all this came as a result of things that happened as a result of WW II. And from what our people learned while they were in Southeastern Alaska." Some of the Pribilovian young men went to the military and saw how other people lived. They received some training and were in most cases "decently treated." Lekanof knew that "the world changed, the Pribilof islands were never to be the same again after WW II." More and more young Aleut people take advantage to further their
education. The war years were awful but "along with the bad some good comes along." There exists a sense of empowerment that they did not have before. At least, says Lekanof, "we have a voice in what is happening to us," a voice Aleuts did not have in the internment camps.\(^{18}\)

In contrast to Lekanof's upbeat appraisal of the effect of the war, Larry Merculieff, a Pribilovian Aleut, currently President of Tanadgusix (an Aleut corporation resulting from the Alaska Natives Claims act of 1972), thought that the war years represented another example of a pattern of abuse and neglect by the Federal government towards Aleuts, a pattern that did not end with the war. While World War II brought changes, some of the old methods of the federal government persisted well past the war years. Merculieff paints a less optimistic different picture than Anthropologist Dorthy Jones concerning postwar Aleut life.

Merculieff pointed out that in the 100 year domination by the U.S. Government, the average life span of an Aleut man was 35 years, the latter ten of which was suffered in extremely poor health. The Aleut language could not be spoken in the government-run schools until the mid-1960s. No one could leave or come to the islands without government approval until the mid-1960s. Discrimination in housing, food and supplies were the standard practice until the mid-1960s. Non-Aleut workers received preferential treatment and even though the Pribilof Aleuts were government employees,
they did not receive civil service benefits until the 1960s. Aleut homes were inspected weekly by the government doctor to ensure that they met the standards of sanitation and cleanliness set by the FWS. Opposition in any form by Aleut leaders was dealt with harshly through economic sanctions. One could lose a home, a job or be deported off the island if one was a "troublemaker."

Extensive efforts were made to relocate all Pribilof Island residents elsewhere in the 1960s when sealing was no longer profitable. Only after intervention by the United Nations, the U.S. Human Rights Commission and a Congressional investigation, all brought about by the efforts of Aleut people, did the relocation efforts cease. But, for Merculieff "history repeats itself time and time again." in terms of Aleut relations with the federal government.

In 1973, sealing, which was the only economic base on St. George, was stopped by the U.S. Government without "consulting and without consideration of any kind to the well being of the Aleuts on St. George." Again the FWS put "seals first, people next." It was only after the decision was made that the Aleut people were notified. It was only months afterwards that a plan was developed to get food to St. George. The FWS shipped the meat in open cardboard boxes that were used for toilet paper, put them on board the ship with dirty cargo nets and placed them on deck. By the time
they reached St. George the meat was "bacteria ridded and maggot infested and the meat had to be discarded."

Merculieff pointed out that since 1969 serious efforts were "made to move our people en masse to the mainland in efforts to stop government expenditures on the Pribilofs, ignoring the fact that with the sweat, blood, and tears, our people have earned for the U.S. Government $93 million in revenues up to 1969."

The wartime relocation and internment of Aleuts was a crucial event in modern Aleut history. All may not agree on the nature of the consequences, but the significance of the loss of culture due to the deaths of many elders is undisputed. Threads run through the memories of Aleuts that reveal how the war years caused the loss of their communities, exposed them to racism, changed their environments, caused emotional and psychological damage, and led to long term health problems. However, on the positive side there was exposure to the outside world which led to higher education for some, military service for others, and a resolve to fight the federal government for their rights on the islands. The changing complexity of Aleut-government relations makes both perceptions possible and understandable. However, even those who see some positive from the war years acknowledged that some reimbursement for the Aleuts' suffering was needed. That compensation would not come until forty-six years after the evacuation.
In 1988 Ronald Reagan gave a short speech concerning both the Japanese-American and Aleut Relocation and Internment. He acknowledged that the Nation owned these interned civilians an apology. "Yes, the Nation was at war, struggling for its survival," Reagan said, and it's "not for us, today to pass judgment upon those who may have made mistakes while engaged in that great struggle." But mistakes were made and payment was to made to the victims. The Aleuts were mentioned in two sentences of the speech. Reagan noted that the bill "provides funds for members of the Aleut community who were evacuated from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands after a Japanese attack in 1942. This action was taken for the Aleuts' own protection, but property was lost or damaged that has never been replaced."19

President Reagan's words did little to reveal the true nature of the relocation and internment of Aleuts during World War II. After the war, Aleuts and their proponents would push for recognition and restitution for their treatment, some 40 years after the events the federal government began to respond.

In 1980 the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians was established by an Act of Congress and was directed to review the relocation of Aleuts during World War II. Aleuts and their representatives worked with Japanese-Americans to gain recognition and compensation. One Aleut who felt sorry for the Japanese-
Americans interned noted that "they were American citizens too, just like us. The point is 'so it will never happen again' no matter who it is, what race."20

The Commission found through oral testimony and government correspondence that the Aleut civilian residents of the Pribilof Islands and the Aleutian Islands west of Unimak Island were relocated to temporary camps in isolated regions of southeastern Alaska where they remained, under United States control and in the care of the United States, until long after any potential danger to their home villages had passed. The Commission came to the conclusion that the United States failed to provide reasonable care for the Aleuts which resulted in widespread illness, disease, and death among the residents of the camps; and the United States further failed to protect personal and community property of the Aleuts while such property was in its possession or under its control.

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians held 20 days of hearings on the claims before it (Aleut and Japanese American wartime relocation claims) and in December, 1982, published its report, "Personal Justice Denied." The Commission concluded that the Aleuts evacuation from the islands was clearly necessary and justified, however, that following the evacuation Aleuts suffered unjustly and should be compensated. The Bill that provided restitution to Aleuts and Japanese Americans was passed and
signed six years later. The money beyond individual compensation was to be used for the benefit of elderly, disabled, or seriously ill, students in need of scholarships, the preservation of Aleut culture and historical records, the improvement of community centers in affected Aleut villages, compensation for damaged or destroyed church property.

Even by 1987 the United States had not compensated the Aleuts adequately for the conversion or destruction of personal and community property in Aleut villages during World War II. The United States has designated nearly all of Attu Island part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, thus precluding the restoration of ownership of Attu Island for the benefit of the Aleut people. There is no remedy for injustices suffered by the Aleuts during World War II except an Act of Congress providing appropriate compensation for those losses which are attributed to the conduct of the United States Armed Forces and other officials and employees of the United States.

The purpose of the Act was to make restitution to Aleuts. The act called for the establishment of a Aleutian and Pribilof Island Restitution fund/trust; $5,000,000 for the benefit of Aleuts, rebuilding of damaged or destroyed churches, individual payments of $12,000 to each Aleut out of the fund. The Aleut/Pribilof Islands Association had suggested $25,000 for each Aleut interned.
The affected Aleut villages of Akutan, Atka, Nikolski, St. George, St. Paul and Unalaska and those eligible Aleuts living on the date of the enactment of the act "who as a civilian was relocated by authority of the United States from his or her home village to an internment camp" would come under the government's restitution plan.\(^{21}\)

The gaining of recognition and an apology from the United States government, despite its lateness, was important for Aleuts, although the compensation was lower than they expected. Martha Shane thought that there was nothing that could be done about the internment now but "at least they gave us a little token."\(^{22}\)

Others felt differently about the law. Its passage won't take away the memories of camp life. The payment won't make up for the loss of life and property. And neither will it erase the past. "It's an acceptable apology," said Anatoly Lekanof, but "its not going to heal the scar."\(^{23}\)

The national attention was still given almost wholly to the Japanese-American Internment, but passage of the act did bring some attention to the camps in Southeastern Alaska, but the President of the Aleut corporation noted that if the "dollars were really important to us, we wouldn't be satisfied with the final settlement."\(^{24}\)

When the time eventually came for the government to provide compensation to individual Aleuts the sad result was that only 100 of the 880 Aleuts who had been interned
remained alive to receive their money. But, for Aleuts such as Alice Petrevilli and Flore Lekanof the money also comes with memories and finally proof that someone will believe what happened to them.\textsuperscript{25}


3. Survival on the islands had always been a community effort. The results of the evacuation severely damaged each and every community. The evacuation not only interrupted the culture but, for Spitler, "it devastated it." This culture had suffered in earlier times but the evacuation was the final crippling blow.

4. The Aleut Corporation began as a result of the Alaska Natives Claims Act of 1972 when Alaska Natives reached a settlement with the U.S Government for land claims and oil rights.

5. Lower 48 is a common Alaskan term for the continental United States.

6. Lekanof "Interview." He noted that:

   "The BIA which worked hand in glove with the Fish and Wildlife service, same people essentially, I think from what I've read, and what I saw at that time, I think they treated us differently because we were aboriginal people." p. 21.

7. Lestenkoff, "Interview."

   The thing that makes Lestenkoff bitter is the lack of proper education on the Pribilofs. He related a story of meeting a school teacher in Seattle who had done some teaching on the islands. She told him she was told before landing on St. George to make a stop at the government office on the way. They told her "do not teach the children any more than you have to. Keep the education low. She didn't ask why." She said when she came out of the office she decided to "do all she can and to ignore" what was said. "It made her mad." p. 18.


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10. Tetra Tech, Working. There is so much debris that to remove safety hazards, pollutants and standing structures from areas within existing roads networks, i.e. from half the sites, would require approximately 24,260 person-days of direct labor at a total cost of approximately 498 million 1979 dollars. A cleanup limited to hazardous and polluting debris from inhabited, ignoring aesthetic considerations, would require 3,272 person-days at a total cost of about $28 million.


12. This was the sole Alaska native political organization until the early 1960s. Though organized in southeastern Alaska and interested primarily in Indians of that area, the Brotherhood did join the organizations demanding change in the Pribilofs.


17. For an interesting description of the sanatorium life and the process of going through the cure see Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story as told through Mark St. Pierre, (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1992.) Madonna Swan went to a sanatorium in 1945 as did Flore Lekanof, she described it as "years of sad isolation" but she did recover by 1950. Her testimony also gives important information about the widespread fear of TB and she describes some of the horrible deaths that the disease caused among Native Americans.
18. According to Lekanof, "Interview," currently Aleuts are "doing things the federal government used to do for us and the land claims settlement act is in the same category. Sure we do make mistakes but its better for us to make mistakes and learn from them than to have the federal government do it all for us. Do it for ourselves."


23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In the Aleutian and Pribilof islands there was a pervasive pattern of neglect and insensitivity. Racism was institutionalized and forged in the long paternal tradition of the government's administration on the islands. The events surrounding World War II in the Aleutians were the focus of this study, but the pattern existed before and continued after World War II. However, a focus on the Aleuts' story of relocation and internment of Aleuts during World War II serves as an important case study. During wartime the American government suspended individual rights for what it deems the greater good, but this often had unforeseen consequences. In the case of the Aleut it was a cruel and life threatening. The narrative presented here shows us the difference between official rhetoric and actual relations with Aleuts. Even in the era of the Indian New Deal, when Native Americans were to be empowered, Aleuts views and thoughts were ignored—they were dictated to and not consulted. The relocation and internment of Aleuts
during World War II begs for comparison to the much larger relocation and internment of Japanese Americans all along the West Coast. Certainly there are similarities between the Japanese and Aleut experiences, but there are also some important differences.

Without doubt both Aleuts and Japanese Americans were sequestered during the war because of their race. Race played a crucial role in the Aleut internment, as well. The average Aleut looks Asian, and with the anti-Japanese hysteria spreading over American in the wake of Pearl Harbor Aleuts were vulnerable to racial bias. However, a racial bias against Alaskan Natives existed before the war and during the stressful time of war those discriminations were only heightened. However, the Japanese internment was of a different nature than the Aleuts' internment. The Japanese, suspected of disloyalty and aiding the enemy, were held behind barbed-wire fences with armed sentries on guard. Aleuts had no such guard; in fact their contact with the military was limited during the internment years to their transportation to and from the islands. But the camps were nevertheless secure. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers controlled the camps. The camps were in isolated areas, surrounded by impassable forests and mountains--especially foreboding to a people who lived without trees. Blackmail held Aleuts in the camps or forced them back for sealing.
Like the Japanese-Americans, Aleuts displayed impressive resilience and fortitude in the face of this unique adversity. Some scholars of the Japanese internment have argued that evacuation allowed some Japanese-Americans to lift their sights beyond their parochial communities of the West Coast and go to eastern and midwestern colleges which opened new doors of advancement for them. Others have contended that evacuation also removed Japanese Americans from low-paying agricultural work, as most farmers lost their land, setting them on the road to economic betterment in white collar and professional occupations. Some Aleuts have similar thoughts about their internment—that it forced exposure to another environment which brought determination to attain education to break free of the control of the federal government. These conclusions must be viewed with caution. In some ways the way Japanese-Americans and Aleuts compensated (by trying to see the good results) for the terrible things done to them—and relocation and internment should not be identified as a requisite to success.

Both Aleuts and Japanese tended to focus on trivial or humorous moments when they discuss their internment experiences. Scholars of the Japanese internment argue that this is a type of "social amnesia...a group phenomenon in which attempts are made to suppress feelings and memories of particular moments or extended time periods...a conscious
effort...to cover up less than pleasant memories." As earlier testimony by Aleuts has revealed, many people were ashamed because of their war experience to be considered Aleut until the recent resurgence of Native American pride in Alaska after the Native Claims Act of the 1970s.  

Aleuts, like the Japanese, were dealt a major blow to their institutions and culture by the relocation and internment. In the case of the Japanese, Issei lost their roles as family heads and breadwinners. In the mess halls, the evening meal—when values and manners were traditionally taught—was no longer a family affair and the lack of privacy even in living quarters made it difficult to discipline children. As a result of War Relocation Authority policies those who could not speak English could no longer be community leaders. Coming from a culture that values age and respects elders, they found themselves forced prematurely to relinquish their power and status to the younger generation. Of course, many of the Aleuts' elders perished during the war or soon after, causing similar transformations to the culture of Aleuts as the loss of esteem of Japanese-speaking elders had for the Japanese communities.

The scars of wartime incarceration were not born only by Aleut and Japanese internees. It shaped the way the next generation was raised. They were encouraged to get good mainstream American educations so they would not be held
back or disrespected. Ironically, in the long run this fostered a distancing from their original heritage.

The impact on the Japanese-American communities in the west before and after the war makes an interesting comparison to the Aleut pre- and post-war world. If we think of the Japanese ethnic enclave in the West Coast before the war as islands, the comparison may be more vivid. Many pre-war Japanese lived in Japanese districts with Japanese businesses and Japanese clientele. These Japanese districts, like many Aleut islands, never quite regained their prewar vitality. Japanese returning from camps were no longer geographically concentrated, and the Nisei and Sansei ceased to patronize ethnic stores. Similarly, as we have seen, Aleuts became scattered over Alaska, and the Northwest. Those who returned found ruined villages and new military neighbors—many went south to leave the islands, coming back only for occasional visits.

In terms of food, sanitation, and medical care, Aleuts fared worse than the Japanese. The main reason for the lack of food for Aleuts was an erroneous assumption on the part of whites that they could fend for themselves in any natural environment—an assumption not applied to the Japanese. Medical care in the Japanese camps was inadequate, with few doctors and poor care, but at least there were regular immunizations which kept the death rate low. While there are no precise figures on death rates among the
Japanese, a 1946 comparison of death rates in camps to death rates in the U.S. population as a whole found that death rates in the camps were lower than those in the general population.\textsuperscript{5} Aleuts had practically no care. During the separation of Pribilovian men and women, twenty-five deaths occurred in a population of just over 400 in a one-year span.\textsuperscript{6} 

The phrases "Before evacuation" (BE) and "After camp" (AC) became words signifying a watershed event in the history of Japanese Americans. Scholars argue that relocation was the central experience which has shaped the way they see themselves, how they view America, and how they have raised their children. The same is true of the Aleuts as well.\textsuperscript{7} 

Removing the Aleuts from their island homes caused irrevocable change in their way of life. Some may contend that change was inevitable, and that evacuation merely accelerated the process of acculturating Aleuts. And, in fact Aleuts had consistently changed and adapted. Aleuts' had adopted of the Russian Orthodox Church and the used many American goods, including use of the Sears and Roebuck catalog. 

But, Aleuts were powerless to fight one of the most disturbing consequences of evacuation, the high mortality rate particularly among the elders. Sporadic medical care in the camps contributed to many deaths and continuing health
problems for the survivors. For the Aleuts, often substandard, unsanitary and crowded living conditions deepened the psychological trauma of losing all their possessions after a sudden uprooting and a voyage in the holds of ships. Adaptation to a foreign, heavily-forested environment followed; all these experiences together with infectious disease imposed stresses greater than many people could withstand, and many perished.

The loss of a generation of village elders has had a cultural impact far beyond the grief and pain to their own families. Among those who died were most of the last people on earth who knew the old Aleut ways: how to make the skin boats, traditional clothing, or local styles of baskets. For example, before World War II there were still some twenty to thirty individuals on the Aleutian chain that were making bidarkas. After the War only one remained alive—he produced only one bidarka after the war years.

The government's island resettlement policies further eroded the traditional way of life. Not all Aleuts who were evacuated returned to the islands; many had died, some chose greater economic opportunities on the outside, others married non-Aleuts. After a wage-earning economy evolved on the islands during the early 1900s the Aleuts grew sensitive to industry and government actions that affected employment, education and government expenditures. Economic pressures to locate in areas of broader, more stable economic opportunity
prompted substantial migration from smaller to larger villages and beyond the Aleutian chain as well. Evacuation accelerated these migration patterns and centralized the population. The villages of Makushin, Biorka, Kashega and Chernofski disappeared after the war, their few surviving villagers never returning to those outposts.

Finally, the American military presence on the islands left a heavy mark. Foxes, a cash crop, and subsistence animals such as seals and caribou, were slaughtered by bored servicemen and ship crews in great numbers as a pastime. Military builders filled in the rich herring spawning lagoons of Unalaska; pond and tidal-harvest foods were nearly destroyed by oil spills from military vessels. Today, military debris still remains to endanger and pollute many sites.

Through the offense of massive looting and vandalism of their homes and places of worship by American military forces, the Aleuts lost invaluable tangible ties to their past. Stolen family mementos, heirlooms and religious icons brought from tsarist Russia in the early 1800s cannot be recovered augmented the losses.

Removal from their homeland permanently changed nearly every aspect of Aleut life. Those who died in the camps were a huge loss to both family and community which also endangered the future of the Aleuts as a distinct people. Evacuation meant cultural erosion by destroying much of
their means of pursuing a traditional subsistence way of
life. They lost artifacts, but also the ability to recreate
them. They lost (or found much reduced) the animals and sea
creatures that had been essential to traditional
subsistence. The evacuation also destroyed many of the
Aleuts' ties to their personal and religious pasts. America,
proud of its cultural diversity, thereby lost a distinctive
part of itself.9

Finally, the significance of the Aleut relocation and
internment is best summed up by an Aleut. Alice Snigaroff
Petrevilli thought one anecdote symbolized what had happened
to her and the Aleuts during World War II. When she told her
daughter these stories she said "but mom, its not in the
history book." Her own daughter didn't believe her, "because
it was not in a history book." It was not until they moved
back to Alaska and started talking to "her aunts and uncles
and my brother who is older than me and my sister is older
than me, then she realized that these things actually
happened, and they were not part of a history book."

Petrevilli thinks the story "needs to be told." In
doing so her people want three things: First, replacement of
their church; Second, their place in the books, so "that
they wouldn't ever do this kind of thing to anybody again."
And third, to "help the old people, the ones that were
really badly hurt."10 Petrevilli hopes "some day they
will print it in a history book. Because I don't think
people should be treated like that." Even today she thought Aleuts "have a hard time trying to control" their life. Because the government sometimes thinks they do not know what we are doing. "But, we know. I think we know what's best for us. More so than anybody else. I think we just need to educate the people. Let them know their history has a value."11
Notes Conclusion


2. Dr. Tetsuden Kashima of the University of Washington, in PJD p. 297.

3. Some of the common characteristics of this reaction are: Attempting to deny or avoid the experience and refusing to acknowledge the significance of losses. Losing faith in white America; maintaining a general distrust or hatred toward white society. Turning aggressions inward, as some rape victims do, by blaming themselves for something over which they had little control. Anger is internalized as feeling of guilt, shame and racial inferiority. According to Christie W. Kiefer in Changing Culture, Changing Lives "persons who have been tormented for some supposed error or deficiency often end up agreeing with the definition of themselves offered by their tormentors and trying to atone for their error."

4. Japanese-Americans had to stand in long lines for inadequate, tasteless meals, to which they were unaccustomed.

5. PJD, p. 165.

6. While the intent of this comparison is not to contrast misery I think these facts do reveal that as Native Americans, Aleuts were given an even lower priority and treated even worse than another ethnic population that many on the West coast considered hostile. Also, the Aleut internment was less visible to the public.

7. World War II put to an end the subsistence-style of life that was practiced on so many of the Aleut islands and brought about new contact with the outside world--it is a sad commentary on government policies that no living Aleut has retained the knowledge of how to make a bidarka, the boat that once gave them domain over their seas.

8. The deaths of younger people, in a population with an historically low birth rate, further endangers the Aleuts' survival as a distinct group.
9. PJD. pp. 358-9

10. Alice Petrevilli "Interview with the Author." Anchorgae, Alaska, July 1991. She noted that

"Its not even replaceable because the icons are not available today. They gave us a total of 1.4 million for the replacement and repair of churches and that is not even adequate; to build a church in Atka would cost a million dollars. So they're trying to find other ways, they used green lumber to build the church so every time we have a bad storm a piece of the church comes apart. People keep rebuilding."

11. Petrevilli, "Interview." In her interview she remembered a Bible that was returned by

"one guy from Cleveland, Ohio. My Brother gave me a bible on my 12th birthday. He took it for a souvenir, but the felt so guilty he sent me another one. He was the only one that did that though the rest of my and my father's possessions they took as souvenirs and never returned them. Pictures of my mother and my brothers were gone. I don't know what they want it for. This is where I get too emotional."
A Note on Sources

For more information on Aleut religion, culture, and history see: Alice B. Kehoe *North American Indians: A Comprehensive Account* (Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1981) pp. 459-467. Dorothy Knee Jones, *A Century of Servitude: Pribilof Aleuts under U.S. Rule* (University Press of America, 1980), deals primarily with the U.S. government's use of Aleut labor, in slave-like conditions, for the harvest of fur seals on the Pribilof Islands. Jones includes a chapter on the Aleut's relocation and internment. Also see Dorothy Knee Jones, *Aleuts in Transition* (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1976) for a treatment of the Aleut people and how they adjusted to contact with Europeans and then later Americans. Ethel Oliver Ross, *Journal of an Aleutian Year* (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1988) is a journal of the year 1946-47 in which Mrs Oliver taught school on Atka Island, under the employment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The journal provides an interesting source for the conditions the Aleuts faced after the war. The most comprehensive account of the Aleut's relocation and internment to this point is by the United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of
Civilians, Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1983). While the bulk of the report concerns the relocation and internment of Japanese-Americans, pages 317-359 cover the events surrounding the Aleuts' plight. The commission found that Aleuts should be compensated for their loses and the trauma associated with the relocation and internment. In 1990 Aleuts received $12,000 each. The commissioners' report relied on the eight volume set of documents collected by John C. Kirtland and David F. Coffin, Jr., The Relocation and Internment of the Aleuts During World War II (Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association, Inc., Anchorage, Alaska, 1981). Kirtland and Coffin also served as attorneys for the Aleuts in their congressional hearings.

For an examination of the paternalistic nature of the relations of the federal government with Native Americans for the past 200 years, see Francis Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1984). Prucha called the Collier's vision for Indians "humane", "yet, despite the highsounding rhetoric of Indian self-determination, it was a paternalistic program for the Indians, who were expected to accept it willy-nilly." p. 318. Carlos Embry America's Concentration Camps (David McKay, New York, 1956) points out that the Indian

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Reorganization Act of 1934, known as the "Indian New Deal", "was regarded by many as a means of bringing about a revolutionary change in the methods of handling Indian affairs, the facts are that it has made very little change and that it conforms perfectly to the historic pattern that has been developed since the time the Continental Congress was convened." p. 195. One unique aspect of the Aleut situation was that the government needed not Aleut land, but labor for seal and fox harvests. Controlling the Aleut helped bring in millions of dollars annually to the U.S. Treasury.

Most of the existing literature on the Aleuts and Pribilovians deals with Aleut prehistory, ethnography, linguistics and the period of Russian jurisdiction. However the following works make some reference to the Aleuts during World War II. Arnold A. Griese. The Wind is Not a River. New York: Crowell, 1978. This fictional children's story tells of the experiences of a young sister and brother on Attu Island when the island was invaded by Japanese soldiers during World War II. The children's knowledge of traditional Aleut skills and practice of traditional beliefs are significant factors in the story. Susan Hackley Johnson. The Pribilof Islands: A Guide to St. Paul Alaska. St. Paul, Alaska: Tanadgusix Corporation, 1978. This informative guide provides an overview of the past and present of St. Paul Island and its residents. The section entitled "Exile"
contains several passages on the World War II relocation of St. Paul residents in June 1941 from the Pribilof to Funter Bay in Southeastern Alaska. Dorothy Jones, _A Century of Servitude: Pribilof Aleuts Under US Rule_. (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981) contains a chapter that deals with the Pribilovan's relocation. Dorothy Jones, _Pattern of Village Growth and Decline in the Aleutians_. (University of Alaska, Fairbanks: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1973) has a brief mention of the World War II relocation of Aleuts. A footnote provides the following observation on page 18: "All Aleuts west of Unimak Island were evacuated to Southeastern Alaska in 1942. While no official reason for the Unimak cutoff was given, to my knowledge, it is noteworthy that all the commercial canneries on the Aleutians were located at or east of Unimak Island." Lael Morgan (ed.) _The Aleutians_. (Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, Vol. 7, no. 3. 1980) is a volume in the "Alaska Geographic Regional Series" and contains narrative and photographic information on the Aleutians. The section entitled "World War II" provides an overview of the Aleutian military campaign with a brief mention of the Attuan's capture by the Japanese and the removal to Japan as US Prisoners of War and the Aleut relocation by the US government. Gary C. Stein, _Uprooted: Native Casualties of the Aleutian Campaign of World War II_. (University of Alaska, Fairbanks: Unpublished manuscript.
n.d. 34pp) is a paper that relates the story of the Attu military campaign and the taking of Attu inhabitants as prisoners of war by the Japanese. Their experiences in Japan as prisoners are described as are the repatriation efforts to return Attuans and Aleuts to their home communities after the War.

The oral histories and testimony that were used in this study come from two sources. Alice Pertevilli, Flore Lekanof and Micheal Lestenkoff were interviewed by the author. Other testimony is from the hearings conducted by the "U.S. Commission on the World War II Internment of Civilian" copies of which are housed at the University of Alaska-Anchorgae library. The interviews conducted by the author were done with funding by the American Philosophical Society and copies of the tapes and transcripts are housed in their main library in Philadelphia.
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Venaiminov, Ivan *Notes on the Islands of the Unalaska District,* trans. B. Keen and Assyra Kardinelowska.


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Special Collections, University of Alaska, Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska.

Aleut Papers, Alaska Museum of Fine Arts, Anchorage, Alaska.

National Archives, Washington D.C. (Naval Records)

Special Collections, Aleut/Pribilovian Islands Association, Anchorage, Alaska.
APPENDIX


Persons from Unalaska Village
Steve Lekanoff          Buried at Burnett
Martha Newell           Returned to Unalaska for burial
Sergie Shapsmikoff      Buried at Burnett
William Stepentin       Buried at Ketchikan

Persons from St. George
Alexander Galanin Sr.    Buried at Funter Bay
Irene Lekanof            Buried at Funter Bay
Palagalia Lekanof        Buried at Funter Bay
Serge Lekanof Sr.        Buried at Funter Bay
Anna Lestenkoﬀ           Buried at Juneau
Constantine Lestenkoﬀ    Buried at Funter Bay
Helen Mandregn           Buried at Funter Bay

Persons From Nikolski Village
Fedora Bezezekoff        Buried at Ketchikan (TB)
Timothy Bezezekoff       Buried at Ketchikan (TB)
Dosofey Chercasen         Buried at Ketchikan (TB)
Susie Chercasen           Buried at Ketchikan (TB)
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<td>Buried at Ketchikan (Child Birth)</td>
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<td>Leonty Sovoroff</td>
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<td>Helen Talanoff</td>
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<td>Matrona Talanoff</td>
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<td>Simeon Talanoff</td>
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**Persons from St. Paul**

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