

THE PELAGIA STORY

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THE PELAGIA STORY

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
Of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2005

ABSTRACT

The Pelagia Melgenak Story is a qualitative case study and history of Pelagia¹ Melgenak, a Sugpiaq Alaska Native culture bearer who was the matriarch of the family of the author. Ms. Melgenak was born July 21, 1879¹ in Old Savonoski, Alaska. She left her home after the 1912 eruption of Mt. Novarupta, in what is now Katmai National Park, and lived most of her life in a new site on the Naknek River near South Naknek, named New Savonoski. Until her death in 1974, she passed on stories, songs, customs and traditions that link contemporary Sugpiat to their pasts. This story documents her life and is a significant part of Sugpiat history and culture of the Alaska Peninsula. It is written largely for the younger brothers and sisters, children, grandchildren, and other relatives of the author as well as descendants of Katmai. It is also for those who wish to understand the bonds of kinships, shared tradition, and spiritual connection to the land that existed during the lifetime of Pelagia Melgenak and the continuation of the tribal community that adheres to the values she believed in.

¹ Katherine Arndt's translations (1998) of the Russian Orthodox Church records reports Pelagia Melgenak's birth as 1879. Prior to Arndt's translation, her family believed that she was born in 1877.

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DEDICATION



Figure 1. Vera Kie Angasan and Trefon Angasan 1948 (Vera Angasan).

I dedicate this work to the memory of my father Trefon Angasan II (1910-1988) who constantly reminded his children to remember their Sugpiaq ethnicity, and to my mother Vera Kie Angasan, now 80 years young, who continues to be an inspirational tradition bearer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the people who supported my efforts during my lifelong quest for formal education.

Thank you to my husband Donald Fredrick Nielsen whose encouragement spurred me onward when I became doubtful of my own capabilities.

Honorable mention goes to my daughters Lorianne Rawson, Eva Nielsen-King, and son Donald Nielsen II who "assumed" I would earn a masters degree.

Thanks to my grandchildren as well, who learned to be quiet during my teleconference classes. Now two grandchildren are in college. Lorianne Abruska studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and Joseph D. Abruska II attends the Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe, New Mexico. High school sophomore grandson Paul Abruska, 16, recently moved from Santa Fe, N. M. to Bristol Bay High School (BBHS) in Naknek. George King III is a senior at BBHS. Recently, his 2005 graduating class chose George as their class speaker for the graduation ceremony in May. While George was in 5th grade, he and his friend Ben Mack came to my house in South Naknek during one of my teleconferences. I heard him say, *"We have to be quiet; my Grandma is going to college."* After his second grade class day ended, grandson Rytter Nielsen King followed me to the

elementary school and patiently waited outside while I took my proctored math test. Rytter is now a freshman at BBHS. The youngest grandson, Bjorn King, is 13 years old. Granddaughter, Isabella Nielsen, 5 years old, lives in Alsea, Oregon, and loves her kindergarten class. My hope is to instill lifelong learning by example.

Thank you to my brother Theodore (Fred T. Angasan, Sr.), and to Teddy Melgenak who helped me with the oral tradition.

Thank you to my nephew Ralph Angasan, Jr. who wrote the story, "*It Was a Good Life*," an interview with my father Trefon Angasan, Sr. which appeared in the 1985, Oral History Program, then annually produced *Uutuqtwa*.

I am thankful for Peggy Wood, who was the Director of the Bristol Bay Campus in Dillingham during the years I worked on earning my baccalaureate degree. I had commented that I would be in my late 50's, if and when, I earned a masters degree. Peggy said, "Well, you could be 59 and not have it."

Dorothy Pelagio Larson, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) class of 1995, and Marie Greene, class of 1997, both Rural Developments students, showed me that "It could be done" (UAF Rural Development Website).

I express gratitude and *memory eternal*² for the mentorship of Martha Demientieff, 71, who died July 28, 2004. She was Alutiiq. (Used interchangeably with Sugpiaq; hereafter I will use Sugpiaq, except in direct quotes). As a child, along with her three other siblings, Martha had lived with my father Trefon Angasan and his first wife Okalena in South Naknek, during her mother Katia Andrei McCain's hospitalization. I met Martha for first time at a *Looking Both Ways*³ museum exhibit-planning meeting in 1996. She graduated from UAF with honors in 1986 and in 1992, graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University School of Education, earning her masters degree from Harvard University in cross-cultural education (Hayes, 2004).

I thank my committee for their support. They are Gordon Pullar, George Charles, Larry Dickerson, Richard Caulfield and Patricia Partnow.

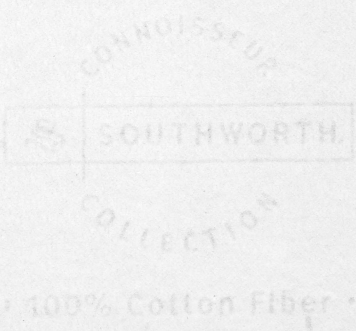
I acknowledge the assistance, and express my gratitude to Aron Crowell of the Arctic Studies Center in Anchorage, Alaska, Jeanne Schaaf, Dale Vinson, and Barbara Bundy of the Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center, also in Anchorage.

² The Russian Orthodox faithful proclaim "memory eternal" for their passed away loved ones.

³ Sven Haakanson, Sr., Kodiak Island Elder from Old Harbor who said, "You've got to look back to find out the past, and then you look forward." (Crowell, 1997).

Thank you to Helen Simeonoff for sharing her experience and knowledge with me.

Katherine Arndt and Don Dumond were gracious in sharing their information with me and for that, I am grateful.



INTRODUCTION

I remember when I was a young girl in Savonoski, a long time ago. We were just cleaning ducks and the game warden came. Pelagia was talking Native to him and I guess that he told them that they can't hunt those ducks no more. That old lady, Pelagia, she followed him with the duck in her hand, shaking it at him and talking Native. She bawled him out. And the game warden got scared and left. We never seen him again (Macauly 1996.)⁴

- Vera Kie Angasan

My mother Vera Angasan's quote above illustrates the character and courage of Pelagia Melgenak. Grown men were fearful of the game warden.

The motivation for writing this work as a thesis is in fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree requirement. This emic case study is about Pelagia Melgenak who was the matriarch of our family, and the community in which she lived. Pelagia was more than the family matriarch. So well regarded was Pelagia that people from communities far, and near visited, and paid their respect to her.

⁴ Taken from Vera Angasan, as told to Margie Macauly-Waite in an interview for the 1996 Bristol Bay Native Corporation Annual Report Volume 7.

Research from the Internet and from literary and archival sources provides the technical information.

Primary sources were my father, Trefon Angasan (now deceased) and my mother Vera Kie Angasan, Teddy Melgenak, Nick Melgenak's grand nephew, and my oldest brother Fred Theodore Angasan, Sr. I have also used personal knowledge from living with Grandma Pelagia as well as from sources from individuals who had known her.

One primary source, my own experiences with and about Pelagia and her relationship to our cultural heritage, is described in my article *The Spirits Are Still there: Memories of Katmai Country*, written for *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People* (Crowell, Pullar, Steffian 2001).

Novarupta and Katmai blew up in 1912, when my father Trefon Angasan was two years old. The eruption forced an evacuation of all the villagers of Katmai Country. The Villagers from Grosvenor and Savonoski crossed Naknek Lake and went down the Naknek River; taking refuge in a new place, they named New Savonoski. Those villagers eventually moved to South Naknek and beyond. Our relatives on the Shelikof Strait side of Katmai from the villages of Katmai and Douglas moved to safer places. Most went to Perryville, named after the captain of the ship that transported them there.

Descendents of Katmai eventually moved to various parts of the Alaska Peninsula or Kodiak and are now all over the world.

My parents, Vera Kie from Ugashik and Trefon Angasan, from Old Savonoski had 10 children. The first three of us, Fred Theodore Angasan, Sr., I, Mary Jane Nielsen, and Trefon Angasan, Jr., were born in New Savonoski. My brothers and sisters in order from the older to youngest are: Fred Theodore Angasan, Sr., myself, Mary Jane Nielsen, Trefon Angasan, Jr., Ralph Angasan, Sr., Katherine Rose Groat, Vera Viola Savo, Val Nick Angasan, Martin Edward Angasan, Sr., Steven William Angasan, Sr., and Anishia Joan Elbie.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A kinship link to the past, the story of our *olden days*, will be lost if this story is not told. I am realizing that my generation holds an important link to the history of the Savonoski people. My older brother, Fred T. Angasan, Sr. and I, both soon to be in our sixties, spent most of our early childhood with Grandma Pelagia. The sole additional person who remembers her stories and oral history is her 68-year-old great-nephew Teddy Melgenak. Teddy's mother Mary was Nick Melgenak's (Pelagia's second husband) niece. My mother Vera Kie Angasan, now 80, lives in King Salmon, Alaska

and is one of three living orphaned children that Pelagia reared to adulthood. The other, Arsenia Melognok, also 80, now lives in Newhalen, Alaska.

Shared traditions of Savonoski people, some no longer used, and some still in use today will be lost if not documented from living people who remember their oral tradition.

Bonds of kinship and community are inherent in our ethnicity. For example, Grandma Pelagia was in reality my father's great aunt. My grandmother, the mother of my father Trefon, Ekaterina Shul'iak, was the daughter of Tatiana, Pelagia's older sister (Arndt, 2000). By example, he taught us to treat her with the absolute respect. Young and old alike lined up to greet her with a kiss.

Like indigenous people all over the world, the descendants of Katmai, including those from the villages of Katmai, Douglas (Kaguyak), and Old Savonoski, have strong ties to their ancestral lands. This sense of place is an important part of our heritage.

Keith Basso, a University of New Mexico anthropologist who has worked among the Apache in Cibecue, Arizona, wrote about the importance of the senses of place and the connections of the Apache

culture to place in *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Basso, 1996).

The meaning of place has implications for others as well, as indicated by Karen Brewster's interview with Nancy Yaw Davis (1999), for the University of Alaska Jukebox Project, about Sitka. Yaw Davis comments on how oral history, "enhances one's own identity....This interview provoked childhood flashbacks and a reflection on the meaning of place that she felt would not have happened otherwise."

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

I write this case study from a very deep and personal perspective as a member of Pelagia's Sugpiaq family in order to preserve and document a part of our Katmai country heritage. Research, memories, and stories, brought me back to a time long past when life was measured by compassion and sharing and time measured by passing seasons. Publications, legal transcripts, and interviews with those who knew Pelagia are interspersed with memories, recollections, narratives and rituals that were important parts of her life.

Tragic events and "debauchery," as recorded by a visiting priest are not ignored (Dumond, 2005). Throughout Sugpiaq history, the introduction

of newcomers traveling through the villages and introduction of alcohol has had dire consequences. I prefer to focus on the healing effect of the words of Sven Haakanson, Sr., (now deceased) of Old Harbor on Kodiak Island. The title of the Smithsonian museum exhibition, *Looking Both Ways* came from his quote, "You've got to look back and find out the past and then you look forward," (Crowell, 2001).

The great tradition- and culture-bearer Pelagia Melgenak influenced and played an important role in the lives of the many people who knew her. This study is also significant in that it documents how her legacy affects us today as we attempt to carry out our own responsibilities in cultural preservation. This is a connection to a place that has endured for at least 4,500 years (Pierce, 1995). A Mink Island artifact on the Katmai coast is dated to 7,000 years ago (Schaaf, 2005). As for Kodiak Sugpiat, this is a connection to a "culture that is 7000 years old," (Pullar and Knecht, 1995).

CHAPTER ONE – THE SUGPIAQ PEOPLE

Despite the geographic separation of Sugpiaq population, our ethnicity remains through teachings of Grandma Pelagia and my father Trefon Angasan Sr., who told us to "remember that we are Sugpiaq." I understood the significance of this admonition only after I reached adulthood and had children and grandchildren. I realized I could no longer speak fluent Sugcestun,⁵ nor were there many fluent speakers of what my mother calls, "Grandma's language." Like many other communities, South Naknek is a melting pot of ethnicities, but predominantly Sugpiaq. Despite loss of language, our shared traditions, bonds of kinship and ties to the land remain, so that practice of these intrinsic values is still part of our heritage. For example, hunters who are descendants of Savonoski people still cut off a minute tip of the heart and throw it upward to thank the caribou for giving itself to them.

Who are we? The Russian colonists called us and other people encountered on the Aleutian Chain, Alaska Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak Island, "Aleuts." We used a label given to us by someone else.

⁵ The language of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq.

In answer to the question posed to the UAA Aleut List Serve asking "What is the difference between Unangan and Aleut," one respondent wrote:

Kdam Idigaa asaġ, Atġam ilagaan angiġ takuq. My name is Crystal Swetzof and I am from Atka. I personally am Unangaġ and have given this matter much thought. About 10 years ago, I had a similar question. Since then I have done searching into the issue and have read about how the term 'Aleut' came about. A group of us, who were living in Atka at the time, researched the matter, consulted Elders and has had a number of discussions about it. What I have learned is that the difference between 'Aleut' and 'Unangaġ' (notice here it is spelled with an 'ġ' at the end and not an 'n') is that the word 'Aleut' is foreign to our language and was introduced by outsiders; it is generally accepted that this term was unknown to our people before contact. Of course, the actual word used by the Russians was a different Russianized version of the word 'Aleut' - the Americans were the ones who took the word they heard from Russian and turned it into its present form.

I will end with a thought on the word 'Aleut'. As I said, it is generally accepted to be a word foreign to our person, that was introduced post-contact. It has resulted in much confusion

because there are people in other parts of Alaska beside the Aleutian chain that call themselves 'Aleut'. This is because the Russians did not reserve this term only for the Unangaġ, they applied it to any group of people that resembled the Unangaġ in any way. They saw the people further up the peninsula, along the coast, the island of Kodiak and the tip of the Kenai Peninsula, perhaps as far as what is present day Cordova, and to the North, to some of the people in the area of Bristol Bay. The Russians at that time did not immediately stop to consider that our peoples had different languages and different cultures; what they saw was that our peoples looked similar because we wore similar types of clothing and used similar kayaks and they mistakenly thought that we were all the same people. Since they used the term 'Aleut' for these different groups, we cannot say that one group has the 'rights' to the term 'Aleut' over any other group. The Russians freely gave it to many groups. There are those of us who are only too glad to hand over that foreign word to whomever wants it; our belief is that our own name, Unangaġ, was good enough for our ancestors for thousands of years and it is more than good enough for us (Retrieved from aleut-l@lists.uaa.alaska.edu, January 6, 2005).

Likewise, "Because of the close linguistic relationship with the Inuit people of the Arctic, anthropologists have often classified the Alutiiq as Eskimos—a label that the Alutiiq strenuously object to" (Pullar and Knecht, 1995).

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Geographically, the Sugpiat extend through four regions of Alaska: Kodiak Island, Prince William Sound, the Lower Cook Inlet, and the Alaska Peninsula. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act signed on December 18, 1971 by President Richard Nixon separated us into the Koniag Regional Corporation, Chugach Corporation, Cook Inlet, and Bristol Bay Native Corporation. Despite the geographic separation, we have a tribal community. These stories embody the values of that community.

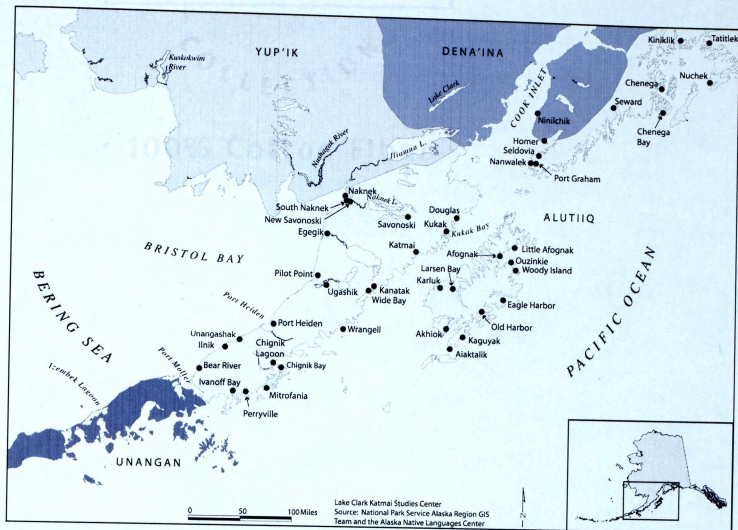
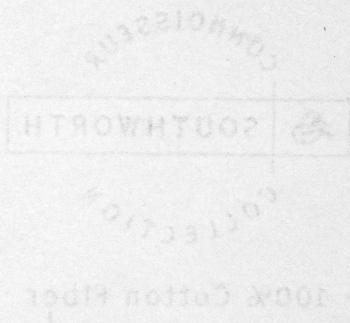


Figure 2. Alutiiq Villages (B. Bundy, Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center).

The continuity of community was evident in the two Alutiiq conferences that I attended at Kodiak in preparation for the *Looking Both Ways* museum exhibition. My mother Vera Angasan also went there. Her pleasure was evident as she joined in the discussions and laughed at Sugpiaq humor. I learned first hand at that conference that humor was one of the Alutiiq values (retrieved March 26, 2005 at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Values.alutiiq.html>). I had not heard my mother

laugh so much in such a very long time as I did at those conferences at Kodiak.



CHAPTER TWO – MEMORIES OF OLD SAVONOSKI

We traveled to Kittiwick in our boats late in the fall of the 1970. Theodore used his fishing boat and towed a smaller skiff behind. My family was in a large converted skiff with a cabin. We spent a day walking with our small children up to Brooks Falls and showed our children where the tents and fish racks once stood at Kittiwick.

Old Savonoski Village on the Savonoski River at the end of Iliuk Arm beckoned, so my brother Theodore and my husband Donald took their young families up to visit. As we took a rest stop close to the Ukak River delta, we walked toward the tree line looking for high bush cranberries. We saw a lone wolf watching us from a distance. A lone wolf had appeared at nearly the same place when we had traveled up earlier as teenagers. We were welcomed back to the land of our ancestors.

Theodore reminisced about the stories that our father Trefon and Grandma Pelagia told about Old Savonoski. I also remember my father talking, possibly about oral tradition he had heard, or things he had seen early in his life. For example, he spoke of the nets made of sinew, using fish skins, any kind of skin you could get, including intestines for bags and clothing. I recall wooden spoons still used at times in New Savonoski, but my father said "they" had spoons and plates made of wood (Angasan, 1985).

Grass had grown so high at Old Savonoski that we had to hold our small children, Lorianne, Eva Marie and Donald II by the hand to walk toward the remnants of the Old St. Mary's Chapel. Theodore and his wife Ida did the same with their children, Little Ted, Robbie and Barry. Nonetheless, were happy to be at the place my father was born. We did not know that this was the last trip we would make to the Old Savonoski Village by watercraft. Since then, silt and fine pumice have shifted; along with remnants of old tree sweepers in Savonoski River to make it less accessible by boat. We have tried many times since then, to no avail.

The multi-village complex located east of the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake was known in the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records variously as Severnovsk, Ikhiak, Ikhagmiut, Nanmiut, and Kanigamiut. (Dumond, 1986).

THE EARLY YEARS

At the start of the earthquakes and subsequent eruption, the villagers knew through oral tradition, to gather water. Father Hariton Kaiakokonak (Father Harry), a child in Katmai at the time of the eruption, stated that an old man started yelling,

Put away as much water as you can and store it, preserve it.

Wherever ashes come down there will be no water to drink

anywhere... Turn your boats upside down. They will be filled with ash. He knows everything, that old fellow.¹ (Schaaf, 2004).

"Grandma Pelagia said they thought the end of the world was coming when the mountain started erupting," Teddy Melgenak told Pat Partnow, interviewer for the oral history program Jukebox: Katmai Villages, in 1995.

Firestein, who is a geologist at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) at their Menlo Park, California office, wrote:

The eruption started on June 6, 1912 following days of strong earthquakes. Over a period of three days, the earth belched 15 cubic kilometers (four cubic miles) of ash that was seen and recorded around the world. The eruption was heard 750 miles away in Juneau (Firestein, 1984).

Griggs describes the presence of ash on the continent of Africa:

During the month of June in Algeria, scientists who were observing solar radiation were dismayed to see a peculiar haze that

¹ Michael Tollefson interview with Khariton (Hariton) Kaiakvagnak (Kaiakokonak), April 29, 1975, on file at the Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center, Anchorage.

continued until the expedition left in September according to Griggs (1922).

At the start of the earthquakes, perhaps sensing impending disaster, Peter Kayagvak, known as American Pete⁷, had gone to a hunting camp on the nearby Ukak River to retrieve some of his hunting gear. American Pete described the event.

The Katmai Mountain blew up with lots, of fire, and fire came down the trail with lots of smoke. We go fast Savonoski. Everybody get in bidarka (skin boat). Helluva job. We come Naknek one day, dark, no could see. Hot ash fall. Work like hell (Griggs, 1922).

Clemons and Norris, historians for the Katmai National Park Service, wrote that most of the villagers of Savonoski were in Naknek working or looking for employment in the fishery (Clemons & Norris, 1999). Thus began the retreat to the Naknek River site that the refugees named New Savonoski.

Then followed years of yearning for the ancestral homelands, after attempting to go back to live. Grandma Pelagia spoke of the trauma of eruption and moving to a new place many years later. Griggs also wrote about an interview with American Pete. P. Hagleberger of the National

⁷ According to family oral history, Pelagia Melgenak's first husband, Pete Kayagvak, became known as American Pete after a trip to San Francisco.

Geographic expedition of 1918 who interviewed him at the new Savonoski settlement obtained the following quote from American Pete:

Too bad. Never can go back to Savonoski to libe (sic) again.

Everything ash. Good Place too, you bet. Fine trees, lots of moose, bear and deer. Lots of Fish in front of barabara. No many mosquitoes. Fine church, fine house (Griggs, 1922).

It was not only the ash that made it impossible to return, but because United States President Woodrow Wilson declared the area a National Monument in 1918, which closed it as a permanent home to the indigenous people who once called the Katmai country villages home.

Hussey, who wrote *Embattled Katmai: History of Katmai National Monument* (1991), writes about efforts former Old Savonoski residents made to continue living there:

It was reported that two families, more determined than the rest, remained at Old Savonoski for a year, before dust and heat drove them back to Bristol Bay . . . But they were not really happy away from the mountains. Some tried to go back to their homes, but they like Mrs. Pelagia Melgenak who found her store covered with ashes, had to give up such hopes (Hussey, 1971).

At Cold Bay, explorer Jack Lee's partner C. L. Boudry wrote in his diary on November 23, 1912:

The volcano are still raising cane . . . I will try to go here in the winter or spring but can't make it now. I try 3 times. Cannot see nothing (sic) for smoke and after you are 10 or 12 miles the acid raise hell...the acid burne (sic) the close (sic) you got on and raise blister (sic) on your hands (Griggs, 1922).

Later, my father Trefon spoke about going back every year. He spoke about trying to take a bath in the river. "You had to dig a hole on the side of the river. The river water was too hot. Some people cooked their food in the water." (Angasan, 1985).

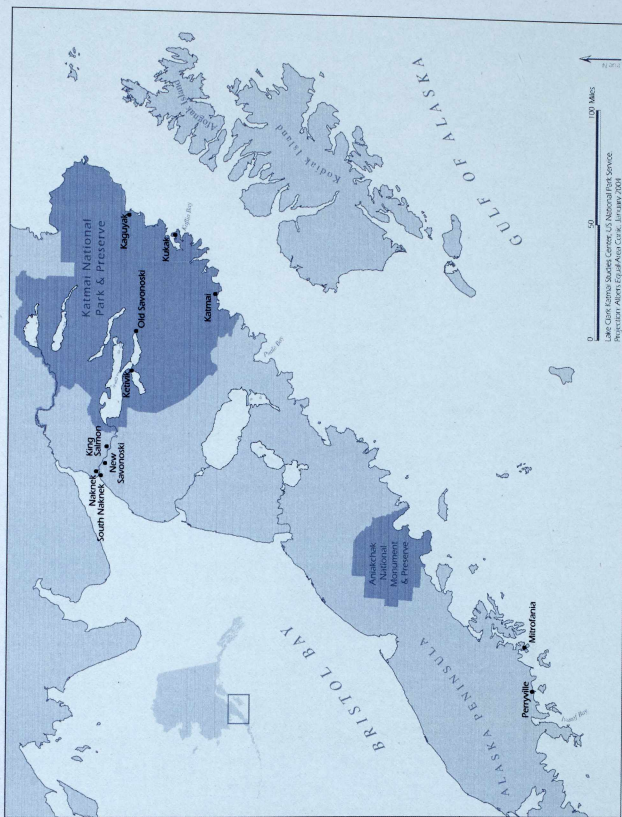


Figure 3. Alaska Peninsula (B. Bundy, Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center).

This map shows the proximity of the villages on the Alaska Peninsula to Kodiak Island and the rest of the state of Alaska.

CHAPTER THREE – PELAGIA MELGENAK

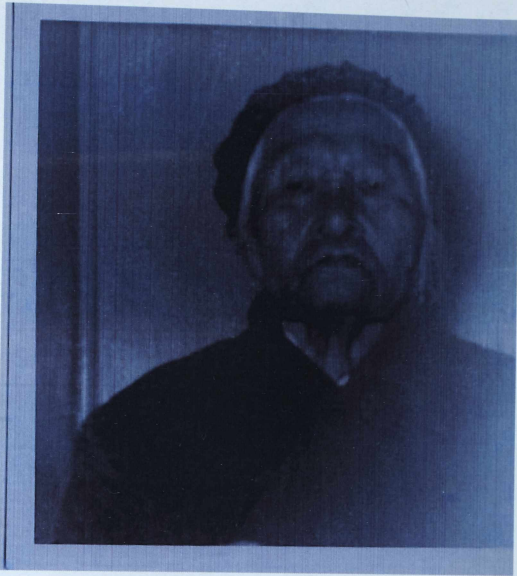


Figure 4. Pelagia Melgenak 1877 or 1879-1972 (Vera Angasan).

Pelagia Ityg'iuK was born to Vasily Ityg'iuK and his wife Mariya in 1879 (Arndt, 1998). Before the year of birth obtained from Russian Orthodox Church records by Fairbanks Alaska historian and anthropologist Arndt, (1998) our family used the birth date of July 21, 1877. This is what Pelagia believed. This date is inscribed on her burial cross at New Savonoski as well.

Pelagia married American Pete when she was 17 years old. While they were at Savonoski, two of their children, Elisaveta and Feodor died (Arndt, 1998). Approximately 40 years later in New Savonoski, the eldest child in my family, my brother Fred Theodore Angasan, Sr. whose baptismal name is Feodor, was born and named after their son.

According to Grandma Pelagia, The remains of Feodor, Elisaveta, and Marina were buried at Old Savonoski. As a child, I remember looking at pictures of Taata⁸ standing by newly painted crosses in the Old Savonoski churchyard. National Park Service historian Norris wrote:

During the 1930s, Interior department officials had become aware that Natives from New Savonoski had been visiting the Savonoski River Valley every summer since 1918, both to hunt and to tend the graves of their ancestors (Norris, 1996).

From McKinley National Park Service superintendent Frank T. Been's 1940 field notes, Norris (1996) also cites that "Natives in the Naknek area still visit the area from time to time, and groups have made several recent attempts to bury family members at Old Savonoski."

In my father Trefon Angasan, Sr.'s testimony at the Pelagia

⁸ Sugcestun word for father. The name we called Pelagia's second husband, Nick Melgenak.

Melgenak's Native Allotment hearing in September 1985, he reported that American Pete died in 1918. He stated that Pelagia married Nick Melgenak in 1919. The second husband of Grandma Pelagia finished the church that American Pete had started soon after the move to New Savonoski. My mother, Vera Angasan believes the church was finished sometime around 1919 (personal communication 1999).

The church still stands today, although falling into disrepair. Even in inclement winter weather when the trail to Savonoski is frozen, villagers of South Naknek continue to travel there to cover up the church windows to keep the elements out. Carvel Zimin, Sr. from South Naknek put in new windows in 1995. The St. Mary's Orthodox Chapel still stands in mute testimony of the enduring spirit and faith of the people.

Visitors to the village first went to pay homage to both Taata and Grandma before visiting any other homes. Their house was the largest in the village. The steam bathhouse, called a *banya* in Russian and in Alaska Peninsula Sugcestun called a *maqiwik*, stood close by their home. There were three caches on stilts, a small generator house for electricity, a smoke house, and a dog yard for Taata's dog-team. A boardwalk connected all of the buildings.

Taata said he was born in Douglas on the Katmai coast side of the Shelikof Strait in 1892. The ancient village is shown on the map as Kaguyak. However, a March 16, 2005 email from Dumond indicates that Melgenak's death certificate dated June 13, 1953 says he died at age 61 from tuberculosis, and lists his place of birth is given as "Sevanoski (sic) village."



Figure 5. Taata and Theodore c.1942 (Sarafima Vansant).

This photo, taken at New Savonoski, shows Taata taking Theodore off the dilapidated porch of an old cache. Note Taata's missing right arm. "He was out hunting at King Salmon Creek (ptarmigan). His gun lay in the dogsled. When he reached for it, the gun went off and shot his arm," (Hodgdon, 1981).

Although he lost his arm, he was not considered handicapped. Taata continued hunting, fishing and providing leadership to the village.

In 1996, I accompanied Jeanne Schaaf, the Lake Clark Katmai National Park Cultural Resource Manager, to Kaguyak. After looking over the tourist camp on land leased from the Russian Orthodox Church, Schaaf marked a new trail away from the ancient subterranean dwelling indentations.

The people built semi-subterranean houses, which were built partially in the ground, supported by wooden posts and had log cribbed roofs. The structures were then covered with mud and sod (Clemons & Norris 1999).

As time passes, the decaying wood frame collapses and leaves a depression in the ground. Schaaf and I walked through the ancient indentations and up to the church. Although overgrown with birch trees, it was easy to find. Orthodox churches are rectangular and are built with the altar area toward the east.

As I stood in the rectangular church depression, emotion so overcame me that I had to pull my sweatshirt up over my face. I heard, or *imagined I heard* people singing the liturgy in *Sugcestun*, as Grandma and Taata had sung in the New Savonoski church (Partnow, 2001).



Figure 6. Fog over New Savonoski Village (J. and A. Littau).

In the above photo, New Savonoski Village is located in the center, on the far side of the Naknek River.

EARLY MEMORIES OF NEW SAVONOSKI

Five homes at New Savonoski were occupied at the time of my first memories. They belonged to my father's maternal uncle Nickolai Golia Panakan and his wife Tatiana, Gregory Tretikoff, Taata and Grandma Pelagia Melgenak, Andrew Wassillie, his wife Agafia Tretifoff Wassillie and

their children Natalia and Jackie (Jakov). Mike Takota McCarlo and his wife Katia, their children, Mishka (Mike Jr.), and Effie lived in the fifth occupied home. Peter McCarlo, Teddy Melgenak's younger brother, also lived with Mike and Katia. Platona, Teddy's other younger brother, lived with Grandma and Taata. Tony, as he came to be called, was sent away to a hospital when he was five years old, never to return. Later, in the latter 1970s, I was to see my old playmate in Anchorage before he passed away.

One morning when I woke up, I heard Grandma Pelagia talking, giving orders to people. It must have been 1948. I was three years old. After waking in Grandma's room, I went out into the living room area of the house. Grandma Pelagia brought my brother Theodore and me out to the porch to *air wash* ourselves. This spiritual cleansing ritual consisted of running our hands over our heads, faces, arms, torsos, and legs as if we were bathing with air. Facing the church on the hill, we made the sign of the cross upon ourselves. Then we went inside to wash in the conventional way with a basin, soap, and water. Thereafter, Taata or Grandma lined us up to face east toward the icon corner to say our prayers in Russian Slavonic, which we had learned from both of them. When we went home, our parents reminded us to say our prayers as they

stood by and listened. They smiled with pride, as we said the prayers they both continued to say as adults.

Each of us had a special prayer. My oldest brother Theodore's (prayer) was the Lord's Prayer:

Otce nas, ize jesi na nebesich, da svjatitsja Imnja Tvoje, da priidet carstvije Tvoje, da budet vol'a Tvoja, jako na nebesi, i na zemli. Chlib nas nasuscny dazd' nam dbes i ostavi nam dolhi nasa, jako i my ostavl'ajem dolznikom nasim, i nevvedninas vo iskusenije: no izbavi nas ot lukavaho. Jako Tvoje jest'Carstvo, isina, i slava vo viki, Amin (Duchnovic, 1947).

My prayer was glorifying the Virgin Mary as the mother of our savior:

Bohorodice, Divo radujsja, obradovannaja Marije. Hospod s toboju. Blahoslovenna ty v zenach, iblahosloven plod creva tvojeho. Jako rodila jesi Christa Spasa, izvayitel'a dusam nasim (Duchnovic, 1947).

We would both begin with, "In the name of the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, 'Vo imja Otca I Syna, i Svajataho Ducha,'" and end with "Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen, 'Slava Otcu, i Synu, i svjatomu Duchu, in nyni i prison i vo viki vikov, Amin,'" (Duchnovic, 1947).

When Trefon Jr. was able to talk, his prayer was just that.

Russian Orthodoxy was introduced in 1794 at Old Harbor, on Kodiak Island. By 1843, there was a chapel built in Katmai. Katherine Arndt, a historian and anthropologist contracted by the National Park Service, did an ethnographic study of the Katmai Alutiiq villages. According to Arndt, who is referenced by Clemons and Norris in 1999, in the Katmai Historic Resource Study *Building In An Ashen Land*, "the priests who went to Savonoski held services in a tent; the first chapel was not built until 1877," Arndt also found that the Kodiak mission records 46 baptisms in Savonoski in 1841 (Clemons and Norris, 1999).

Both of Pelagia's husbands had been readers in the church. My father, Trefon Angasan said that Grandma taught both of them to read Slavonic⁹ for the church services and *Cyrillic*¹⁰ for the *Sugcestun* prayers and liturgy. Later, when I had learned to read English, I looked at Taata's book expecting to see *Sugcestun* sounded out in English letters. I remember how surprised I was that he was reading what I thought was Russian. It wasn't until anthropologist and researcher Lydia Black brought a *Sugcestun* prayer book to the Kodiak Alutiiq Conference in 1997, that I learned it was Cyrillic.

⁹ However, Don Domond (2005) writes that Pete Kayagvak taught Russian at the school in Old Savonoski according to the priest Father Modestov.

¹⁰ Greek alphabet used for church Slavonic and *Sugpiaq* liturgy.

Taata was the reader and led the church services. During holidays Paul and Anna Chukan, and their granddaughter Katherine (now Katherine Brown), would sometimes travel up from Naknek. Anna Chukan was Taata's niece. Several South Naknek people also arrived for the occasion. Excitement was in the air as we scurried toward the church while bells rang. Taata's light plant provided electric lights on poles along the boardwalk, up the stairs on the hill to the church, and in the church building.

Taata and Grandma were the spiritual leaders. The early Russian Orthodox Church imposed gender separation. Grandma sat at the left front along with all of her godchildren, with other women behind her on the side where the icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ child hung. Taata stood at the readers stand at the right of the altar doors facing an icon of Christ. All of the men and boys stood behind him. Now, in modern times, it does not matter on which side a male or female stands.

The priests rarely traveled to the village of New Savonoski, because they had to cover such great distances and served many villages. The people took it upon themselves to carry on the religion. Volunteer readers learned the church readings from the Bible and songs handed down by memory. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Father Sergey Repin, stationed

in Egegik, served the Naknek, South Naknek and Savonoski areas. He also went to New Savonoski for Easter services. People would travel from Naknek, South Naknek, Levelock, and from as far as Igiugig and Iliamna to New Savonoski for the services (F.T. Angasan, personal communication 2002).

Demytrysyn, in a circa 1840-1845 report on the Russian American Colonies wrote a directive to Toion who were to become starshinas (elders/church wardens, or readers) in the Aleut settlements in the Kodiak Department:

The starshina must be firm in having the Aleut men and women fulfill their Christian obligations and carry out all tasks assigned to them by the priest. Toward this end, each settlement is to build a chapel, through its own effort, where the priest can conduct worship services when he visits. They should build the chapel when time and circumstances permit, after the settlement has been organized and put into order (Clemens & Norris, 1999).

In some Sugpiaq communities, the reader and the *starista*¹¹

¹¹ This is the Alaska Peninsula pronunciation from Christensen, M. Lind, D., Phillips, R., Phillips, T., and Sam, M. (1997) *Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq Workbook*.

(churchwarden) were separate people. In the New Savonoski settlement Taata (Nick Melgenak) was also the village *toyuq*¹¹ (first chief) as well as the reader. Mike McCarlo was the *sakaasiik*¹² or second chief. McCarlo, Teddy Melgenak's biological father was from Grosvenor (McCarlo called it), a village above Old Savonoski, near what is now Lake Grosvenor. Gregory Tretikoff was the *starista* (T. Melgenak, personal communication January 7, 2003). Pullar and Knecht (1995) also discuss these community positions in Chaussonett's *Crossroads Alaska: Native Cultures of Alaska and Siberia*. Similarly, Pullar and Knecht (1995) write:

Once each Alutiiq village was governed by a chief (*Toyuq*), a second chief (*Sukashiq*¹³), a third chief (*staristaq*) who was the lay reader of the village's Russian Orthodox Church, and a council of elders.

ARRIVALS

My father would often bring Theodore, Trefon Jr. and me to New Savonoski in a dogsled from Naknek, and later from South Naknek. How delightful it was to smell the wood smoke and hear dogs barking as we

¹² Sukaasiik - Alaska Peninsula Sugcestun word for second chief.

¹³ Sukashiq - Kodiak Sugcestun pronunciation for Sukaasiik.

approached the tiny village. My father covered us using a rope secured tarp as though he was ferrying freight. He did this every time. Regardless, Taata and Grandma were elated and "surprised" as we emerged from the sleds.



Photo courtesy of Vera Angesan

Pelagia Melgenak with hands on her hips dancing and singing to welcome her arriving grandchildren, and One-Arm Nick Melgenak

Figure 7. Pelagia and Nick Melgenak (Vera Angesan).

Grandma sang to us, teasing us with a song "*Bechung na na,*" then "*Asi ken gret tum kin, bi nga kin gret tum kin*" to us in Sugcestun she danced with her hands on her hips. The literal translation is, "I don't like you, and I don't love you." This is what George Charles calls *verbal arts as*

performance (singing and dancing) in his doctoral dissertation (Charles, 2000).

WINTER

In the winter, Grandma bundled us up in furs and caribou skin fur boots. Grandma had a squirrel skin outer garment and long caribou skin boots that went well over her knees. She wore a head covering at all times except when she was sleeping or bathing. Grandma Palegia also kept her arms and legs covered as befitting a good Russian Orthodox Christian woman.

STORIES

It is essential that Native culture and oral tradition-bearers document the stories and retell them to their families in order to preserve them. Elsie Mather, said, "By not depending so much on outside sources, by doing things ourselves, we have the means to preserve a good part of our culture," (Mather, 1995). William Schneider, an oral tradition advocate, wrote about the Allen Dundes, who pointed out that "stories contain at least three elements: text—what the story is about; texture—the way the story is told; and context—the circumstances surrounding the

telling," (Schneider, 1995) Both Schneider and Charles (2000) discuss *verbal arts*. Schneider describes verbal arts as "The use of language to communicate meaning within a group that expects, appreciates, individual variation," (Schneider, 1995).

Grandma Pelagia possessed a strong sense of personhood and was a master of her language. Grandma narrated stories using structure and variation. Although she wasn't schooled, in the formal academic sense, of mnemonic devices for remembering (e.g. patterns, repetitive retelling), and paralinguistic speech methods, she was a master at using her language to communicate her oral tradition. She used paralinguistic speech devices with manipulation of voice quality, using emotive simulation by stress, slowness or speed, and volume with rise and fall in the pitch of her voice. The characters became alive and we became participants.

Grandma Pelagia used animals or birds as main characters as well as human beings. The messages were subtle. Listeners interpreted their own meaning from the narratives. The stories pertained to good and bad behavior. The consequences would be either punishment or rescue with the help of birds, animals or other living creatures. She conveyed through her stories, and how she lived, that respect for animals, nature, and for

human beings was essential. Alutiiq Elder, Martha Demientieff demonstrated these same values in her own way:

I have the same values as my mother did....To help anybody that needs help, to respect everybody and everything. I mean, I have to respect the trees. I have to respect the animals. I have to respect everything (Demientieff, 2001).

Grandma stood outside by the door to greet swallows, geese and ducks, singing to them when they arrived in the spring and again when they left in the fall. Though all birds and animals were treated respectfully so that they would return, *Chungoupuluks* (swallows) were particularly revered. If anyone found a dead swallow, the person who found it had to bury it in the churchyard.

Grandma Pelagia told stories about small creatures that we did not eat portraying them as helpers to humans in times of need. Grandma told the following story that illustrates the belief in the sacredness of swallows. Teddy Melgenak retold this story for the 2002 Bristol Bay Native Corporation Annual Report. Melgenak said that stories such as this one helped him grow up to be good to the birds and to take care of them. Taata and Pelagia Melgenak took in Teddy when he was born. Melgenak eventually moved to South Naknek and then onto King Salmon where he

now resides. He took Grandma's words to heart, and today he builds swallow houses, both in his work for the Katmai National Park Service and for himself.

WHY SWALLOWS ARE HOLY BIRDS

Once there was a man and a woman who were lost in the woods. They were cold, tired, and getting worried. They ran into another couple that took them to their home and treated them like special guests, feeding them their best food. There the lost couple stayed until their strength returned. The nice couple agreed to show the lost pair the way home. On their way, the happy lost couple asked the two others who they were so they could repay them in some way. The man behind them said, 'Take ten steps forward, then turn around and we will show you.' The lost couple did. When they turned around there was a male and female swallow sitting in the middle of the path. The swallows showed them the rest of the way home. That is why swallows are 'holy birds' (T. Melgenak, 1994).

Those birds we did not eat, such as swallows and ravens had stories associated with them that portrayed them as helpers to human beings. My elder brother, Theodore (2002) retold this story to me:

THE RAVEN

A long time ago, there were starving people that lived near a large lake. A raven came and drank all of the water in the lake, exposing all of the fish and plants growing on the bottom of the lake. The people were very happy as they gathered food, eating, drying and preserving provisions for the winter. When there was enough gathered to last through the season, the raven regurgitated to put all of the water back in the lake (F.T. Angasan, personal communication, December 28, 2002).

My personal interpretation of The *Qunkopowuk* (raven) story is that it teaches us to use only what we need to ensure a sustainable harvest and that a community works together in order to survive. As Elsie Mather believes, I am on "shaky ground," if I presume to interpret meaning for others (Morrow and Schneider, 1995).

Boys hunted at an early age; my brother Theodore was four years old when he first started hunting. We had headed out somewhere in the gas boat, Taata, Grandma, Teddy Melgenak, Theodore, and me. My brother shot and retrieved a seagull, though we do not usually eat seagulls. He plucked it the best he could, but Teddy Melgenak, who was nine at the time, plucked most of it. Grandma and Taata were proud as it

was cooked and served because it was his first actual game. We have never eaten seagull before or since (F.T. Angasan, personal communication, 2002). We were taught not to kill anything unless we intended to eat it.

SUMMER

Summertime was full of subsistence activity. The nets were set for catching salmon, and cutting fish for drying and smoking began. After cutting the heads off, the fish were split, leaving the tail in place and removing the backbone. The finished split fish had two sides connected by a tail. The sides and backbones were slightly salted to keep the flies off and for easier preservation. Then the split fish was hung to dry on huge A-frame racks. Many times, grownups chased climbing children down from the drying racks. We moved the fish into the smoke house when they had a dry coating on them. If it started to rain, Grandma and Taata would send out the older children to turn the fish over to the skin side. We used all parts of the fish. The heads were cooked, or salted for winter use. The men cooked the unused parts for the sled dogs.

We cut up our fish to dry and smoke them, the same way today. Like Grandma Pelagia, I use an *ulukaq*¹⁴ to split the fish. Before contact, the material used for a knife was slate. Aboriginal innovation and adaptability is a requisite for survival, so Grandma Pelagia's *Ulukaq* had a carved wooden handle and a blade cut from a saw. The blade when newly made, has to be three or four inches deep to accommodate wear.



Figure 8. Pelagia Melgenak's *Ulukaq* (Vera Angasan).

Grandma's knife blade, carved to fit her hand, appears worn from the original height to the scant blade as shown. It was likely made for her

¹⁴ A knife with a hand-carved handle, formerly made of slate.

by her husband. All knives are custom carved to fit a particular person's hand. I remember helping to cut up fish with my own little ulukaq that Taata had made for me. I wish I still had it, but through time, it has been lost.

Children searched for dry brush on the hill near Savonoski. We laid the rope down on the ground, piled dry brush on them, and helped each other tie the bundled brush to our backs. We proudly carried them to the smokehouse. The dried kindling wood was useful for starting the smokehouse fire. We felt important to be playing a part in the seasonal activity.

At Savonoski, visitors were scarce during the summer during the commercial salmon-fishing season. If we heard an outboard or gas boat noise, we children would run down to the beach to see who might be arriving, far off in the distance toward the point. Often it would be our parents with the little brothers and sisters in a wooden skiff driven by a nine-horsepower Johnson outboard motor. They sometimes traveled to Savonoski during a commercial fishing period closure. By the time they reached the shore of Savonoski, virtually everyone in the village would be on the beach to greet them.

Kinship is important to modern day Sugpiat as well. For example, it is evident at airports, when relatives or others with Sugpiaq ties, regardless of

how far apart their places of residence are, joyfully greet each other and catch up on happenings.

PELAGIA'S MATRIARCHAL ROLE

Pelagia directed the activities of the house, church and village. She informed villagers of church holidays or other important dates by consulting her wooden calendar that was a small, flat, rectangular wooden board with holes to indicate days and months. A wooden peg marked the present day and another peg marked the month. The Russian Orthodox Church followed the 46 B.C. Julian calendar instead of the present day Gregorian calendar initiated by Pope Gregory of Rome in 1582 (Meyer, 1997). The Julian calendar is 13 days behind the calendar used today (Orthodox Compass Newsletter, (Oleksa, 2000)). Alaskan Orthodox churches still follow the Julian calendar, whereas many Russian Orthodox churches in the other parts of the United States now use the Gregorian calendar.

There was church in the mornings and evenings of Holy Days. Main holy days were Easter and Christmas, the beginning of Easter and Christmas Lent, Pentecost, Annunciation, and Ascension, the same as the present Orthodox celebrations. If it was a name day, (a person was named after a saint when baptized as an infant), there was a church

service and feast was prepared at the home of the person whose name day occurred. Villagers either sang or chanted the prayer in Slavonic or Sugcestun.



Figure 9. New Savonoski Church (J. and A. Littau).

This photo is taken from across the Naknek River from New Savonoski during early winter when slush is forming on the water. Frost has formed on the alders and willows. The nearby Alaska Packers Association salmon cannery in South Naknek sold lumber for construction of the most important building in the village.



Figure 10. Andrew Ansaknok and Trefon Angasan 1917 (University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Cobb 4466).

This photo is of my father's cousin Andrew Ansaknok and my father Trefon Angasan, taken at the South Naknek cannery in 1917, one year before the devastating flu hit Bristol Bay shores.

THE FLU EPIDEMIC

Fifty-four refugees from the upper Naknek drainage were living at New Savonoski when the 1918 flu epidemic swept across Alaska. The toll was heavy along the Bristol Bay coast. In 1953 only eight former residents of Old Savonoski were still alive, and New Savonoski had only 19 permanent residents. By 1961 (Davis reported) there remained only three persons on the lower Naknek who had lived at the ancient village at the head of Iliuk Arm (Hussey, 1971).

During the flu epidemic, people living in Pelagia and Nick Melgenak's home all survived. Nina Harris (now deceased) of South Naknek attributed that to Pelagia's Native medicine (Uutuqtwa, 1982). Our mother Vera Kie Angasan informed me, "A plant was burned and brought into every room and that it was *as if the virus that caused the flu was afraid of the smell.*" Men from the nearby Alaska Packers Association (APA) cannery in South Naknek erected a huge cross over a common grave filled with victims of influenza. In 1985, my nephew Ralph Angasan, Jr. interviewed my father Trefon Angasan, Sr. for a story that appeared in the Oral History Program of Bristol Bay High School publication that was published annually at that time. It was called *Uutuqtwa*¹⁵: *An Historical Magazine of the Bristol Bay Area*. As he talked about the devastation of the flu, his voice reflected his sadness:

Everybody died all over. I was at (New) Savonoski. There was about 10 houses there I guess. There wasn't (sic) very many alive. Some walk around and just drop. It was horrible, just horrible.....People from APA take care of the flu. They take 'em and bury them in one big hole. There is a big cross and there's a big bunch of people in there. Just pile them in there and throw'em (Angasan, 1985).

¹⁵ The word means "I go home" in Yupiaq (commonly called Yup'ik).



Figure 11. New Savonoski Church and Graveyard (J. and A. Littau).

The picture shows the church within the last 10 years. The huge cross was close to the small generator house to the extreme left. The cross was still standing when I was a child in the early 1950s, but has since fallen. At the time of the flu, the Savonoski people probably did not yet realize that it was a worldwide epidemic.

In 1918 and 1919, the so-called 'Spanish flu' killed an estimated 20-40 million people worldwide . . . The strain of influenza virus that caused the 1918 global epidemic ('pandemic') was exceptionally aggressive (Retrieved on March 24, 2005

http://www.bariumblues.com/recreating_the_spanish_flu.htm).

If Grandma was not feeling well, she boiled Hudson Bay *caayuk* (tea) to drink sparingly. Teddy Melgenak says of illness, "Grandma used to say if you are feeling sick, don't lay (sic) around or sickness will say, 'this is a good place to stay.'"

Grandma Pelagia told us that bad thoughts also made you sick. Hence, she understood the holistic¹⁶ conception about mind and body. This traditional worldview was illustrated in the previous stories on how to conduct oneself regarding respect for every living thing. For example, you were not to kill anything unless you ate it (not to be wasteful). You are to be respectful to the caribou after killing it for food. Steam baths were taken regularly to keep your body clean.

She often tied up wormwood to use as a *táhiq*¹⁷ for slapping your body in the steam bath. Wormwood has a eucalyptus like smell that clears your sinuses and soothes bodily aches. Alutiiq Kodiak islander, Rona Peterson says they also used *táhiqs* in the *banya* (Peterson, 2001).

¹⁶ Holistic medicine emphasizes the need to look at the whole person, including analysis of physical, nutritional, environmental, social, spiritual, and lifestyle values.
<http://www.holisticmed.com/whatis.html>

¹⁷ A medicinal plant bundled and used in steam baths to relieve aches and pains.

My father Trefon said that they built earlier steam bath houses with whatever was at hand, such as, "covering them with mud (trees, tiwgs), grass for the floor . . . like a beaver house,"(Angasan, 1985).

By the time I was born, Savonoski people built steam bath houses using processed lumber. They had a dressing/undressing room with benches on both sides and in the hot room in the back. This room had rocks covering an old oil drum stove lying on its side with a chimney attached toward the back. Hot water was in a container on top of the stove and cold water was in a five-gallon can with the lid cut off. A long stick nailed to a small can was the dipper. We splashed water on top of the hot rocks to make steam. Grandma and I were always the first into the steam bath, but I usually washed up and got out as quickly as I could because it was so hot, while Grandma took a leisurely therapeutic bath.

By 1948, Grandma was already 71 years old and suffering from aching legs that swelled at the knees, probably the result of arthritis. Her hands, gnarled from years of hard work, had twisted joints. She used an *ayarok*¹⁸ as she walked. Until she was in her nineties, she still insisted on traveling with the family up to Kittiwick on the Brooks River, in what is now

¹⁸ A wooden cane.

Katmai National Park, in the fall to get redfish. Again, from the *Looking Both Ways* article that I wrote about our family:

My parents and grandparents brought us up the Naknek River and across Naknek Lake to visit their ancestral homelands. As we reached the rapids, Grandma Pelagia would prepare tea and dried fish to feed the 'eating rock.' The driver of the skiff or boat would pass as closely as possible, enabling Grandma to throw her offerings to 'the rock' and say her Sugcestun words that meant 'Eat. Our nets—let the fish come back to them.' We still do this, both going up and coming back down the river. Only now, we feed it potato chips, bread, marshmallows, or whatever modern-day campers carry with them. When my brother-in-law Charley Savo first married my sister Viola, he didn't feed the rock. He had to be towed back home when his outboard engine shaft was broken. After that, he fed the rock. When we arrived at Dad's cabin at the mouth of Naknek Lake, were anxious and excited about how close we were getting to Kittiwick. Upon arrival, at Kittiwick, Grandma would joyfully go ashore, make the sign of the cross on herself and venerate the earth by putting her forehead on the ground. We tease my brother Ralph to this day. He thought that Grandma was

kissing the ground, so that is what he would do (Crowell, Steffian, Pullar, 2001).

While we were at *Qitirwik*¹⁹, (now called Kittiwick) on Brooks River, Grandma, Taata, and our parents would catch fish to split and dry. The spawned-out red salmon or *sayathluk* begin turning red as they arrive at fresh water when the fish are returning to their rivers of origin to spawn. The colloquial term for them is *redfish*. The men built racks to dry the fish at the mouth of Brooks River on the south shore. Fish racks were still up in the 1950s when the National Park Service became more visible in the area. I have a visual image of the scene. I am not certain if the people standing across the river looking at us, at our tents, and at our fish racks were Northern Consolidated camp personnel or tourists. They may have been National Park Service employees. Thereafter, we traveled to Brook River later in the season to catch and dry our redfish.

Ray Peterson, President of Northern Consolidated Airlines began development as Brooks Camp in the spring of 1950 with the construction of cabins. That same year the National Park Service

¹⁹ Sugcestun word for Kittiwick, which means a sheltered place behind a look-out point. Schaaf (2004) spelled it *Kedevik*.

assigned Willie Nancarrow as the first seasonal ranger to establish a residence and headquarters at the site of the present campground (Norris, 1992).

When Pelagia grew too frail to go back up to her ancestral homelands, she asked all who went to Kittiwick to bring back some water and a small bit of soil. Grandma would cross herself, and then drink the water. She appeared rejuvenated and her face reflected pure joy.

CHAPTER FOUR – COUNCIL OF KATMAI DESCENDANTS

Pelagia Melgenak instilled a sense of place and strong motivation to protect and preserve our cultural and spiritual connection to Katmai country that was evident even twenty years after she passed away. Her values clearly communicated cultural continuity and ties to the land as evidenced by the founders of the Council of Katmai Descendants.

In 1994, Margie Macauly-Waite, whose grandfather Alex had lived in Katmai, and my younger brother Trefon Angasan, Jr. started talking about forming an advocacy group concerning the whole Katmai National Park. Margie Macauly was working for Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) at the time and was a driving force in the formation of the council. The group named themselves the Council of Katmai Descendants. During the annual Bristol Bay Native Corporation Village Officers and Directors Workshop in Anchorage, village representatives of Perryville, Ivanof Bay, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, South Naknek, Naknek and Chignik were present at a meeting at the Anchorage Hilton. Those villages included a number of descendants of the Katmai villages²⁰ evacuated after the Novarupta eruption in 1912. On December 3, 1994, the group elected the first officers.

²⁰ The villages were: Old Savonoski, Douglas (a.k.a Kaguyak), and Katmai Village.

In 1996, the Council of Katmai Descendants incorporated as a non-profit entity to address issues and concerns related to what is now the Katmai National Park.

The Council of the Descendants of Katmai represents all Natives who have traditional ties with the Katmai lands regardless of where they currently live, their Native corporation, or their tribal enrollment (Nielsen, 1999).

In 1999, Margie Macaully-Waite wrote the following:

The Council of Katmai Descendants does not have an official membership roll. All descendants of Katmai country are members of the Council of Katmai Descendants. The descendants of Katmai are numerous with many descendants continuing to live throughout the Alaska Peninsula, the Bristol Bay Region, and on Kodiak Island as well as other parts of the world. The Council of Katmai Descendants represents Native descendants of people of Katmai country displaced from their traditional villages after the eruption of Novarupta in 1912. The lands within the Katmai National Park and Preserve are the homelands and spiritual resting place of our ancestors, therefore, all of the lands within the Katmai National Park and Preserve are considered sacred lands to the Council of Katmai

Descendants. The Council of Katmai Descendants is driven by our strong motivation to protect and preserve the descendants' cultural and spiritual connection to Katmai country (Macaulay-Waite, 1999).

BROOKS CAMP

The National Park Service Cultural Resource Manager of the Lake Clark and Katmai National Park, Jeanne Schaaf informed the Bristol Bay Native Corporation and the Council of Katmai Descendants that an oil spill had occurred in Brooks Camp. Oil spill remediation at Brooks Camp, located in Katmai National Park and Preserve, was the most pressing issue at the time of formation of the council. Concern was that the oil would contaminate the water table and destroy salmon smolt. Water was tested in various parts of the Brooks River and Naknek Lake. The descendants were adamant that the environmental clean-up methods be the least invasive and disruptive to the area.

The Council of Katmai Descendants opposed the 1995 Katmai National Park and Preserve Draft Development Concept plan for expansion of the camp on Brooks River. Brooks Camp was built on an ancient village dating back to as early as 4,400 years ago (Pierce, 1995). Development at Brooks Camp began in the 1950s for National Park

Buildings and for the concessionaire, originally Northern Consolidated Airlines. There were at least 960 visible surface depressions, many believed to be remains of semi-subterranean houses, and twenty archeological sites (National Register of Historic Places Nomination Registration, 1989). The Brooks River Archeological District became officially declared on February 14, 1978 and the Brooks River area became a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1993 (Schaaf, 2003).

Archeologists of the 1953 Katmai Project were the first to work on the site. During the 1960s, Don Dumond, of the University of Oregon, removed remains of 11 individuals from five sites in the Brooks River area. In 1974, Harvey Shields, who was a student of Dumond and later a National Park Service archeologist collected remains of five individuals that are now at the University of Oregon in Eugene. In 1982 and 1983, Roger Harritt, also a student of Dumond and a National Park Service archeologist excavated two eroding sites and removed human remains of four individuals as well as funerary objects, curated at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Museum (Pierce, 1995).

Some human remains were accidentally dislodged by a backhoe during the construction of utilities at Brooks Camp. In 1965 some artifacts were discovered during excavation for a cesspool. Two burials were found

during the excavation of a trench for a waterline (Dumond, 1995). The Council is still researching the number of remains disturbed or removed by past construction and previous excavations. The University of Oregon has housed artifacts and human remains from the Katmai coast and Brooks River since their archeological work in the 1960s and 1970s. The disturbance and removal of human remains during the construction of Brooks Camp continues to be an unresolved issue. However, Dumond of the University of Oregon has given permission for the human remains removed from Katmai coast excavations in the 1960s to be included in the study of the Mink Island human remains. Discussion follows on p. 61. The study of the Mink Island human remains continues with Guy Tasa, a physical anthropologist at the University of Oregon at Eugene.

SUGPIAQ MASKS

According to my father's tradition, learned primarily from teachings of Grandmother Pelagia Melgenak, Sugpiaq/Alutiiq masks were used in religious ceremonies. According to Dominique Desson's²¹ research "they bridged the gap between people, animals and a supreme being." They

²¹ Dominique Desson completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1995.

could also be used in celebrations or feasts. Hence, the masks had sacredness affiliated with them. After the rituals were completed, they were put in the caves.

On our trips back to our ancestral homeland near Brooks Camp in what is now Katmai National Park, as far back as I can remember, our father Trefon Angasan, would look toward Old Savonoski where he was born, proclaiming, "There are masks in the caves." Anyone within hearing range would smile with contentment that the masks our ancestors carved and used in ceremonies were safely tucked away.

In 1993, Patricia McClenahan, a Katmai National Park Service anthropologist, told our assembled family at South Naknek that Harry Featherstone removed the masks in 1921:

Harry Featherstone, a trapper in the then Katmai National Monument must have become familiar with the Katmai country and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. In May of 1923, another trapper Roy Fure from the Bay of Islands, another part of Naknek Lake, and Featherstone guided Naknek schoolteacher Alyce Anderson into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. In 1936, Alaska Game Commissioner Homer Jewell noted that Featherstone was the most aggressive trapper among nine other trappers known to be in the area. It is also noted Featherstone was known to

officials, (or infamous) for two other incidents as well. He shot bears and sold the hides to fishermen. Then he decorated his cabin at the head of Naknek Lake with 35 carved wooden masks that he had removed from beneath sheltered overhanging cliffs near Old Savonoski (Clemens and Norris, 1999).

This action violated our sacred trust. President Wilson had declared the area a National Monument in 1918. How could this happen?

Since then, I learned that explorers collected masks throughout Alaska since the early Russian colonization era and possibly before. For instance, the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg dispatched the Russian naturalist and ethnographer Il'ia Gavrilovich Voznesenskii to build up their collections from Russian America. Voznesenskii was in the Kodiak and the Alaska Peninsula area between September of 1742 and March 1743, Father Ioasaf Bolotov in 1793-1794, Gavriil Davydov in 1802-1803, and Iurii Lisianskii in 1804 (Desson, 1994).

Aron Crowell's paper (1992), "Postcontact Koniag Ceremonialism on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula: Evidence from the Fisher Collection," discusses ceremonial masks, headdresses and shamanic articles collected between 1879 and 1885 from Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula by naturalist and amateur ethnographer William J. Fisher for the

Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C (Crowell, 1992).

Desson's dissertation includes pictures of masks from Katmai and Douglas, villages on the Shelikof Strait side of what is now the Katmai National Monument, as well as masks from Kodiak and Prince William Sound. Her Table 3, *The Provenience Attribution of Masks* shows that there are six Katmai masks, four Kodiak masks and 11 Prince William Sound masks, at the Smithsonian (Desson, 1994).

In the 1870s, Alphonse Pinart from Marquis, France, according to his surviving diaries, traveled and collected ethnographical and linguistic data on the Natives of the Aleutian Islands, Nushagak, Bristol Bay, Prince William Sound, the Kuskokwim and Nunivak Island. Pinart's diaries are in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley (Desson, 1994).

Sugpiaq artist Helen Simeonoff of Afognak and Kodiak learned of the 77²² Alutiiq masks collected by Alfonse Pinart at a seminar held in Kodiak featuring Dominique Desson's slide show presentation of her studies for her dissertation, *Masked Rituals of the Kodiak Archipelago*. The masks and other artifacts are in a museum on the northern coast of France, called the Chateau Musée on Rue de Bernat (Chateau Museum

²² In Table 7 of her dissertation, Desson states that of the original 79 masks at the Boulogne museum, two are missing.

on Bernat Street) in Boulogne sur Mer, France. According to Simeonoff, anthropologist Dr. Lydia Black and linguist Jeff Leer worked with Desson. Desson corroborates this by the acknowledgements in her dissertation thanking Black, who was also Desson's committee chair, and by her Bibliography, which includes three books by Jeff Leer.

Simeonoff used her Alaska Airlines mileage to make her once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to see the masks. She first flew to London, took a train to Folkestone on the southern coast of England, then hovercrafted across the English Channel, on a one-hour trip to Boulogne sur Mer, France. Simeonoff states, "When I walked into the museum and approached our Sugpiaq masks, I was overwhelmed, excited, and happy." As she approached the Afognak masks, Simeonoff asked herself, which of her ancestors might have carved and painted them? "I knew they were made by my relatives and relatives of my mother." She could imagine the villagers carving masks, singing, dancing, and storytelling about great hunting feats and wished she could meet them. Simeonoff spent five days at the Chateau Musée de Boulogne, from opening until closing time, sitting, observing, and sketching the masks. When it was time to leave, Simeonoff wept as if leaving her family behind. She was leaving cherished items once held in her ancestors' hands (Simeonoff, 2001).

Featherstone gave seven of the masks taken from Savonoski River to Naknek schoolteacher Alyce Anderson. Thankfully, Anderson passed them onto the Alaska Territorial Museum in the early 1921 along with a letter of explanation concerning their origin. The letter is part of the Museum record (Ziemann, 1994).

In 1994, the National Park Service hired investigative ranger Denny Zieman to document and report findings concerning the missing masks. Zieman completed the report, but despite intensive research, was not successful in locating any of the missing Savonoski masks. One mask in the Oakland Museum in California may be from Savonoski. The 1994 Oakland Museum accession record provided by Zieman indicates that the mask came from the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Desson's *Table 3: Provenience Attribution of Masks* lists three Katmai masks at the Burke Museum in Seattle, Washington (Desson, 1994). The Descendants of Katmai intend to apply for a grant from the National Park Service to take several older members of the Council of Katmai Descendants to see them and to make a determination for possible repatriation.

In 1999, returning from a Rural Development Seminar at Sitka, Alaska, four people stopped in Juneau to view the Savonoski masks at the Alaska State Museum with me. Those who accompanied me were Mike Davis, a Rural Development faculty member who works out of Bristol Bay

Campus along with three undergraduate students: Andria Agli from South Naknek, Carol Kvasnikoff from Nanwalek, and Velda Miller from Bethel. The museum curator, Steve Henrikson, carefully took the masks out of their climate-controlled drawers and placed them on a table in order for the five of us to view them. Although the masks were stolen and desecrated, I am thankful that seven of Savonoski masks are in the Alaska State Museum in Juneau.

At first, I could not comprehend the mixture of sorrow, reverence, and then joy that washed over me as I viewed the masks. Like Simeonoff at the Chateau Musée de Boulogne sur le Mer, I wondered what rituals our ancestors performed using the masks, what their names were, how they looked and dressed, and how they lived. I felt sorrow about the theft, and by Featherstone, a man who had no understanding about the sacredness of these ritualistic pieces and their important role in our ancestors' lives. Knowing Katmai people touched and used them for ceremonies, I felt linked to our traditions. Being in their presence and studying them gave me a sense of harmony and a greater appreciation for my ancestors. After we viewed the masks, I asked that the group use a purification ritual by "air washing" outdoors, following the tradition of Grandmother Pelagia Melgenak.

My hope is that my children and grandchildren will see the masks and will experience a connection to our heritage. Repatriation of these precious pieces of our past will inevitably occur as the Council learns the mechanics for implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Another important factor is to obtain climate-controlled facilities for their safe storage.

MINK ISLAND

In the winter of 1996, Jeanne Schaaf conveyed to a meeting of the Council of Katmai Descendants in Anchorage, Alaska, distressing reports of human remains eroding out of the banks, and vandalism on Mink Island.

The small island is located near the Takli Island Archeological District in the National Register of Historic Places outside of Geographic Bay on the Shelikof Strait side of the Katmai National Park and Preserve, northeast of the Katmai village site.

Natural weathering, wave erosion, and recent vandalism have each contributed to the partial destruction of Mink Island. The repeated loss of irretrievable data and the continued threat to the sites integrity prompted the decision for archeological mitigation. This spring, vandals cut with shovels into the eastern edge of the

upper midden exposing 16 linear meters of cultural data to a maximum depth of 1.5 meters. In addition, natural erosion expedited by the earlier acts of vandalism has resulted in exposure of cultural material throughout the western end of the slopes (Jeanne Schaaf, 1997)

The Council of Katmai Descendants' collaboration with the Katmai National Park Service resulted in an archeological team in place on the island in the summer of 1997. I visited the site in the fall of 1997 with my daughter Lorianne Nielsen Rawson, who came as a representative of South Naknek Tribal Council and a member of the Council of Katmai Descendants. Nephew Ralph Angasan, Jr. participated as both a council member and as a representative of King Salmon Tribal Council. We directed consultation of the removal of human remains at the Mink Island archeological site. Margie Macauly-Waite worked on the island and served as an advisor during the excavation of the human remains from August to September 1997. At Macauley-Waite's suggestion, the human remains were brought to Kodiak, first to the Russian Orthodox Church until arrangements were made for temporary storage in the Alutiiq Museum.

The condition of the human remains enclosed in wooden boxes became a concern. Jeanne Schaaf from the Lake Clark Katmai Studies Center was worried about mold spores, etc. Schaaf brought them to

Anchorage, Alaska for condition assessment. The human remains and artifacts will stay at the National Park Service Curatorial facility until studies are completed and a plan of action is written for their disposition.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION ACT

President Bush signed The Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) into law on November of 1989:

The law establishes procedures and legal standards for repatriation of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony by federal agencies and certain museums, educational and other institutions, and state and local governments. It recognizes certain tribal, Native Hawaiian, and individual rights regarding burial sites located on federal and tribal lands (Meister, 1995).

The two best-known cases of National American Graves Protection Act repatriation in Sugpiaq country, where removal of human remains took place, either by vandals, or by researchers, are from the Larsen Bay site on Kodiak and Prince William Sound. Gordon Pullar, now with the Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development, University of Alaska Fairbanks office in Anchorage, was working as the President of the Kodiak Area Native Association at the time of the repatriation and reburial of the

Larsen Bay remains in 1991. Ales Hrdlicka, a Smithsonian Institute archeologist whose fieldwork in Alaska extended from 1926-1938 had removed human remains from the village of Larsen Bay on Kodiak Island (Pullar, 1994).

Various miners, and others in the name of science, removed Prince William Sound's human remains, and others were looted during the Exxon-Oil Spill cleanup workers after the Oil Spill in 1989. There were approximately 15 cases successfully repatriated and reburied in different locations between 1989 and 1997, according to John Johnson, Manager of Cultural Resources at the Chugach Alaska Corporation.

The Mink Island excavation and repatriation differs from these two cases. The Council of Katmai Descendants requested the excavation in order to stem vandalism of the remains eroding off the shores of the island and for the subsequent excavations to prevent further desecration. The Mink Island excavation falls under Section, 10.2 (g) (3) Intentional Excavation (Federal Register 62160). Mink Island is the first application of this new law (NAGPRA) in Katmai, for intentional excavation of human remains. The plan of action written for the National Park Service serves as direction for the treatment of human remains, associated funerary items and culturally affiliated items removed during the archeological

excavations on Mink Island located on the Shelikof Strait side of the Katmai National Park and Preserve.

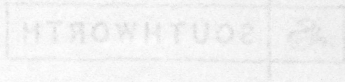
The necessity for a NAGPRA plan of action for this site coincided with a senior project requirement for completion of a baccalaureate degree in the spring of 1999.

My heritage and cultural ties with Katmai National Park was the major impetus for choosing The Plan of Action for the NAGPRA repatriation of Human Remains as my Rural Development Senior Project (Nielsen, 1999).

From consultation with other members of the Council of Katmai Descendants, consensus was reached that the human remains and objects made themselves known in order for us to gain all the knowledge possible before reburial. Consensus was reached for all of the proposed types of studies mentioned in the November 1988 survey. The studies included:

Separation of the human remains into individuals, and identification of the age, sex, diet, health and life history of the individual. The studies also include radiocarbon dating of a small bone from each individual and DNA analyses to determine biological affiliation of the individuals (Nielsen, 1999).

Guy Tasa, a physical anthropologist from Eugene, Oregon continues the physical analyses.



COLLECTION

100% Cotton Fiber

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

The Smithsonian's *Looking Both Ways* website describes the present era:

The mouth of the Naknek River at Bristol Bay offers an abundant harvest to fishermen and hunters. Each summer, huge numbers of sockeyes and other kinds of salmon swim up the river. Beluga whales and seals are commonly found in Bristol Bay, and caribou roam the interior hills....In 1912, the Katmai volcanic eruption destroyed the interior village of Savonoski and forced its Alutiiq residents to return once again to the mouth of the Naknek River. There they built New Savonoski, (up river) on the opposite bank from their old enemies at Naknek village. Later they moved again to the nearby cannery town of South Naknek. While they are close neighbors today, the Yup'ik and Alutiiq people at Naknek and South Naknek also recognize their differences in language, culture, and history (Retrieved March 24, 2005 from <http://www.mnh.si.edu/lookingbothways/text/villages/naknek.html>).

The oil spill in Brooks Camp continues to be monitored and cleaned using bioremediation methods. The desecration of the old village sites continues. The Council is promoting the possibility of moving the Brooks Camp to a less intrusive area. The Council has worked with the National Park Service on another NAGPRA project concerning human remains that

eroded out of the banks of Brooks River. A large many-roomed Sugpiaq house was excavated before it too became a casualty of natural erosion.

Andria Agli of South Naknek, a Katmai Descendant as well, wrote A Plan of Action for the Disposition of Human Remains from that Brooks River Cutbank site. Agli graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the spring of 2003.

In 2005, the study called *Brooks River Cutbank: An Archeological Data Recovery Project in Katmai National Park* was completed. Don Dumond, one of the authors, has worked in the area since 1960 as the field supervisor for the 1960-1961 Brooks Camp excavations (Norris 1996). Dale Vinson, who had worked with an archeological crew in a 1982-1983 excavation at Brooks (Norris 1996), was also one of the authors. "The Cutbank Project was under the overall direction of Vinson (Dumond, 2005)." The third author, Barbara Bundy, who "served as a field assistant, also had primary responsibility for artifact description and analysis, and for authorship of the report," (Bundy, Vinson and Dumond, 2005).

At the Council of Katmai Descendants meeting in Anchorage on March 16, 2005, members expressed their thanks for the published study, and are pleased that the work occurred before erosion took its toll on those and other archeological resources.

As more of our people are educated, our efforts to gain control over cultural affects will take place. Particularly, we look for the repatriation of the remains removed out of the areas mentioned earlier in the paper during the Dumond, Shield, and Harritt excavations, and the repatriation of the Savonoski Masks.

Mending the Circle,²³ revised and edited by Meister in 1997, provides an essential guide for lay repatriators. Government laws tend to be very technical. This book is useful for understanding and implementing NAGPRA, written as a handbook, a very essential tool, for Native Americans by Native Americans and helps to even the playing field. The writer of the introduction to *Mending the Circle* says it best:

For all the inartful language and requirements of the laws and the awkwardness of agreements for implementing them, repatriations are taking place with increasing frequency to the general satisfaction of participants. Native Peoples are engaged in the real work and benefits of repatriation—settling the spirits, meeting, remeeting and gaining spiritual knowledge and comfort from sacred beings; and empowering future generations with accessible

²³ *Mending the Circle: A Native American Repatriation Guide: A Guide for Understanding and Implementing NAGPRA and the Official Smithsonian and other Repatriation Policies*, edited by B. Meister was published by the American Indian Ritual Object and Repatriation Foundation.

cultural property, history and images. All involved with these worthy tasks have reason to be grateful for and humbled by the privilege (Harjo, 1997).

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

My hope is that all Katmai country researchers will work together with the Council of Katmai Descendants and local culture and tradition bearers in Sugpiaq villages. In Evers and Toelken's book, *Native Oral Traditions: Collaboration & Interpretation* they wrote:

A key point in their (1987) essay in...(*Yaqui Deer Songs*, by their Evers and Molina) is that Native American participants need to be involved in research projects....One challenge their work poses is to the recruitment and retention of academic institutions....Native Americans must come to occupy academic positions so that they may launch projects from that institutional base. Another alternative possibility...is also desirable: academics must seek arenas outside the university setting in which to conduct research agenda collaboratively with community-based Native American intellectuals. Collaboration must come to be seen as a standard dimension of research in Native American communities (Evers and Toelken, 2001).

Brooks Camp in Katmai National Monument, known for its abundance of bears and scenery, attracts tourists from all over the world. I traveled to Brooks River as a chaperone for several South Naknek teenaged students during the summer of 2004. All of the students had family ties to the area. The enthusiasm and pride in their ancestral homeland was evident as the students walked the trails and hiked the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes where their ancestors once walked.

One day, the Katmai National Park will present our history and our culture as a living, ongoing heritage, along with examples of our spiritual ties to the land and its history. The cultural aspects will be a vital part of what the tourists go there to see. The visitor experience will be more than bears and scenery. Visitors will know that the Katmai National Park and Preserve is the ancestral homeland of living descendants who still have strong ties to the land.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alutiiq. Sugcestun pronunciation of the Russian term Aleut. Used interchangeably with Sugpiaq.

Ayarok. A wooden cane.

Barabara. A semi-subterranean house constructed of wood and covered with an insulating layer of sod. Siberian word. The Alaska Peninsula Sugpiaq word for house is engluq. Kodiak Sugcestun word is ciqluaq.

Bidarki. Two or three hole skin boat built like a kayak with movable joints in order to travel through rough water. Sugcestun word derived from Russian word Baidarka. Larger craft were called baidar. The original Sugcestun word was qayaq.

Chungoupuluk. Sugcestun word meaning swallow.

Cyrillic. From St. Cyril, a missionary from Byzantium. It was invented sometime during the 10th century AD, possibly by St. Clement of Ohrid, to write the Old Church Slavonic language. The Cyrillic alphabet achieved its current form in 1708 during the reign of Peter the Great. To find, first

go to google.com then enter www.omniglot.com/writing/cyrillic/htm.

Eating Rock. Colloquial name given to huge submerged votive rock on upper Naknek River that Grandma Pelagia gave food, as we passed it both on the way up and on the way down the river.

Kittiwick. Modern pronunciation of Qitirwik, Savonoski Sugpiaq pronunciation for sheltered spit or lookout point at the mouth of Brooks River in what is now Katmai National Park. Other spellings, Schaaf in *Witness* (2004) used the spelling Kedivik.

Qunkopowuk. Sugcestun word meaning raven.

Native. Native people with a capital "N" is specific to the Alaska Native indigenous peoples. Native with a small "n" is used for people who have lived in Alaska for a period of time but are not indigenous to Alaska.

Qitirwiq. Now called Kittiwick. Original Sugcestun word meaning shelter behind lookout point.

Redfish. Colloquial term for spawned out sockeye or red salmon. Dried redfish is called tamuq and mingcik in Sugpiaq, mutchuduq and tamwanuk in Yupik, Yukula, eucola or iukula, in Russian.

Sakaasiik. Sugpiaq village second chief. Pronunciation from Alaska Peninsula (Christensen, M., Lind, D., Phillips, T., Phillips, R., Sam, M., 1977). Kodiak pronunciation *Sukashiq* (Pullar and Knecht, 1995).

Savonoski. Derived from the Russian word Severnovsk meaning northern place. Old Savonoski is commonly used to denote place on Savonoski River in Katmai National Park. Savonoski is also used for the new settlement on Naknek River.

Sayathluk. A spawned out salmon that has turned red from contact with fresh water.

Slavonic. In this paper, meaning Church Slavonic used by the eastern orthodox churches.

Sugpiaq. An indigenous Alaska Native who is descended from the **Sugpiat** (pl) of the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound areas. Literal translation means "genuine human being/real people."

Sugcestun. The language of the Sugpiat, Literal meaning is to "speak like a genuine human person."

Starista. Churchwarden in the Russian Orthodox Church. In Kodiak Sugpiaq villages it is spelled, *Staristaq* and means lay reader (Pullar and Knecht, 1995).

Táhiq. A bundled medicinal plant.

Toyuq. Sugcestun word meaning chief, derived from Russian word Toion.

Ulukaq. Semi lunar knife formerly made with ground slate, but now made with steel and wooden handle. Used for cutting fish or other food.

Uutuqtwa. Name of a former annually produced book with interviews of local interest by the Naknek School. The word means *I go home* in the

Yupiaq language. Naknek is across the river from South Naknek. The ethnicity Naknek includes Yupiaq, Sugpiaq and Athapaskan Alaska Natives. Whereas, the majority of South Naknek is settled with all the ethnicities previously mentioned, but predominately Sugpiaq.

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