

ALASKA PENINSULA COMMUNITIES DISPLACED BY VOLCANISM IN 1912

Don E. Dumond

Department of Anthropology, 1218 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1218; ddumond@uoregon.edu

ABSTRACT

By 1912, northern Alaska Peninsula people had more than a half-century's experience with industrial economy—first Russian, then American. When the eruption in the vicinity of Mt. Katmai forced evacuation, Pacific coast settlements relocated 400 km southwest, to Perryville, while across the mountains, upriver people fled 100 km toward the Bering Sea, founding the settlement of (New) Savonoski, 10 km inland. Settlers from both moved out seasonally for customary employment, but thereafter histories differ. Isolated Perryville achieved a school in the 1920s, recognized Native village status in 1950 and again after 1971, and presently retains its identity. People of less-isolated Savonoski were more quickly attracted to opportunities near canneries and schools; the resultant shrunken population was responsible for a failure of remnant Savonoski to achieve status either as a Native village or as a recognized Native group under ANCSA. The Savonoski location was essentially abandoned in the late 1970s.

KEYWORDS: Novarupta Volcano, Katmai eruption, Perryville, Savonoski, community relocation

INTRODUCTION

At the time when Russian fur hunters found themselves in control of both coasts of the northern Alaska Peninsula—by 1820—Native speakers of the Yup'ik language Sugpiaq, or Alutiiq, occupied settlements from coast to coast except for settlements on the shore of Bristol Bay. These bay-side points were held by the intrusive speakers of Central Yup'ik referred to in early documents as Aglegmiut, now commonly written *Aglurmiut* (Dumond 2005:fig. 41). Archaeological evidence can be interpreted to indicate that this Aglegmiut intrusion had occurred between about AD 1800 and 1810. Before that time Alutiiq speakers had extended to the Bristol Bay coast (e.g., Dumond 2003).¹

When portions of the upper peninsula were mapped with relative completeness by Russian explorers, there were three named communities in the Alutiiq areas of

the Pacific coast: Katmai, Kukak, and one reported as Kayayak. Within the interior Alutiiq area west of the Aleutian Range (which divides the peninsula lengthwise), settlements identified as Ikak and Alinnak were located on the course of what is now known as the Savonoski River, one at its mouth on upper Naknek Lake, the other a score of kilometers upstream (Fig. 1; see also Dumond 2005:fig. 40). It was Alutiiq communities in these locations that would be displaced in 1912 by the world's largest eruption of the twentieth century, which emanated primarily from Novarupta Volcano, with some involvement of nearby Katmai Volcano. The two settlements at the mouth of the Naknek River, occupied principally by Aglegmiut descendants, were relatively unaffected.

1. As is well known, the early Russian explorers applied the term "Aleut" not only to inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands but also to the members of a different language group who inhabited islands in the northern Gulf of Alaska as well as the adjacent mainland. Through time this usage was accepted by the local people. Linguists have referred to this latter language as Sugpiaq or Pacific Yupik, but since the 1980s they have recognized that "Alutiiq," a Sugpiaq rendition of "Aleut," is more acceptable to the people themselves (e.g., Krauss 1985:5). In Russian literature, as in local conversations in English, the term "Aleut" is nevertheless current.

receiving in return for pelts items that included some they would have made or produced themselves if they had not been working for the Russian-American Company—bird-skin parkas, *kamleikas*, seal skins, and nets—plus imported goods such as tea, sugar, tobacco, glass beads, metal pots, knives, axes, mirrors, and so on (Partnow 2001:68). The people Christianized, a chapel was constructed in the 1830s, to be replaced at least twice thereafter (Partnow 2001:162). With the American purchase of Alaska in 1867, the trading post of the Russian-American Company was assumed by the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC) and operated briskly until fur trading closed in 1902 with a collapse of the fur market (Partnow 2001:113, 128), although more limited trading continued.

Kukak Bay, which provided one of the most promising harbors on the Pacific coast of the peninsula, was mentioned as a settled locality in Russian documents dating before 1800 (K. Arndt, pers. comm.). A more specific description is in the report by G. H. von Langsdorff (1993:II, 138–141), which details a visit in 1806 to a settlement of “summer huts” somewhere on the bay and known as Tonjajak. By 1880, after the American purchase, there was a chapel present at the bay (Partnow 2001:162), and in 1891 the ACC opened a post there which it operated for a time (Partnow 2001:113). However, by 1895, presumably because of better opportunities for trade, the few remaining inhabitants reportedly moved farther northeast to the settlement known by then as Douglas (K. Arndt, pers. comm.) where an ACC post remained active.

According to at least one report, this nineteenth-century settlement of Douglas—a name derived from Cape Douglas, to the northeast—had been established by 1876 by people from Katmai and from the multisettlement interior Alutiiq community across the mountain range, Severnovsk (known as Savonoski to the later Americans). This new coastal village the Natives knew as Ashivak, although it was at about this same time that the ACC post was established at what was referred to as Douglas—possibly but not certainly the same location. The Douglas post would continue to operate until 1901 when it was closed in the face of the declining fur market (Partnow 2001:113, 128). Whatever the truth of this account that Ashivak/

Douglas was established relatively late by Alutiiq-speaking Natives, the immediate vicinity had long been the site of a settlement, or settlements, reported variously as Kayayak (Fig. 1), Kaliak, Kaguyak, or Naushkak (K. Arndt, pers. comm.; Dumond 2005; Partnow 2001).³

Although these coastal settlements evidently had thrived when the fur market was active, especially with sea otters available, the close of more active trade by the ACC in the years immediately after 1900 was followed by some decline in population. Sometime before the 1912 eruption at least a partial stopgap was provided by the growing market for preserved salmon. In response to this, a summer fishery and saltery was established by a man named Foster on an inlet—Kafkia Bay—immediately southwest of the mouth of Kukak Bay (Partnow 2001:185–190).

That Kafkia Bay was chosen for the purpose was clearly no accident: the geographic conformation provides a funnel-shaped outer bay, which leads through a narrow pass into a restricted and more convoluted inner bay, into which a modest sockeye salmon stream debouches.⁴ This early twentieth-century seasonal operation quickly came to employ or otherwise attract virtually the entire able populations of both Douglas and Katmai, which were located some 50 to 75 coastal kilometers on each side of Kafkia Bay. As a result, beginning in the early summer both villages would be almost depopulated as the people moved to the saltery for the chance to enter, if only in a small way, into a larger industrial enterprise.

How many people were involved? According to the U.S. census of 1910, the populations of Douglas and Katmai were that year some 45 and 62 respectively, for a total of a few more than 100.

PENINSULA INTERIOR

There were two interior Alutiiq settlements, apparently no more than 20 km apart and constituting what in effect was a single community; in Russian records they were frequently lumped together as the “Severnovsk settlements” without further distinction. The first reference to them occurs in those same accounts from the first two decades of the nineteenth century that reported the Aglurmiut

3. The known Douglas site was tested archaeologically in 1953 (Davis 1954:45–56) and again in 1964 (Dumond and Nowak 1965:9–13) and found to yield only historic materials, apparently of the American period. A prehistoric site is recorded some 5 km to the south on the same broad bay, however (Dumond and Nowak 1965:43; Dumond et al. 1964:37–41).

4. The site has been known by fishery regulators as a favorite with twentieth-century poachers. When the inner bay is filled with migrating salmon, a gill net threaded around this natural fish trap permits the entire bay-full of fish to be drawn in at once (pers. comms. in the 1960s from various Bureau of Commercial Fisheries personnel).

incursion into Bristol Bay. According to these reports, the people now known as Aglurmiut had been dislodged by warfare from their homes in the Kuskokwim River region and had then moved to the head of Bristol Bay. There they forcibly occupied the mouths of the rivers Nushagak, Kvichak, Naknek, and Egegik and displaced the people of at least the latter two points southward and eastward, where some of them became known as the Severnovsk people of the upper Naknek River drainage (Wrangell [1839] 1980:64; see also Dumond 2005:47–48). More complete information came with the establishment of the Russian church in the region, the Russian priest Veniaminov referring before 1830 to “Severnovsk Aleuts,” and the Kodiak church establishment recording the baptism of forty-six people of the Severnovsk settlements in 1841 (Dumond 2005:60). Thereafter the latter settlements were visited periodically, if somewhat intermittently, by priests from the mission at Alexandrovsk Redoubt (i.e., Nushagak) near the mouth of the Nushagak River. In the 1870s a log chapel was constructed at the lower of the Severnovsk villages—a place by then referred to more specifically as Ikk or Ikkhagmiut (with some variations in spelling)—and in 1905 a chapel was added at the upper village, then known as Kanigmiut (Dumond 2005:64–65, citing Russian church documents).

Unlike the villages of the Pacific coast, neither a Russian-American Company nor an Alaska Commercial Company post was ever established at the Severnovsk villages. Rather, trade was conducted through Native traders who received goods for resale from the commercial trading posts on the Pacific coast (K. Arndt, pers. comm.). Throughout the nineteenth century, trade with nearby Alutiiq settlements on that coast was preferred by the Severnovsk people over concourse with the downriver settlements that had been in the hands of their Aglurmiut enemies; this was attested by Ivan Petroff (1884:24) following his tramp through the area as recorder for the U.S. census of 1880. There is also other evidence of the coherence of the Alutiiq or Sugpiaq people of the northern peninsula, as suggested by the indication above that the late settlement of Douglas was founded by a combination of Katmai and Severnovsk people and by repeated references in vital statistics records of the church in which people born on the coast resided at Severnovsk, and vice versa (K. Arndt, pers. comm.).

Communication between the coastal and interior areas apparently depended on two major routes (Fig. 1). One, apparently the better publicized among non-Natives, was the more southerly route across Katmai Pass connecting the Severnovsk villages with Katmai (see, for instance, Dumond 2005:71–78). A second, evidently easier although less known, was up the course of the Savonoski River, then over a relatively low pass some 2000 m lower than more formidable Katmai Pass and along a stream leading downslope to Ayu Bay (shown in modern maps as Hallo Bay). The coastal end of this route is between Kukak Bay to the south, and the site of Douglas on the north.⁵ As enumerated in the 1910 census, there were around seventy-five people in the two Severnovsk settlements—a number smaller than that of their relatives on the Pacific coast.

Given the apparently isolated location of Severnovsk, what opportunity did its people have for engagement with the industrial economy? One, of course, was the developing fishing industry of Bristol Bay. By 1890 there were both canneries and salteries located near the mouth of the Naknek River. By 1910 cannery output there had increased more than thirty fold, and by that date a hundred or more Native people found seasonal jobs, with benefits such as cannery byproducts in fish trimmings presenting an additional attraction. By then a majority of the Severnovsk people were accustomed to moving downstream to the vicinity of the fish processing establishments on Bristol Bay—in opposition to their earlier preference to deal only with Alutiiq-speaking people (Dumond 2005:83).

There was one additional factor, apparently hinging on the discovery of gold to the north of Bristol Bay, especially in the vicinity of Nome on the southern Seward Peninsula. The latter discovery occurred in 1898, and for the next two years the run was on. Most of the stampedees from the States sailed north, passing through the Aleutians and into the Bering Sea by way of Unalaska. But there were other possibilities to cut off some of that sea journey. In 1900 the preliminary report on the Nome gold region by the U.S. Geological Survey described a “well-known winter route along the coast,” which had been used “to some extent by the Russians. Starting from Katmai . . . and crossing the base of the Alaska Peninsula,” then following the coast around the eastern shore of the Bering Sea (Schrader and Brooks 1900:37). According to the major early report on

5. This information draws on a route shown in one of the sources for Figure 1, and also on interviews, especially including one in 1961 with the late Mike McCarlo, then of Savonoski village (Davis 1961).

the so-called Katmai (i.e., Novarupta) volcanic eruption of 1912, during the Nome gold rush (after 1898) traffic northward had become heavy enough through Katmai Pass to induce the Katmai trader to provide housing for transients (Griggs 1922:267). Although Katmai Pass was touted as primarily a winter route, in which travel would continue around the Bering Sea by dogsled, a still later USGS report said specifically that:

hundreds of prospectors preferred the rough trail and the fury of the winds in the pass to the long and hazardous ocean trip of 300 miles [480 km] around the end of the [Alaska Peninsula]. A bunk house was constructed at Katmai, and small boats plied Naknek Lake and Naknek River to accommodate the travelers (Smith 1925:192).

How summer travel was managed around or across the Bering Sea was not specified, however. And the only specific account I have found of prospectors' travel from east to west through Katmai Pass, this in early 1901, was indeed in winter by dogsled (Beach 1940:61–68). Even so, whether or not there was a need for boat travel across Naknek Lake and down the Naknek River—which presumably would have called on services of people of Severnovsk, who lived at the end of the overland trail from Katmai—Native people must have been involved in the traffic by foreigners, a situation that would certainly have spurred interest in a world outside of the Naknek Lake and river system. This seems to have had a particular impact on one Petr Kayagvak, a leading resident of the lower Severnovsk settlement, Ikak or Ikkhagmiut.⁶

Kayagvak, born in 1872 in the settlement of Togiak, across Bristol Bay from the Naknek region, had come to Ikkhagmiut in 1897 as guide to the Orthodox priest from the Nushagak mission, Father Vladimir Modestov. Within days Petr married a local girl, Pelagia Itug'yuk, and so remained at the Severnovsk village, where with Fr. Modestov's appointment he served as lay reader in the chapel and then as local school teacher. Near the end of the year the Kayagvak couple had a son. But in 1905 the priest visiting the village, now called Nunamiut rather than Ikkhagmiut, reported in the confessional register that Pelagia was widowed. Similar reports followed through 1909, and yet in 1910 the church records report the birth of a daughter to Petr and Pelagia (Dumond 2005:88–90). Two years later Petr was to be one of the closest witnesses

to the volcanic eruption near Katmai Pass; by then he was known as "American Pete."

What had happened in the interim? The modern family tradition is that Petr Kayagvak's nickname was acquired because of a stay in San Francisco (e.g., Nielsen 2005:note 7). How did he get to California? The known records are silent, but it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that his travel to the contiguous United States was a spin-off of the increasing involvement of Severnovsk people in the larger economy—one symptom of which was the tendency after 1900 for the people to spend summers downriver near the functioning canneries. Indeed, it is not at all unlikely that Petr's trip stemmed from contacts made during the time of Nome gold rush traffic through Katmai Pass and across Naknek Lake.

In any event, with American Pete we are led to the eruption of 1912.

CATAclysm

The active phase of the massive eruption, which was first (and erroneously) reported as emanating from Mt. Katmai itself, has been dated according to witnesses from the Pacific coastal side as occurring from June 6 to June 11, although activity on the Bristol Bay coast was reportedly more evident between June 12 and June 15, the difference apparently dependant on the winds. With prevailing wind from the west, the mass of ejecta spilled onto the Pacific coast of the peninsula and on northern Kodiak Island, whereas the coast of Bristol Bay received no more than a centimeter or two of fine ash (Fig. 2; Dumond 2005:84–85). On the coast between Katmai and Douglas pumice fell around 50 cm deep, and at Severnovsk about half that. As a result, four separate Native villages were precipitately abandoned—Douglas, Katmai, and the two Severnovsk settlements—although no lives were lost.

On the Pacific, the bulk of the population was gathered that June at Kafia Bay in preparation for the fish run; those few not present there were evidently able to flee successfully along the coast. People trapped at Kafia Bay (114 individuals in all) were picked up on June 12 by a small steamer sent from Kodiak (Partnow 2001:191). Meanwhile, across the mountains near upper Naknek Lake the Severnovsk villages had also been virtually abandoned as the bulk of the population moved to the lower

6. It is this lower settlement, site of the older Orthodox chapel, that would be known in the American period as Savonoski, or, following its abandonment, Old Savonoski.

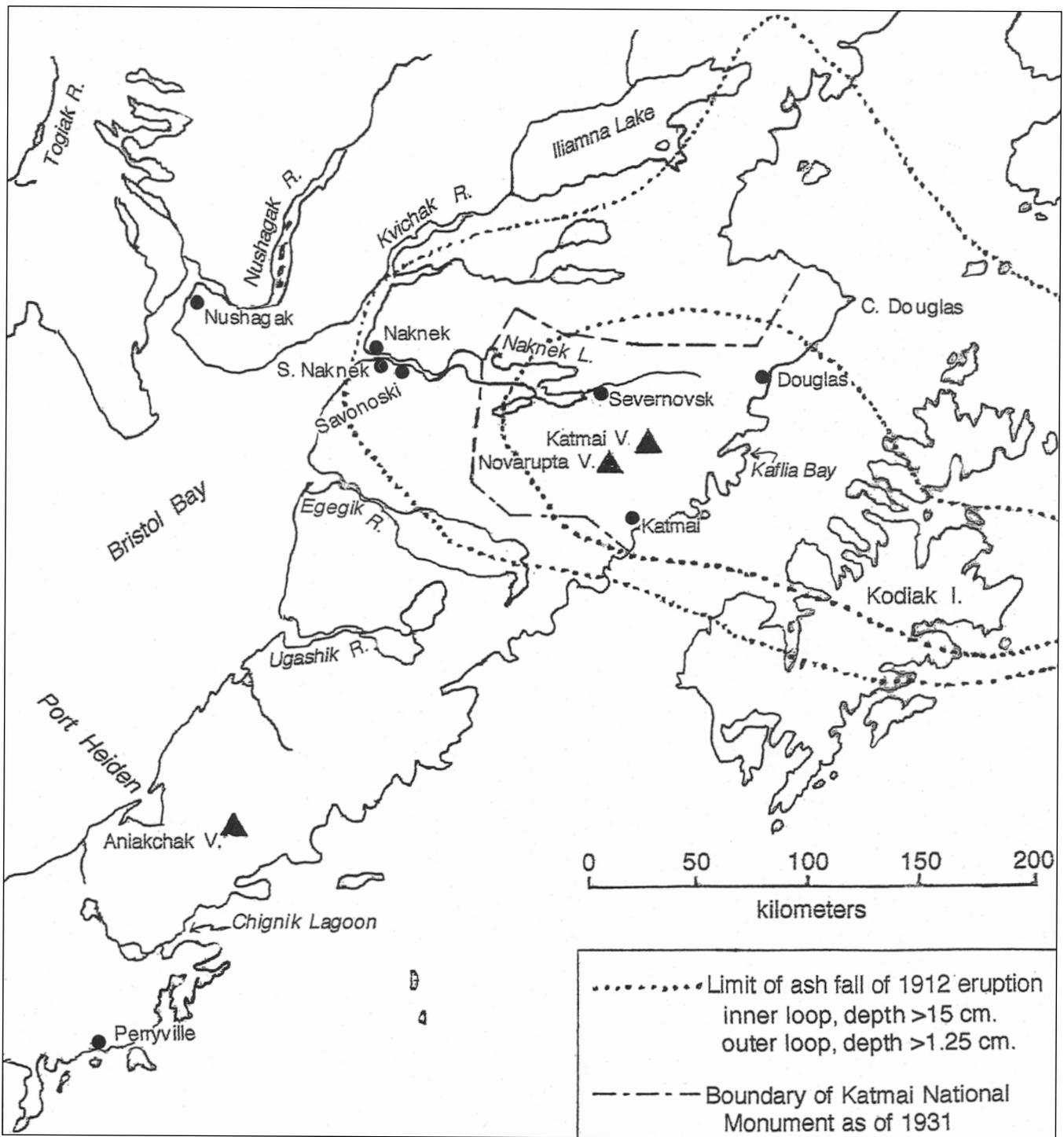


Figure 2. A portion of the Alaska Peninsula, showing major settlements mentioned in the text as well as the area of heavy tephra fallout from the eruption of 1912 (the latter based on Griggs 1922). Severnovsk represents the area of the Russian-period Severnovsk settlements, especially the major one individually designated *Ikak* and then *Nunamiut*, and still later *Old Savonoski*. Eruption fugitives established (“New”) *Savonoski* on the lower *Naknek* River.

Naknek River to await the opening of the salmon season. Of those remaining, American Pete was apparently witness to at least some of the pyrotechnics, as sand-sized pumice was ejected in the violent flow that engulfed the upper tributaries of the Ukak River. What was once a partially wooded valley was instantly turned into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. The few people still at Severnovsk fled down Naknek Lake and river in boats (Dumond 2005:86; Griggs 1922:17–19).⁷

And so, what next? Their villages swamped in pumice, people of the Pacific were taken by Revenue Service ships to their home settlements to retrieve belongings, and then most were moved southward where after a false start they were settled at the site that would become Perryville, the village name recognizing Captain K. W. Perry of the Revenue Service vessel *Manning*, the ship that provided the transport.⁸ To the west, in the summer of 1912 the Severnovsk fugitives camped as necessary along the lower Naknek River; in the fall a meeting by Native leaders from both Severnovsk and Naknek villages, moderated by the priest from Nushagak, resulted in an agreement that the newcomers would establish a settlement, a new “Savonoski,” on the Naknek River some 10 km upstream from South Naknek (Dumond 2005:87; Partnow 2001:195–198).

These displacements were permanent. Although a family or two from the new Savonoski settlement reportedly attempted not long after the eruption to move back to their former home, the pumice with its residual heat made it impossible (Davis 1961). Whatever further interest the fugitives of both inland and coastal villages may have had in returning to their homes, the establishment of Katmai National Monument inhibited repopulation; although centered on the eruption zone, the original monument of 1918 incorporated the territories of both Katmai and the Severnovsk settlements (Griggs 1922:endpaper map). In 1931, ostensibly for reasons of wildlife conservation, the monument was expanded northward to Cape Douglas, including the site of Douglas village, and westward to incorporate almost the whole of Naknek Lake (Fig. 2; Hussey 1971:422–423).

After resettlement, both Perryville and Savonoski endured for a time, but as years passed the histories of the new villages diverged. Although in both cases it is possible

to think that the involuntary shifts in location of the communities served in the long run to move their people in the direction in which they both were already headed—into further participation in the greater economy—the physical positions of the new villages alone led to differences.

THE POST-ERUPTION SETTLEMENTS

PERRYVILLE

At Perryville, the new village was relatively less isolated than had been the ancestral villages of Katmai and Douglas. Subsistence fishing and hunting, as well as trapping, were available locally as well as in the larger Ivanof Bay to the southwest, and for the first few years were sufficient to be sustaining. Importantly, no more than 90 coastal kilometers to the northeast was the Chignik River and lagoon system, with a burgeoning fishing industry. Similar fish processing centers were present only a bit farther away to the southwest on Unga Island of the Shumagin group—both of these farther away than Kafia Bay had been from the two earlier villages, but both with opportunities immeasurably greater. Although at Chignik in particular, opportunities for Natives to find work in the fishing industry were somewhat limited before the 1920s, they grew sharply thereafter. Furthermore, in the 1920s and 1930s a change in world fashions drove prices for furs higher, encouraging the establishment of family traplines on nearby lands in winter and leading to some commercial fox farming. As years passed, the pattern of seasonal cash employment developed in the Russian fur trade and continued at the Kafia Bay saltery continued with winters spent seeking fur bearers and summers in moves to Unga or Chignik (Partnow 2001:235–243).

Yet Perryville itself remained a living village. In 1914 the bell for a hoped-for church had been obtained from a wrecked ship, and thereafter lumber was acquired for the building (Partnow 2001:198), a sign of permanence. Although some people would move to hunt and later to settle on Ivanof Bay, and some would be drawn to other developing locations, in 1920 the Perryville population was still recorded as eighty-five. A grade school was established by 1922 (Partnow 2001:251), another strong influence for stability of family residence through the school

7. Much of the detail regarding the eruption and the ensuing movement of people is from USRCS (1912–13); a concise and coherent summary of events, based on these and other sources, is Hussey (1971:chap. 11).

8. The details of the selection process are unclear, as Hussey (1971:363) comments.

year. During that same decade, a new post office removed the necessity to seek postal facilities as far away as Chignik (Hussey 1971:368). In 1930 the census-enumerated population stood at ninety-three. In 1950 Perryville was recognized as a federally incorporated Native village under terms of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA), as amended for Alaska in 1936 (Perryville 1950). In 1971 the village was listed in section 11(b)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) as a Native settlement subject to the act, and by 1974 it was recognized as having an approved ANCSA village corporation named Oceanside with an enrollment of 130 (Arnold 1976:312, 333). Today the resident population is somewhat more than 100, with outside seasonal employment still economically important.

SAVONOSKI

At the new Savonoski, a major church edifice was erected in the years after the eruption, the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Kazan, as that at the Severnovsk village of Ikak, later Nunamiut, had been. At first the chapel grew by the efforts of American Pete, the old lay reader, who died around 1918. More than a year later the building was finished by Nikolai Melgenak, who in 1919 had become the second husband of Pelagia, Petr Kayagvak's widow (Dumond 2005:90). Yet not many years after 1912 the recognized headman of the settlement had moved to Naknek village, closer to active canneries on the north side of the river, where he and his wife were both listed in the original enumeration sheets of the U.S. census of 1920. Naknek in 1924 claimed the earliest school in the area, a factor that undoubtedly attracted new residents.⁹ By 1918 or 1919, the remaining Savonoski population, originally nearly 100, had dropped by half (Davis 1954:71). The year 1919 saw the local manifestation of the worldwide influenza pandemic, which Perryville was evidently spared. Thirteen Savonoski people were carried away by the sickness, a fourth of the remaining population. In the U.S. census of 1920 the Savonoski residents numbered only twenty-two.

Unlike Perryville, and despite the substantial presence of the Savonoski chapel, there was never to be a school or a post office there. Both institutions were located no closer than the developing village of South Naknek.¹⁰ Although Pelagia, now wife of Nikolai Melgenak, is credited with raising at Savonoski a number of children of her relatives, the population there continued to drop. In 1953 it was said to be nineteen (Davis 1954:7). There is no record of any attempt to establish Savonoski as a recognized Native village under the Indian Reorganization Act. Although listed in 1971 as a settlement potentially subject to land and cash distributions under ANCSA, it is not shown in the U.S. census of 1970 as a village with a population greater than twenty-five—the minimum necessary for recognition under section 11(b)(2) of ANCSA. On the other hand, nearby Naknek and South Naknek are both shown as ANCSA-eligible villages at that time (Arnold 1976:332–333).

In 1975, however, steps were taken by remaining residents to incorporate Savonoski, and an application was submitted for recognition as a smaller Native group under ANCSA section 14(h)(2) and for lands in the amount of 2,560 acres. But following investigation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs the application was ruled ineligible on the grounds that the seven people enrolled as Savonoski Incorporated and who had resided in the settlement on the crucial census date of April 1, 1970, were members of a single family and household and for that reason ineligible to form a separate Native group under Code of Federal Regulations 2653.6(a)(5). Although appealed, the decision was upheld by the Land Use Board of Appeals (IBLA 1984). Before that date, however, according to local information the settlement itself had been essentially abandoned, its remaining inhabitants moving to South Naknek in 1979 (Hodgdon 1981:7).¹¹

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

This brings the question posed at the outset: What was the effect of the displacement? At least a partial answer to this, I think, must be that despite the dislocations, trau-

9. The same former Savonoski headman and his son (listed respectively as Trefan [sic] Angasan, age 55, and Trefem Angasan, age 27) were recorded in the 1938 census as among fourteen Native residents of Naknek village north of the river (Meggitt 1938).

10. South Naknek was said to have a school in the 1930s (Meggitt 1938), which was later than the village of Naknek, although some local people recalled that a school first appeared there as late as the 1950s. The South Naknek post office was established in 1937 (Dumond 2005:99).

11. In 1984 the head of the last Savonoski family testified they had moved to South Naknek to be near the school, although he claimed to return to Savonoski in the summers (McCarlo 1984).

matic though they must have been for the Alutiiq people involved, the enforced settlement changes served in both cases to further movement along the pathway the Native inhabitants of the villages had already shown evidence of choosing: toward ever-greater participation in a world economy. Although antiquarians and nativists may lament this change, it is simply the taking up of the work of modern people in a modern world. Thus, in at least one sense the dislocation may have sped the people on their inevitable way.

But there is also an obvious contrast. Between the bases of Savonoski and Perryville there is the matter of relative isolation. Perryville, on one hand, was sufficiently isolated to make its selection as a location for schools and postal services entirely reasonable, the school in particular then promoting permanence of settlement. The recognition of Perryville as a Native village, first under the IRA and later under ANCSA, cemented these tendencies. Thus one can argue that the degree of isolation of Perryville with its relative maintenance of population was a factor in the community's continued existence.

Savonoski, on the other hand, was close to industrially developing communities that tended to draw people away almost immediately, and at the same time its nearness to those facilities inhibited its selection as a location for a school or post office. Policies of the U.S. government were involved in disallowing Native village status to Savonoski, of course, but in crucial interplay with these was the steady decline in resident population. This was what ultimately caused Savonoski to be eliminated from eligibility for some of the centralizing institutions that Perryville achieved.

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