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# Out of Harm's Way: Relocating Northwest Alaska Eskimos, 1907–1917

JAMES H. DUCKER

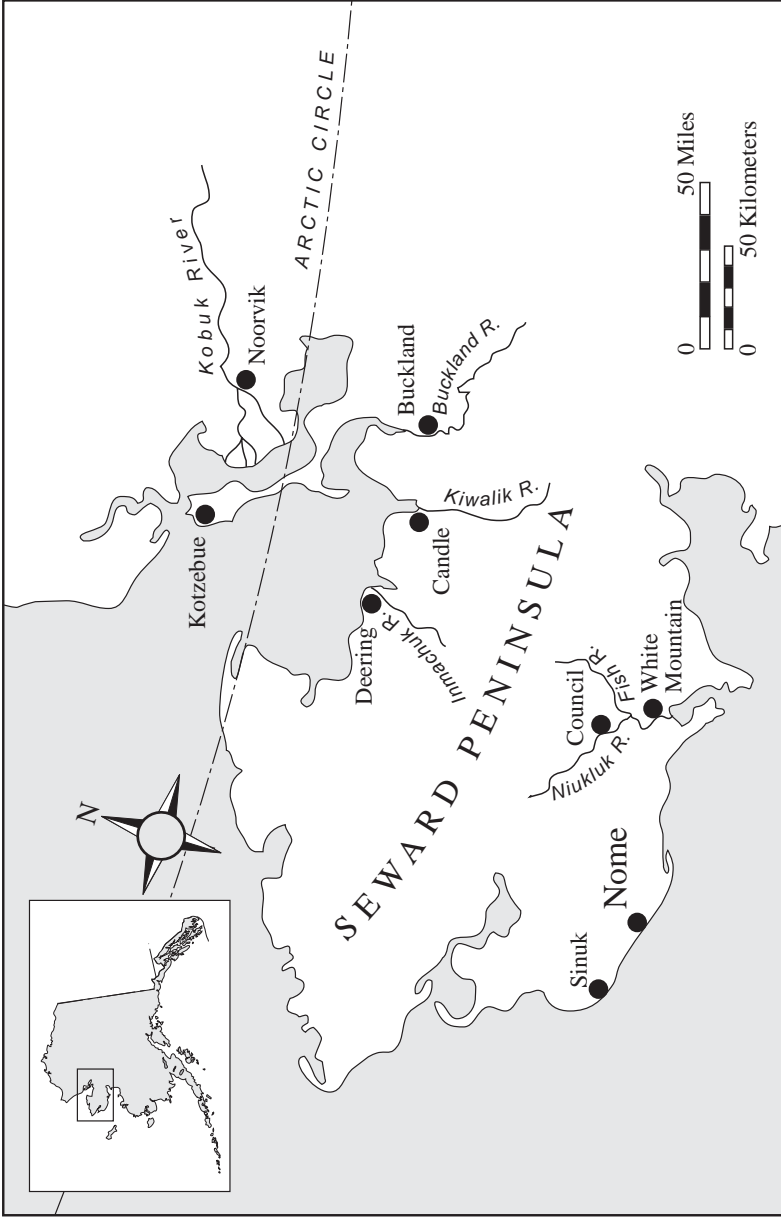
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As Europeans explored and exploited America, they encountered the problem of what to do with the Indians who lived on the land. The newcomers' land hunger, superior numbers, and overwhelming economy and technology ultimately pushed the natives aside. Removal and the creation of progressively smaller reservations were the answers settled upon by many whites who coveted Indian lands. Throughout this history of displacement, however, some of those who promoted reservations did so for more noble motives. They sought to preserve natives, if not native societies, away from the evils of the newcomers and to buy time with space by taking the Indians far enough from the encroaching whites that they might learn at a measured pace from friendly missionaries and teachers the rudiments of the expanding culture so they could deal with it on a more equal basis.<sup>1</sup>

The themes of covetousness and conscience worked in tandem as Americans moved west. But they were not so closely linked in Alaska, particularly in the territory's remote northwest corner. During and following the turn-of-the-century gold rushes to Nome and several smaller discoveries, there was little reason for westerners to crave the lands that drained into the Bering Sea.

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NORTHWEST ALASKA

Farming and ranching were not feasible in the traditional American sense, and the mining industry, which was the only excuse for nearly all whites to be in the area, monopolized relatively small acreage. Indeed, mining in some areas was declining toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Yet those whites who considered themselves the friends of Alaska's Inupiat Eskimos strove to relocate them away from corrupting Western influences so as to better educate them in white ways.

The native groups of northwest Alaska<sup>2</sup> lived in scattered and, with few exceptions, small communities of one or only a few extended families. Subterranean houses built of driftwood and covered with tundra sod provided protection against the winter cold, while most families migrated during the summer to pursue the harvest of the seas, rivers, and nearby mountains. Eskimos who lived along Norton and Kotzebue sounds and the western tip of Seward Peninsula depended most on the spring hunts for seals, whales, and walrus and on fishing at other times of the year for salmon and sheefish. Inland people, particularly those in the upper Kobuk River valley and along the Fish River in the heart of the Seward Peninsula, relied more heavily on taking caribou, smaller mammals, birds, and migrating salmon and other fish.

The resources of the Arctic furnished a reliable sustenance. Indeed, there was some redundancy. If the village whalers failed or if the salmon runs were poor, there were other resources to fall back on. No group relied entirely on the sea or the land and nearly all had a choice of several species to hunt in any given season. By adapting to fluctuations in the availability of fish and game, by forsaking areas or pursuits that, for cyclical or environmental reason, became less productive, the Eskimos of northwest Alaska were able to provide for their needs.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did these people adapt to reap the best harvest from sea and land, but they also exploited their geographic position to act as the principal traders between Alaskan Eskimos and Indians farther from the Bering Strait and Siberian natives who, by the late eighteenth century, were able to supply Russian goods. Sheshalik, near modern Kotzebue, was the site for an annual trading fair that sometimes attracted more than two thousand Eskimo people from throughout the region, as well as from Asia.<sup>4</sup> Their tradition of trading prepared them to be aggressive bargainers with early westerners entering the region, eagerly bartering with Russian explorer Otto von Kotzebue when he sailed north of the strait in 1816 and with the whalers who entered the area in mid-century.

By the 1880s, Bering Strait natives had incorporated numerous Western goods into their daily lives. To get these goods, the Eskimos took jobs with the whalers and the few other westerners who occasionally ventured into the region. For several years in the late 1890s, perhaps as many as half of Alaska's Eskimo people north of the strait were seasonally involved in the whaling industry; the promise of Western provisions drew natives from as far as the upper parts of the Noatak and Kobuk valleys. Some natives even became small entrepreneurs putting together their own whaling crews, including hiring some whites as their workers.<sup>5</sup>

Whaling, however, decimated a mainstay of many of the coastal Inupiat's diet and exposed the natives to some of the less virtuous representatives of American culture. In 1890, to counter these developments, Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary and head of the U.S. Bureau of Education in Alaska, recruited missionaries who would also serve as teachers for the three native centers of Wales, Point Hope, and Barrow, and shortly thereafter launched a program of developing reindeer herds to sustain the natives. The Bureau of Education, an agency of the Department of the Interior, had received responsibility for education in Alaska six years earlier when the federal government determined that, because the natives in Alaska were largely self-sufficient, they did not need the more comprehensive federal paternalism provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In Alaska the federal role could be restricted more narrowly to education.<sup>6</sup>

Yet more than a decade after Jackson introduced education to the region, the number of government-funded schools for natives in northwest Alaska remained essentially static. The gold rushes to the Klondike and Nome, though, injected a greater sense of urgency to the educational mission in Alaska. Consequently, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the bureau received more generous federal funding and exhibited dynamic new leadership. Legislation enacted in 1901 directed that one-half of all license fees collected outside of incorporated areas of Alaska be devoted to support bureau programs. Some of the bureau's schools were then educating whites and mixed race students. In 1905 alone this law generated \$145,000. In that year, Congress repealed the law and determined to provide for native schools by direct appropriation. The territorial government would see to the education of white children. For fiscal year 1906, Congress allotted only \$50,000 to the bureau for the native schools, but it doubled that sum the following year and increased it still more for 1908.

The license fees and the direct appropriations allowed the agency to add dozens of schools. In the 1902–1903 school year, there were twenty-three schools for natives; by the fall of 1908, the bureau had sixty-six. In that period the bureau increased the number of schools in the Seward Peninsula and Kotzebue Sound area from four to sixteen.<sup>7</sup>

New leadership came from Elmer Ellsworth Brown, who in 1906 became commissioner of education, replacing William T. Harris, who had held the post since 1889. In his first annual report, Brown advocated a more comprehensive educational system than the bureau had thus far attempted. Brown recruited Harlan Updegraff as chief of the Alaska Division to lead the effort. Updegraff pursued an ambitious program, including the development of native industries and marketing skills and instruction in agriculture, cooking, sanitation, and personal hygiene, as well as English and arithmetic. He foresaw that natives successful in procuring a comfortable income through wage work for whites or by wedding traditional skills in hunting, fishing, and trapping with new technology and an understanding of a Western economy would live healthier lives and not indulge in the disillusioned person's consolation of hard drink. To further this goal, he directed his employees to "regard themselves as social workers and lay hold on every possible opportunity of assisting the development of the natives." The agency's teachers were to transfer the ideas of the urban settlement house to the Arctic wilderness.<sup>8</sup>

Updegraff wanted education to prepare natives to contribute to a "society in which the white men and natives will live harmoniously in accordance with the standards of American civilization." He did not wish the aboriginal peoples of Alaska to lose their cultural integrity. But a measure of assimilation and integration with Western society was inevitable, because the natives had already adopted elements of Western religious and material life. Updegraff wanted to uplift the natives as a people, rather than as individuals. "Our efforts," Updegraff contended, "should recognize the native community as the unit and the individuals within it as sub-units." He stated in his first annual report that it was a mistake to educate children away from their society. Rather they must learn in the context of the life they would graduate into, and learn so that they could contribute to the general improvement of their people. Consequently, Updegraff's philosophy fit well with the bureau's expanding local school system.<sup>9</sup>

This educational process, however, was threatened by the white residents in some Alaskan communities. Like friends of Indians in the American West, bureau leaders viewed the white frontiersman among Alaska's natives to be a scourge.<sup>10</sup> Although Updegraff wanted an integrated society, too close association between natives and the bad elements would undercut any chance for the bureau's programs to work. In 1907 Updegraff opposed establishing reservations to protect the natives from corrupting whites. He thought that if laws were enforced, particularly the law against selling liquor to natives, then reservations would not be necessary. Only if strict law enforcement failed would he support the creation of reservations.<sup>11</sup>

Bureau representatives in northwest Alaska had plenty of evidence of the corrupting influence of the bad elements. Andrew N. Evans, then assistant superintendent of the northern district in Alaska and later promoted to superintendent, summarized a number of these complaints in a report in 1909. He stated that "the sale of liquor and mingling of white men and natives cause the greatest distress to the natives. Under such influences the native rapidly goes to pieces and is soon unable to support himself." Evans asserted that the Inupiat were less healthy in white settlements than in their traditional homes. He charged that whites directly undercut the school system: "Traders and squaw-men who cannot debauch the natives as they wish, on account of the teacher, use their influence to keep children away from school." Evans concluded that the situation was beyond the remedy Updegraff had hoped for in 1907. He advocated that every native village gain reservation status and treat undesirable white visitors as trespassers.<sup>12</sup> The bureau did not immediately adopt Evans's suggestion, but its Alaskan officials persistently tried to separate natives from whites.<sup>13</sup>

Four communities with concentrations of whites—Nome, Council, Candle, and Deering—emerged on the Seward Peninsula at the turn of the century. Although these places were not dens of iniquity devoid of good and humane people, they were home, at least temporarily, to sizable populations of young men separated from family and some of the institutions of social control common in more settled areas; the camps inevitably had some rowdy elements. Moreover, Bureau of Education teachers and administrators felt that their culture held a moral responsibility toward natives; they were particularly sensitive to instances in which contact between the societies led to even occasional corruption.

Consequently, each of these four towns became a source of concern for bureau personnel.

In 1907 Evans noted that some Nome natives drank and four Eskimo women worked as prostitutes. This was only to be expected, he contended, because “they are thrown in with the worst element of white men and naturally learn vices rather than the better instincts.” Nome teacher Carl S. Zook reported the next year that “morally, conditions are very bad. Natives here are in contact with the most vicious element of other races. The susceptibility of the Eskimo makes him an easy victim of the designer of evil.” Legal penalties for selling intoxicants to the Inupiat did little to suppress the trade. Some whites turned the law to their advantage. The commissioner of education complained in 1907 that, in the previous few years, the jail at Nome had been full of men happily caught selling alcohol to the natives. The men got the Eskimos’ money and free board and lodging; some of the men had found such accommodations for several winters in succession. Nor did Nome natives benefit from the practice or the example of loafing whites who hung around native homes, ingratiated themselves with small gifts of trinkets and tobacco, and then sponged off the obliging Eskimo people.<sup>14</sup>

Council, situated sixty-five miles northeast of Nome on the Niukluk River, was the center of a mining camp that was in decline in the second half of the first decade of the century. Natives were able to move into abandoned miners’ cabins and take jobs working on roads, freighting, cutting wood, carrying mail, and laboring in the mines.<sup>15</sup> Charles W. Hawkesworth, who succeeded Evans as assistant superintendent, wrote that Council “contains a lot of the worst kind of miners” and termed it a “rotten mining town.” He stated that all of the influences of the settlement “tend to pull the Eskimo down and there isn’t a single influence to lift him up.” The degradation of native women seemed to be especially rife at Council. Evans reported to his superiors that “whiskey peddlers and others . . . have been in the habit of prostituting natives at Council, which has always had a bad reputation in this respect.” Evans, who traveled extensively in northwest Alaska, first saw a native prostitute in Council. A.B. Kinne, a bureau teacher in the town, recommended that the only way to protect native girls from “the evil designs of men seeking to gratify their passions” was to encourage the girls to marry as soon as possible after reaching puberty.<sup>16</sup>



Candle, located on the Kiwalik River, was the largest mining community on the north side of the peninsula. Opportunities to purchase goods and to work drew natives to the town. A survey conducted by the bureau's doctor for the area in 1910 indicated that Inupiat in that community earned more than those in any other village he visited. Yet not all that Candle offered was good. Two bureau teachers wrote, "Candle is composed of saloons, houses of vice, [and] gambling places. [It is] in fact no fit place for Eskimo people when trying to enlighten them for good."<sup>17</sup>

Deering was about thirty miles northwest of Candle on Kotzebue Sound. Here a native community and a white mining camp existed in close proximity. The natives earned wages mining, longshoring, freighting, and doing odd jobs.<sup>18</sup> The white settlement, which numbered about fifty men, had a saloon, very few women, and no law enforcement representative closer than the deputy marshal in Candle. Walter C. Shields, superintendent of the northern district, recorded that, at Christmas in 1911, several white men got a number of natives drunk and shared the night with Inupiat women. Shields added that, although the women teachers running the Deering school did a good job, he recommended that the bureau send a male teacher there, in part to deal with "the unpleasant situations that arise between whites and natives." He thought further trouble inevitable unless a competent police official was installed at Deering or liquor was banished from the community. Several years later, teachers reported that the mining settlement had drink and all-night dances, prompting prostitution by girls as young as fourteen and thus undermining school discipline.<sup>19</sup>

The Bureau of Education tried to lure the Inupiat away from these four corrupting communities. In doing this, the bureau created new settlements or revived or bolstered older ones through its decisions about where to place schools.

The bureau's schools were popular enough among the Inupiat that they became magnets for settlement. When the agency erected schools along the Noatak, upper Kobuk, and Selawik rivers in 1907 and 1908, Eskimos by the score immediately followed and built permanent homes, creating villages that still survive. Superintendent Shields observed that "the natives will establish a permanent village at any good place where the Government establishes a permanent school and industrial plant. It is a remarkable fact that a Government school is the only thing that will hold

natives even in a bad place, for they want school advantages for their children.”<sup>20</sup>

The source of the schools’ attraction is less easy to decipher than that they did draw northwest Inupiat. There were factors other than a desire to acquire a Western education for their children that could prompt Inupiat to live in the new school villages. The Eskimos may have seen the schools as potential sources of trade and income. Harrison R. Thornton, one of the first teachers at Wales, believed that part of the reason local natives appreciated him was that he traded Western goods to obtain more suitable native clothing and food.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, few whites came to the region with whom the Eskimos had not traded or gained employment; explorers and whalers had been but precursors to miners and teachers. Turn-of-the-century miners paid or bartered with Inupiat to pack goods, cut wood for steamboats, supply fish and meat, and work on claims. The teachers needed help to get building logs for the school houses and teachers’ residences and to cut firewood to heat them. They sometimes would require furs and food for their own survival and assistance in bringing their annual allotments of personal goods and school equipment to the villages.

Such employment, however, could not have benefited many natives, certainly not the numbers who clustered in the new settlements. More important was the natives’ historically based receptivity to the innovations whites brought. Ernest Burch, the leading ethnographer of the Kotzebue Sound Eskimos, cautions that prior to the 1880s these natives were highly competitive and aggressive toward strangers. Their ability to maintain important elements of their culture while adopting useful Western ways testifies to their resiliency. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these natives were weakened by a series of epidemics that devastated their peoples and undermined their traditional cultures. Faced with the greater power, dynamism, and material wealth of American society, many were easily swayed by representatives of that culture to send their children to schools.<sup>22</sup>

This receptivity among the natives of the Kotzebue Sound region may also have been in reaction to the prophecies of Maniilaq. Maniilaq was an Inupiat born near the headwaters of the Kobuk River in the first third of the nineteenth century. Although he died well before the turn of the century, his predictions that white men would come among the Inupiat and introduce innovations such as paper, stoves, and the abolition of taboos, which would make

life easier, were well known in the area and may have predisposed natives to the white missionaries and educators.<sup>23</sup>

The westerners' religion was a factor. The earliest teachers in most of the schools in northwest Alaska were associated with mission societies. Although the natives did not abandon their traditional beliefs and practices entirely, many adopted Christianity. Daniel Foster, a native in his thirties at the time the bureau established a school at a new settlement called Noorvik, noted that Inupiat of the village of Oksik relocated to the new place because the teacher was Charles Replogle, a Quaker missionary, and these natives had become adherents to that church. Grace Hill, assigned by the bureau as an assistant teacher at Noorvik in 1915, complained to Superintendent Shields that Replogle worked upon the "religious superstitions of a primitive people" to induce the natives to volunteer to construct the village church at Noorvik. Shields acknowledged that Replogle used his religious influence to build Noorvik and went on to note that "this religious hold has been used at many a station and . . . there are other places besides Noorvik where the religious hold was what helped to start the work."<sup>24</sup>

Natives may also have been drawn to whites who seemed to have come to live with them not for personal material gain but to befriend them. The Eskimos could see personal merits in the teachers. The teachers cared deeply for the welfare of those for whom they had abandoned the relative comfort of the states. The Inupiat surely observed this sympathy and these particular newcomers' lack of any apparent selfish reason for living in the north. Although Eskimo people may not always have followed their advice to avoid drink or to adopt late-Victorian ways of life, they could not have doubted that these whites sought to be their friends.

This benign image of the newcomers was supported by their dispensing of relief in times of destitution and medical care to the sick. Both the missions and the government furnished relief funds, which, though not large, could prove crucial to desperate families. More importantly, natives often benefited from the teachers' small medicine chests. During the first year of school at Shungnak on the upper Kobuk, the teacher's wife gave medical care in over three hundred cases. In southwest Alaska's Kuskokwim Basin, so many of the region's sick went to be treated by the first American missionaries (who also served as government teachers) that the mission and school settlement was known among the natives as "sick town."<sup>25</sup>

Curiosity about the goings-on in the schoolroom also drew the natives. In reports to their supervisors, teachers may have exaggerated the enthusiasm with which the Inupiat greeted their pedagogy. Still, there seems ample evidence that schooling itself attracted natives to school villages. Wales teacher Thornton attributed the villagers' interest to the novelty of the situation and to an eagerness to learn English in order to trade more skillfully for Western goods. One bureau supervisor commented in 1911 that letter writing—"The magic of making a few scratches on paper and sending it to another, and having the one who receives it understand the mind of the writer"—was the most intriguing skill natives learned in the new schools. Superintendent Shields remarked that the Nome Eskimos "are like the Japs, and are very willing to learn anything that is for their advantage." Pauline Harvey, who enjoyed her parents' migratory subsistence existence in the upper Kobuk River area in the 1910s, also recalled that she "couldn't wait" to attend the bureau's school during the winter at Noorvik.<sup>26</sup>

The teachers were unable to compel attendance, but the students came. During the first year of school in Shungnak, attendance averaged forty-four in a crude 24' x 24' room with only thirty-six seats. In a few instances teachers found that night schools drew substantial numbers of adults.<sup>27</sup> Shields reported in 1913 that, although "Eskimos live in very small and scattered communities, . . . [they] as a rule see that their children get to one of the villages where there is a school for the greater part of the winter." Bureau employees were not the only ones who appreciated the natives' interest in schooling. In 1917 Shields noted that the wife of a trader at Solomon, east of Nome, had for two years maintained a school and hired a teacher in an effort "to collect the natives around the store." Apparently, a substantial number of Inupiat had gathered there, because the bureau hired the same teacher she had employed and took over the operation the following year.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the substantial flexibility of the Inupiat in choosing what resources to exploit and where to gain what they needed to survive minimized the cost of moving to be near the schools. Northwest Alaskan Eskimos had a history of seasonal geographic mobility for hunting, trading, and feasting, and occasional relocation to new territory to better exploit resources. Mobility was accelerated in the late nineteenth century as disease depopulated some areas, leaving them open for colonization, and shifts in the

location of caribou herds forced movement to be closer to more productive hunting grounds.<sup>29</sup>

The natives' social structure was geared to great mobility. Burch described northwest Alaska Native societies as "comprised of relatively autonomous, self-sufficient social segments." The leader of each family made decisions about what to hunt and fish and where to live. These decisions expressed themselves with periodic movements of families into and out of villages and from one site to another.<sup>30</sup> Particularly along the river systems, families might settle in different areas after returning each fall from trading and hunting excursions to the sea. Thus, a movement to a school village within the traditional society territory was not unprecedented, although the congregation of so many natives in a single site for many consecutive years was novel for all northwest Alaska Natives except those at the major whaling villages of Wales, Point Hope, and Barrow. The concentration of Inupiat at a single permanent site could, after a number of years, strain the resources in the immediate vicinity. But Eskimo people and educators were able to adjust—the Eskimos, either the men alone or with some or all of their families, wandered farther to hunt and trap, and the educators understood and acquiesced in shortened school years so that villagers could gain their subsistence.<sup>31</sup> Thus movement to school villages and interest in Western education can be viewed as the response of at least some members of a mobile and competitive people intent on maintaining their families with traditional hunting and fishing while gaining a better understanding of a stronger and wealthier society that offered material advantages.

The bureau's earliest efforts to relocate natives away from corrupt whites focused on Nome, which, with several thousand residents, was by far the largest town in western Alaska. Congregational minister C.E. Ryberg undertook a project in 1903 to move Nome's Eskimo population twenty miles to Quartz Creek. The colony drew about a hundred natives, but the effort collapsed when Ryberg left the peninsula the following year. In 1906, the Bureau of Education established a school at Sinuk to accompany a mission Methodists were then establishing there. Sinuk was seven miles from Quartz Creek, and bureau and mission officials hoped it would attract natives from Nome. For the dozen years of its existence, it was home for seventy to one hundred Inupiat, many of whom would otherwise have settled in Nome.<sup>32</sup> Yet it proved inadequate to lure the more than three hundred natives

who regularly resided at Nome or the additional hundreds who summered there.

The agency also considered establishing a school on King Island, a two-mile-long rock forty miles from the peninsula, to keep its residents from coming to Nome. But the undertaking was formidable. Shifting ice cut off King Island from the world eight months out of the year. Building a school there would be difficult and finding a teacher for such an isolated post nearly impossible. The bureau did not pursue the project.<sup>33</sup>

In 1911, in its most unusual effort to relocate Seward Peninsula Eskimos, the bureau arranged for transporting eleven native families and two single men a thousand miles to Port Moller. This settlement was on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula. Upon the natives' request, the bureau had the U.S. revenue cutter *Bear* carry them to Port Moller in late August and early September. After asking for the necessary funds for several years, the agency sent a teacher in 1915 and erected a school in nearby Herendeen Bay in 1916. The Bureau of Education would continue to recruit Nome natives to travel to Port Moller, although these later Eskimo migrants may have come south only seasonally to work in the canneries that sprang up in the area in the middle of the decade.<sup>34</sup>

While the bureau worked to coax the Inupiat away from Nome, it also tried to discourage natives from remaining in the city by delaying creation of and then underfunding its school. Nome citizens were the first to organize a school specifically for the town's Eskimo children. Once Nome incorporated in 1901, the bureau, which operated a school in the town for one year beginning in the fall of 1900, relinquished responsibility for educating Nome's children to the town government. In 1903, apparently in an effort to provide segregated education for Eskimo children, two men opened a native school. Three years later, after Nome civic leaders erected a new school and asked the federal government to pay for a teacher, the bureau consented to run the school.<sup>35</sup> Reluctant to put money into a school for natives it would prefer left town, the bureau rented an inadequate building that teachers and local agency officials complained about until it was washed into the ocean by a great storm in 1913. Necessity then spurred establishment of far superior classrooms in the old federal courthouse.<sup>36</sup>

Unhappy with its failure to move the Inupiat out of Nome, the bureau decided that segregation within the community was the



next best solution. In 1907 the teacher at Nome suggested that the agency buy land in or adjacent to town and compel natives to reside on it. Teacher Carl Zook argued that "the school should be the center of the [Eskimo's] life, social and moral, and the teacher a semi-chief. . . . Could the natives be gathered together in one part of town, they could be much more easily watched and protected from the vicious element of whites." The bureau gave the proposal serious consideration but found that the federal government had no legal basis to confine the natives.<sup>37</sup>

In 1911, after some Inupiat began to move from their long-time residences at the extreme east and west ends of town into white residential areas, white townsmen began a movement to segregate natives. Some proponents used the same rationale as Zook, saying that the dispersed population was difficult to serve and protect from corrupt whites. The town's health officer raised the specter of sickly natives infecting the white community; he noted one tuberculosis case who daily gave off enough germs "to kill a dozen families." Probably the *Nome Nugget* expressed the true racist root of the effort when it told whites that, "unless we wish to see Eskimos to the right of us, Eskimos to the left of us, tom cod in front of us, and seal oil behind us, we must be up and doing, for the natives have developed a strong desire of late to settle in among the white people."<sup>38</sup>

Superintendent Evans explained to the city council in mid-June that the bureau had no way to compel natives to move but promised the agency's support of an attempt to concentrate them on the sandspit at the west end of town. That summer the bureau arranged for the establishment of good school and sanitary facilities on the sandspit and induced all visiting natives and some permanent residents of the town's east end to relocate. The effort did not result in the permanent removal of Eskimo people from the east end, but the *Nugget* voiced its satisfaction that the bureau's work had prevented natives from moving into white neighborhoods.<sup>39</sup>

Ultimately bureau officials had to admit their failure to get natives out of Nome. The town had too many attractions: both the excitement of Western ways and the means—longshoring, mining, fishing, and selling of carvings, native clothes, and crafts—to partake in the newcomers' conveniences, if only in a marginal way.<sup>40</sup> In 1910 Shields charged that Nome was "the worst place for the natives in all Alaska," and complained that "the fact that the bureau may hesitate to put in a plant here does not help to keep

the natives away in the least. Nor does the increasing or starting of work at other places keep them from Nome." Three years later he conceded that Nome was "a permanent native center."<sup>41</sup>

The bureau was more successful in getting natives out of other Seward Peninsula mining towns. It sought for many years to discourage natives from living in Council. Although the agency opened a school in this Niukluk River mining camp in 1904, by 1908 Assistant Superintendent Evans hoped to discontinue it. He waited until late September to request appointment of a teacher for that year's schooling at Council in the hopes that the prospect of having no school would prompt many of the natives living there to move. His bluff failed. Three years later, Assistant Superintendent Charles Hawkesworth decried the corruption into which natives fell in the town and wrote that, "if we could get [the Eskimos] to move away to some other place, that would be the very best solution of the problem." But bureau employees' exhortations could not get the natives to leave. In 1912 Superintendent Shields wrote that "for the most part the natives seem fairly content with their lot in Council, and they will have to be shown good inducements to live elsewhere." A year later, after speaking with all the adult native males, he concluded that most would never move. "We will have to regard Council as a permanent native center," he lamented.<sup>42</sup>

There was good reason for the Eskimos' reluctance to leave Council. Mining had declined in the area, and natives were able to move into good cabins left by departing miners. The residual business activity provided jobs for which they received good wages. Moreover, the Inupiat were fully absorbed into town life, and Shields observed in 1912 that "they received fair treatment from the whites, and the distinction of race is drawn less at Council than at any other mining camp." He also found less exploitation of the natives by the white criminal class than in the past and an eagerness by local whites to have the Eskimo people remain.<sup>43</sup>

White citizens of Council whom Shields met argued that "the native question" should be solved in a fully integrated society such as then existed in their town. But despite all that Shields admitted was good about the natives' situation in Council, he did not agree. Although both white and Eskimo people were then benefiting in an integrated Council, the superintendent foresaw disaster. The Inupiat were "the hewers of wood and drawers of water" for Council's white population. They were dependent on



white employers. As the natives adopted Western ways, they lost their traditional subsistence skills. On the volatile mining frontier, Shields feared that Council's economy might decline further and departing whites would leave an aboriginal population unable to care for itself.<sup>44</sup>

Shields advised his superiors in 1912 that it would take more than a school to entice these partly Westernized natives from Council. He noted that for years the bureau had advocated industrial education but had not done much to create an industrial plant for natives. Council's natives were ideally suited recipients of such an undertaking. The Fish River, into which the Niukluk flowed, had good timber and would provide an excellent site for a sawmill as the center of a "new model village." A site on the lower Fish River might also attract natives from a couple of small coastal communities.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, Shields came to doubt that even such a facility would prompt Council natives to leave, and the bureau did nothing to encourage removal, while it maintained its rudimentary school at Council. Finally, it was an initiative by coastal natives that revived bureau efforts to get the Inupiat out of Council. Five coastal families moved into the abandoned transshipment settlement at White Mountain on the lower Fish River in 1914. They urged the bureau to provide them with a school. After considering what he believed to be the demoralizing conditions for natives in Council, Shields in 1916 carried through on Evans's implied threat of eight years earlier. The bureau closed its school at Council and established one in its place at White Mountain. Ten Council native families moved immediately to White Mountain, and all of the Eskimo children in Council made White Mountain their home for part of the school year. White Mountain would prosper as a native community. While Council's population dropped from nearly three hundred in 1910 to barely one hundred ten years later, White Mountain had almost two hundred Inupiat residents in 1920. In the mid 1920s the agency chose it as one of its three centers in the territory for a major industrial education facility.<sup>46</sup>

Evans initiated the effort to move natives out of Candle. The Bureau of Education for some time had wanted to move the natives but had been unable to undertake it. In 1910 Evans convinced William T. Gooden and his wife Lizzie, Friends missionaries then conducting a school at Candle, to lead a group of natives from the mining settlement to the Buckland River, twenty miles to

the east. The Goodens, like the bureau officials, were distressed by the demoralizing impact of the mining town on the natives.<sup>47</sup>

The initiative proved very successful for a number of reasons. About 1903, natives then living on the Buckland River had moved in the opposite direction to obtain jobs at the new mining field, in the process largely depopulating the river basin. Therefore, the natives were very familiar with the area to which they moved and appreciated the natural bounty of the valley and, very probably, the benefit to preserving their ways by leaving Candle. The mining industry at Candle had suffered a sharp drop in production beginning in 1907 and had stagnated since then. The fall off undoubtedly meant fewer jobs for the natives. It also was less necessary to concentrate at Candle to get Western goods, since Kotzebue traders were then delivering supplies throughout the surrounding countryside. Moreover, Evans had promised to provide the natives with a reindeer herd if they moved to the Buckland, and the Goodens offered to continue teaching the children in the new village. This combination of factors brought about a large exodus of natives from Candle; Shields reported that “the natives have almost entirely left.”<sup>48</sup>

Relocating the school may have been the critical incentive to move the Inupiat. In the summer of 1912, the Goodens decided to leave because of Lizzie’s health. Shields feared “that the people would return to Candle, and all the hard, devoted work of the Goodens might go for nothing” if the bureau did not assume the responsibility of maintaining the school. The agency had not previously financed the Buckland school. With the school’s and the community’s future threatened, the agency took over education on the Buckland and appointed Iva Taber, a California-educated Eskimo, as teacher. The natives stayed on the Buckland, and Shields was able to report in 1917 that Candle was still largely devoid of Inupiat.<sup>49</sup>

Another particularly energetic Quaker family spearheaded the exodus of natives from Deering. When Charles and May Replogle went to Deering in the fall of 1913, they found that mining operations had filled much of the Inmachuk River with silt and made fishing and hunting in the area less productive. Fuel wood was scarce and timbers were so lacking that housing was unhealthy and crowded. The couple was also upset by the immoral effects of the nearby mining community on the Eskimo residents.<sup>50</sup>

In January 1914 Replogle proposed a solution. He wrote Commissioner Claxton that “the native can be colonized successfully

and advantageously for himself and the Department." Replogle wanted each colony to have a graded school rather than the one-room schools that the Bureau of Education operated. Each colony would also have a sawmill and facilities to manufacture stoves, soaps, sweets, and other locally useful products. These operations not only would produce goods the natives needed but would provide business training.<sup>51</sup>

Claxton undoubtedly appointed Replogle with the expectation that he would initiate such development. The Replogles had spent several years doing missionary work at Douglas in southeast Alaska in the 1890s, and in 1904 they published a book that advocated fostering industries among Alaska Natives on land set aside by the government. Since then, this strategy had gained ascendancy in the bureau. Commissioner Claxton promoted the policy in testimony before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations in April 1914. Claxton explained that Alaska Natives were so scattered—occupying 160 settlements, many of which were very small—that bringing schools to all would be prohibitively expensive. Government funds could be saved and better education provided if natives could be concentrated into about sixty villages. The commissioner cited the example of Hydaburg in southeast Alaska. When the bureau had established a school there three years earlier, it had drawn nearly all the population of several nearby villages. The bureau established a cooperative store and sawmill. These, along with fishing, allowed the natives to prosper. Not only would the bureau save money by reducing the needed number of schools, Claxton argued, but the education of both youths and adults would be more effective because the bureau would place each school in the hands of "a man who has practical industrial training, a man of education and practical common sense, fitted to become an industrial leader."<sup>52</sup>

In Charles Replogle, Claxton had the "industrial leader" he wanted. Replogle convinced a sizable number of Deering Inupiat, particularly the younger natives, to move from the settlement to an unpopulated area on the lower Kobuk River. In late April, Superintendent Shields learned that the move had begun. He wired his superiors, who authorized reassigning Replogle to the new settlement and permitting removal of bureau structures at Deering to the Kobuk River. Over the next two years, Replogle arranged to move most of Deering's natives and their property and the school's property to the new settlement of Noorvik.<sup>53</sup>

Shields termed the settlement at Noorvik “the most important project we have undertaken in this district.” The government funneled resources to the new village. The bureau abandoned a long-discussed plan to start a school at Oksik, farther up the Kobuk, and diverted lumber destined for that place to Noorvik. It transferred reindeer herds from Deering to Noorvik. Before the end of 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed an executive order reserving a square tract fifteen miles on a side centering on Noorvik for the use of the bureau and the Eskimos.<sup>54</sup> Unlike reservations established in the states, the Kobuk River Reserve and the handful of similar reserves created in Alaska at this time placed no constraints on natives’ movement outside the reserve. Rather the intent was to keep undesirable whites out. With this protection from white encroachment afforded its project, the bureau sent in a sawmill, telegraph equipment, and an electric power plant to light the community. It was the first northwestern native community furnished with such elaborate equipment. In Noorvik’s first three years, the bureau spent more than \$18,000 on the village, an astronomical sum compared to that expended on most schools. In the next few years it built a new school, lent financial assistance for the establishment of a native cooperative store, and, in 1920, began building a hospital.<sup>55</sup>

Noorvik became the bureau’s model village for northern natives. The developments the bureau sponsored there operated efficiently and proved of benefit to the natives. One observer sent by the agency to make an independent assessment of Noorvik found it “full of inspiration for every government teacher.” Although Noorvik never succeeded in luring all the Inupiat from Deering and bureau employees would continue to bewail the degradation of some natives who remained at Deering, it did grow to number 281 by 1920, easily outstripping Kotzebue as the largest predominantly native community in the region. Oksik emptied completely as its people moved to Noorvik. And the new village drew so many from Deering and Kiana, another white settlement up the Kobuk River, that whites in the communities complained they were left with few natives to take the poorer paying jobs the local economies required.<sup>56</sup>

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Despite their lack of acquisitiveness for native lands, whites tried to relocate Alaskan aboriginals. For many in Nome, this certainly had its root in racism. But elsewhere on the Seward

Peninsula teachers and missionaries provided the primary impetus for segregating natives from white communities, sometimes doing battle with whites who did not wish to lose the cheap labor and business patronage the Eskimos provided.

The teachers and administrators of the Bureau of Education viewed themselves as the Inupiat's protectors against the evil elements of Western culture. Although they sometimes debated among themselves about the policies the bureau should pursue, they did not question that the path the agency laid out for Alaska Natives was better than that offered by other whites. Thus, for the bureau's employees, there was every reason to prod natives to follow their teachers out of the white towns to the forests and tundra. The establishment of the Kobuk Reserve at Noorvik was the ideal. Because undesirable whites were excluded, teachers would have a near monopoly of influence on their charges, who, bureau officials frequently commented, were very malleable to the forces of Western society.

Indeed, Alaskan whites seemed at times to view the Inupiat's future as something primarily in the hands of westerners. This was true of bureau officials as well as other northern whites. It was a habit of mind resting on centuries' experience as Americans shoved Indians onto reservations or into the grave as they grasped the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific; it was reinforced by the evident docility of Alaska Natives decimated by disease and famine.

By relocating natives away from exploiting and corrupting whites, the Bureau of Education followed a pattern established early in the nineteenth century by self-proclaimed friends of the Indians. But in the early twentieth century these actions were in sharp contrast with contemporary policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Americans were eager to exploit resources on western reservations. With some exceptions, the government responded to their wishes by spurring Indian land allotments and sales of "excess" reservation tracts to whites, and by opening reservations to white timber and mining interests. Westerners also needed laborers, and the BIA accommodated them by establishing employment offices to furnish Indians jobs on farms, ranches, and railroads. The BIA argued that these actions would accelerate assimilation of their charges into Western civilization. Whites moving in among the Indians to farm, ranch, harvest timber, and mine would provide good examples of industriousness, and the discipline, work skills, and rewards learned at the workplace would equip Indians for full incorporation in Western society.<sup>57</sup>

Certainly the primary cause for Alaska's divergence from the experience in the states was the relatively modest white demand for the territory's land. But there were related reasons. Whites had little interest in Eskimo, Aleut, and Alaskan Indian lands, except along the southern littoral and at scattered mining sites, because they had not figured out how to use it profitably for farms, ranches, or anything else that would prompt thick settlement. With the possible exceptions of Fairbanks, Nome, and the southern coastal towns, white settlements were rough, barely more than mining camps and disproportionately male. When Bureau of Education representatives looked about them, they saw no white models for living in the Arctic that they could point to as worthy of the natives' emulation. Rather, Alaskan Bureau of Education leadership and many of its teachers came to appreciate the natives' ability to survive in their harsh environment in coherent and viable communities. It was in support of such communities, leavened with appropriate instruction from teachers, that the bureau coaxed movement from white towns and created schools in the wilderness.

They were not always successful, because Alaska Natives, not faced with loss of much of their land, retained their ultimate independence. Although the Bureau of Education may have viewed its relocation efforts as moving the northwest Eskimo out of harm's way by removing them from corrupt mining towns, the Inupiat may have better grasped the reality that they were not imminently in harm's way. To a greater extent than Indians in the contiguous states and territories, the Inupiat's ability to gain a subsistence from traditional fish and game abetted by Western technology left them free to choose their future—a future enriched by options offered in the white towns and in the school-centered villages. The natives exercised that essential freedom in choosing their personal and collective futures. Their choices affected the success of settlements designed by the Bureau of Education. Their interest in Western education provided in a setting suitable for maintenance of traditional subsistence activities caused great numbers to follow teachers and establish what, in many cases, were year-round homes in permanent villages. Yet many natives chose to reside in the small mining towns of the Seward Peninsula where they could find work and Western conveniences unavailable elsewhere. Natives were attuned to the fluctuations of the mining economy. They were particularly reluctant to move from Nome, which remained a major mining center



throughout the pre-World War I era. In contrast, the bureau had its greatest success in campaigns to relocate the Inupiat from the declining mining towns of Council, Candle, and Deering.

The common native experience in Alaska, and especially in the more remote areas of the territory, was thus radically different from that in the lower forty-eight. In the south, greed for Indian land limited aboriginals' options. The great majority either had been stripped of tribal lands and become immersed in the dominant society or lived on reservations, where the BIA sought to prepare them for a future that had little resemblance to their traditional past.<sup>58</sup> In Alaska, the presence of whites did not so dramatically undermine native life. White settlement denied some natives their choice of seasonal camps, mining fouled some fish habitat, and newcomers competed with natives for fish and game; nevertheless, the taking of game and fish and the gathering of roots and berries still provided many of the essentials for Alaskan Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian people, and white settlement covered little of their traditional land.<sup>59</sup>

Natives could choose to continue this existence or move to a white community and take positions in it, albeit usually ones of a marginal nature. Some chose a compromise that incorporated wage labor in or near a Western community with their seasonal subsistence round. In this context, the Bureau of Education's relocation efforts can be seen to have provided the natives with an additional choice. Natives could furnish their children with a rudimentary Western education while they lived in the lands and by the means that had been passed down by their forefathers for centuries.

## NOTES

1. Some notable treatments of Euro-Americans' motives for relocating American Indians are Robert Winston Mardock, *The Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971); Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System, 1846-51* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975); Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Indian in America* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975); and Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

2. Northwest Alaska, which is the focus of this study, is defined as the region draining into the Bering Sea between Unalakleet and Kivalina, including Diomed Island.

3. Dorothy Jean Ray, *The Eskimos of Bering Strait* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 111–17; Ernest S. Burch, Jr., *Eskimo Kinsmen: Changing Family Relationships in Northwest Alaska* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1975), 14–20; William L. Sheppard, *Continuity and Change in Norton Sound: Historic Sites and Their Contexts*, Occasional Paper No. 37 (Fairbanks: Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 1983), 9–10, 15–25, 32–36, 61–63. For brief yet remarkably comprehensive summaries of the life of Eskimos of the area, see Ernest S. Burch, Jr., “Kotzebue Sound Eskimo,” and Dorothy Jean Ray, “Bering Strait Eskimo,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant, vol. 5, *Arctic*, ed. David Damas (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1984).

4. Ray, “Bering Strait Eskimo,” 287; Burch, “Kotzebue Sound Eskimo,” 304–305; Burch, “The Eskimo Trading Partnership in North Alaska: A Study in ‘Balanced Reciprocity,’” *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska* 15 (1970): 54.

5. John R. Bockstoce, *Whales, Ice, and Men: The History of Whaling in the Western Arctic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 180–202, 232, 241–42, 252; Burch, *The Traditional Eskimo Hunters of Point Hope, Alaska: 1800–1875* (North Slope Borough, 1981), 19.

6. Stephen Haycox, “‘Races of a Questionable Type’: Origins of the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Bureau of Education in Alaska, 1867–1885,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 75 (October 1984): 156–63.

7. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1903*, 58th Cong., 2d sess., H. Doc. 5, 2346–47; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1905*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 5, xxxiv–xxxv, 281; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1907*, 60th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 5, 378–79, 382; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1909*, 62nd Cong., 2d sess., H. Doc. 107, 1303–1304.

8. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1909*, 1297–98; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1906*, 59th Cong., 2d sess., H. Doc. 5, xxiii; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1907*, 383–84, 387, 395.

9. Harlan Updegraff to Mrs. R.H. Young, 3 February 1908, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives (microfilm roll 23, University of Alaska, Anchorage. Hereafter all correspondence not otherwise noted is from the microfilm of this record group.).

10. William T. Hagan, “Reformers’ Images of the Native Americans: The Late Nineteenth Century,” in *The American Indian Experience, A Profile: 1524 to the Present*, ed. Philip Weeks (Arlington Heights, IL: Forum Press, Inc., 1988), 213–14.

11. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1907*, 387, 390.

12. A.N. Evans, Report, received 20 September 1909, roll 29.

13. The bureau tried to move natives from white communities elsewhere in Alaska. For example, the bureau’s district superintendent for Alaska’s south-east panhandle referred repeatedly to the undesirable effects on natives of their living in Juneau and the nearby community of Douglas. Despite numerous efforts to pry them out of these white communities, however, the bureau failed to get the natives to leave.



The desire to separate natives from undesirable whites was also in evidence in the bureau's policy in Cook Inlet. In 1914 the agency conducted a study of where in Cook Inlet, near present-day Anchorage, to establish a major school center. The study rejected two white communities on the east side of the inlet because they were populated with too many "debauching, bootlegging men." The bureau established a reserve at Tyonek on the west side of the inlet in 1915 and, in cooperation with the natives of the community, ousted white traders and either excluded white fishermen or leased their fishery to whites who paid a price. In the 1960s the Tyonek natives ultimately won a court case that allowed the reserve's natives to sell the rights to drill for oil and gas under the reserve for more than \$12 million.

For the undesirability of Juneau and Douglas and efforts to get natives to leave, see, for example, W.G. Beattie to Commissioner of Education (hereafter cited as CEEd), 1 December 1911, 31 December 1912, 3 March 1913, 30 June 1914, and 30 June 1915, roll 43. For Tyonek, see Charles M. Robinson to W.T. Lopp, 25 November 1914; Robinson to Lopp, 22 May 1915; Robinson to CEEd, 30 June 1917; Miller to Lopp, telegram 31 May 1918; Lopp to Miller, telegram 13 June 1918; David F. Dunagan to CEEd, n.d.; and David F. Dunagan to CEEd, 30 June 1919, roll 25; David S. Case, *Alaska Natives and American Laws* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1984), 91–92; and Darbyshire and Associates, *Tyonek* (Juneau: Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs, 1981).

14. A.N. Evans, "Native Conditions at Nome," 7 July 1907, box 1, file "Natives (general)," entry 806, Record Group 75, National Archives; Carl S. Zook to E.E. Brown, 1 July 1908, roll 18; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1907*, 390; Walter H. Johnson to CEEd, 31 [sic] June 1911, roll 18.

15. Wilbert Snow to CEEd, 15 June 1912 and A.B. Kinne to CEEd, 1 June 1910, roll 6.

16. Charles W. Hawkesworth to Elmer Ellsworth Brown, 23 May 1911, roll 6; A.N. Evans to W.T. Lopp, 10 December 1910, roll 6; A.N. Evans to CEEd, 29 September 1908, roll 6; A.B. Kinne to CEEd, 1 June 1910, roll 6.

17. Frances M. and L.G. Sickles to Gents, 15 October 1908, roll 21; Walter C. Shields, "Report on Candle 1913," received 2 July 1913; and Iva K. Tabor, "Annual Report," 29 June 1917, roll 3; *Nome Semi-Weekly Nugget*, 13 May 1905; Benjamin W. Newsom to CEEd, received 14 September 1910, roll 6.

18. Bertha S. Cox and Iva Kenworthy, "The Fifth Annual Report," 31 May 1909; "Sixth Annual Report of the Deering Public School," 9 September 1909; and Martha Hunnicutt and Florence Pennok, "Deering U.S. School Annual Report," noted 23 June 1913, roll 6.

19. Walter C. Shields, "Report on Deering" [1912], roll 6; Arthur O. Roberts, *Tomorrow Is Growing Old: Stories of the Quakers in Alaska* (Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 1978), 266.

20. Walter C. Shields to W.T. Lopp, 8 December 1915, roll 7. Review of census manuscripts indicate the impact of the creation of schools. For example, in 1900 one hundred natives were spread along the Noatak River and 259 along the Selawik and its tributaries. Ten years later the census-taker found 114 of the 128 members of native households on the Noatak at the village of Noatak,

and all of the 219 natives on the Selawik were recorded as residing in the village of Selawik.

21. Harrison Robertson Thornton, *Among the Eskimos of Wales, Alaska, 1890–93* (1931; New York: AMS Press, 1976), 71.

22. Burch, “Kotzebue Sound Eskimo,” 311–12. Shields was concerned with the natives’ passivity. At a reindeer fair in 1917, he quoted the Bible to urge them to “act like men, be strong.” He chided the Inupiat for being weak and doing anything that whites told them. Tautuk, a leading herder, admitted the Eskimo people were weak. He was thankful for the better life reindeer herding afforded him but said that, had the people maintained their old reliance on hunting, they would be stronger because they would have to work harder. Moreover, English was the language of power—“I always feel weak because I cannot read and I cannot talk like white people.” Shields, “Sermon” and Tautuk response, 25 March 1917, frames 691–93, 698, roll 33. According to Rachel Craig, an Inupiat of northwest Alaska who has conducted oral interviews of elders of the region, natives received the teachers’ urging to send their children to school, sometimes reinforced by exhortations of officers of the U.S. revenue cutter *Bear*, as commands that had to be followed. Rachel Craig, interview by author, 7 December 1995.

23. Ruth Ramoth-Sampson, comp. *Maniilaq* (n.p., n.d.), viii–ix; Craig interview, 7 December 1995.

24. Northwest Alaska Elders, *Lore of the Inupiat: The Elders Speak*, vol. 3, ed. Linda Piquik Lee, Ruthie Tatqavin Sampson, and Edward Tennant (Kotzebue, AK: Northwest Arctic Borough School District, 1992), 141; Grace A. Hill to Lopp and Shields, 4 August 1916 and W.S. to Grace A. Hill, draft not sent, Alaska Native Brotherhood Collection, box 41, University of Alaska Fairbanks (hereafter ANB Collection, UAF).

25. Eli M. Myers to “Dear Sir,” 30 June 1908, roll 15; Ann Fienup-Riordan, *The Real People and the Children of Thunder: The Yup’ik Eskimo Encounter with Moravian Missionaries John and Edith Kilbuck* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 82.

26. Thornton, *Among the Eskimos of Wales*, 44; Charles W. Hawkesworth to CEd, 31 January 1911, frame 854, roll 30; W.S. to W.T. Lopp, 24 November 1911, roll 18; Pauline Harvey interview, 11 November 1982, “Elders in Residence Collection,” H90-06-10, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

27. Eli M. Myers, “Annual Report,” 30 June 1908, roll 15; P.H. Laufman to CEd, 1 June 1908, roll 26; C.C. Pidgeon to CEd, 30 June 1910, roll 26; A.B. Kinne to CEd, 4 December 1908, roll 6. There was no compulsory attendance law until 1915. Even then, law enforcement was out of the question in many parts of the territory and lax in some parts where it would have been most feasible. Moreover, the bureau’s employees understood that economic necessity often required that students follow their parents on extended subsistence activities away from villages for months at a time, whether or not school was in session.

28. Walter C. Shields to CEd, 26 November 1913, frame 518, roll 32; W.S. to chief of the Alaska Division, 19 June 1917, frame 384; and Walter C. Shields, “Annual Report, N.W. District 1918,” frame 564, roll 33.

29. The denser population and traditional village loyalty of residents of the permanent Eskimo settlements along much of the Kuskokwim River apparently contributed to a much weaker pull of Bureau of Education schools in that area. Wendell H. Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer: An Alaskan Eskimo Ethnohistory, 1778–1988* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990).

30. Burch, "Kotzebue Sound Eskimo," 303–304, 307, 313–17. Also for mobility and colonization, see William L. Sheppard, "Contact Period Settlement Dynamics in Norton Sound" (Paper delivered at the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association, Fairbanks, 9 March 1990).

31. Many teachers' annual reports commonly explained low attendance numbers in September and abrupt declines in April or May by movements back from or to fish camps or hunting camps and occasionally observed that some students left with their parents for periods during the school year to trap or hunt. In 1916 Fred M. Sickler, the teacher at Shungnak, made similar comments and also noted a social implication of nontraditional congregation of riverine people in school villages. He was troubled by the amount of bickering in town and the resultant removal of some families. When he asked the elders about the cause of the strife, they told him that "before the school came we never spent more than a year in the same house. . . . We never lived in one great village but in camps along the river. We have not learned to live together." Fred M. Sickler, "Report," received 23 September 1916, roll 22.

32. Dorothy Jean Ray, "The Sinuk Mission: Experiment in Eskimo Relocation and Acculturation," *Alaska History* 1 (Fall 1984): 28, 31; A.N. Evans to Harlan Updegraff, 21 October 1909, roll 29.

33. Evans to Updegraff, 21 October 1909, roll 29; Walter C. Shields to CED, 26 November 1913, roll 32.

34. *Annual Report of the United States Revenue-Cutter Service for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1912* (GPO, 1913), 110–11; U.S. Revenue Cutter *Bear* Log Book, 19 August 1911, National Archives; *Hearings Before Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations . . . in charge of Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill for 1914*, vol. 10, p. 278; *Hearings Before Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations . . . in charge of Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill for 1915*, vol. 80, p. 991; *Hearings Before Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations . . . in charge of Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill for 1916*, vol. 82, p. 710; Walter G. Culver, "Annual Report U.S. Gov't School at Port Moller," 19 August 1916; Culver, "Annual Report," 30 June 1917; W.T. Lopp to Superintendent Forbes, Pacific American Fisheries, 11 March 1916, and Lopp to Walter G. Culver, 29 January 1917, roll 20. The origin of Eskimo settlement at Port Moller is not clear. The 1911 exodus from Nome evidently was not the first travel between the two places. In 1910 the census-taker counted forty-three people at Herendeen Bay. Most were Eskimo or the offspring of white and Eskimo unions. These Eskimo people were clearly of a different stock from those in other communities the census-taker visited along the peninsula; he identified the inhabitants of the other settlements as Aleut. Unfortunately, the census does not indicate where most of these Eskimos came from, although it does make clear that at least one was from the western Seward Peninsula.

35. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1903*, 2344, 2347; *Nome Semi-Weekly Nugget*, 17 September 1904; enclosure to Elmer Ellsworth Brown to secretary of the interior, 2 March 1907, Interior Department Territorial Papers: Alaska (M-430), roll 14, frames 310–11, Federal Archives and Records Center, Anchorage; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1907*, 390.

36. Walter C. Shields to CEEd, 30 July 1910; C. Zook, memo, 1 July 1908; Arthur W. Johnson to CEEd, 1 July 1910; Walter C. Shields to W.T. Lopp, 24 October 1911; Shields to Lopp, 13 November 1913; and Anna C. Anderson to CEEd, 4 June 1914, roll 18.

37. Carl S. Zook to Harlan Updegraff, 5 December 1907, chief of division, to Carl S. Zook, 13 February 1908; and A.N. Evans to CEEd, telegram, 5 May 1908, roll 18; A.N. Evans to CEEd, 15 June 1911, roll 31.

38. *Nome Daily Nugget*, 9 May 1911, 6 May 1911, 11 May 1911, 10 June 1911.

39. A.N. Evans to CEEd, 15 June 1911, roll 31; *Nome Daily Nugget*, 2 August 1911, 4 August 1911.

40. The reminiscences of Waldo Bodfish suggest the attractions of Nome. Bodfish came to town for the first time as a boy about 1912 with his Eskimo family. Although they stayed only a week, his experiences—apartment living with a stove and modern utensils, money (another Eskimo boy had to explain the coins' value), and running errands for miners and fishermen—and his reluctance to leave remained with Bodfish when his life history was recorded seventy years later. Waldo Bodfish, Sr., *Kusiq: An Eskimo Life History from the Arctic Coast of Alaska*, ed. and comp. William Schneider (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1991), 19–20.

41. Walter C. Shields to CEEd, 30 July 1910, roll 18; Shields, "Report on Council 1913," received 2 July 1913, roll 6.

42. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1905*, 280; A.N. Evans to CEEd, 29 September 1908; Charles W. Hawkesworth to Elmer Ellsworth Brown, 23 May 1911; and Walter C. Shields, "Report on Council 1913," received 2 July 1913, roll 6; Shields to CEEd, 25 March 1912, roll 31.

43. Shields to CEEd, 25 March 1912, roll 31. For other testimonies to the natives' Westernization and prosperousness within an integrated council, see Stella Dunaway to Harlan Updegraff, 31 January 1908; Charles Wilbert Snow to Lopp, 20 January 1912; Snow to CEEd, 15 June 1912; Lula James Welch to district superintendent bureau of education, received 23 June 1913; and Welch to CEEd, received 5 June 1915, roll 6.

44. Walter C. Shields to CEEd, 25 March 1912, roll 31.

45. *Ibid.*

46. J.V. Geary to CEEd, 16 July 1917, roll 7; Walter C. Shields, "Alaska School Service Superintendent's Monthly Report for September 1916," roll 33; U.S. Twelfth Census manuscripts; *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1925), 27.

47. Walter C. Shields, "Report on Buckland," answered 18 July 1912, roll 32; Wilson H. Cox, "Annual Report of Mission Work on the Alaskan Field," 1 March 1911, roll 2, frame 1174; and Cox "Annual Report," 1 March 1912, roll 2, frame 1179, Friends Alaska Mission Documents, Alaska Quaker Documents,

George Fox College, Newberg, Oregon (microfilm, University of Alaska, Anchorage. Hereafter cited as Friends Alaska Mission Documents).

48. Mrs. Dana Thomas, Alaska Mission Diary, v. 9, p. 56, 1 July 1903–1 July 1904, roll 1, frame 1641, Friends Alaska Mission Documents; Fred F. Henshaw, "Mining in the Fairhaven Precinct" in *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1908*, U.S.G.S. Bulletin 379 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1909), 364; Fred F. Henshaw, "Mining in Seward Peninsula" in *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1909*, U.S.G.S. Bulletin 442 (1910); Alfred H. Brooks, "The Mining Industry in 1912" in *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1912*, U.S.G.S. Bulletin 542 (1913); Walter C. Shields, "Report on Candle 1913," received 2 July 1913, roll 3; Shields, "Report on Candle," answered 18 July 1912, roll 32.

49. Shields, "Report on Buckland 1913," received 2 July 1913, roll 3; Shields to CED, 21 June 1917, roll 33.

50. Roberts, *Tomorrow*, 266; Charles Replogle to Claxton, 13 January 1914, roll 6.

51. Ibid.

52. Replogle, *Among the Indians of Alaska* (London: Headley Brothers, 1904), 55, 169; *Hearings Before Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations . . . in charge of Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill for 1915*, vol. 80, p. 975.

53. Walter Shields to chief, 27 March 1914, box 6, folder 6, William Thomas Lopp Papers, University of Oregon, Eugene; Shields to Sinclair, telegram, 24 April 1914 and Lopp to Shields, telegram, 28 April 1914, roll 32; Shields to chief of Alaska Division, Bureau of Education, 19 April 1916, roll 18.

54. Shields to chief of Alaska Division, Bureau of Education, 19 April 1916, roll 18; Roberts, *Tomorrow*, 267; Executive Order 2089, 21 November 1914. The Kobuk River Reserve was the largest of several similar reserves created in Alaska in the 1910s.

55. Replogle to Shields, 26 June 1916; and Replogle to Shields, 23 November 1916; Lopp to Shields, 30 June 1917; Delbert E. Replogle to P.P. Claxton, n.d., "Annual Report . . . for Nineteen Twenty," ANB Collection, UAF; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1918*, 65th Cong., 3d sess., H. Doc. 1448, 141.

56. J. Maguire, "Report of Conditions at Noorvik," 18 August 1917; Replogle to Shields, 3 December 1917; Shields to Replogle, 29 December 1917, box 41, ANB Collection, UAF; *Lore of the Inupiat*, 3: 133.

57. Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 164–68, 201–202.

58. See Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846–1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984) for the disastrous impact of reservations on the traditional life of Indians in the states.

59. Ann Fienup-Riordan, *The Real People and the Children of Thunder*, has a similar "optimistic" view of the effects of missions and schools among the Kuskokwim River Eskimo of southwest Alaska and the ability of natives to choose the elements of Western culture they wished to adopt. Wendell Oswalt, *Bashful No Longer*, 190, is less sanguine about the people's exposure to whites in

the early twentieth century but acknowledges that when modern Kuskokwim Eskimos look back toward a golden era, they refer to the first third of this century.

