

**PATTERNS OF VILLAGE GROWTH
AND DECLINE IN THE ALEUTIANS**

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These variations indicate that additional factors influence village population change. To understand the range of factors associated with Aleut village population change, I shall examine:

- The conditions under which the dominant pattern of village population movement occurs.
- The conditions associated with variations from this dominant pattern.
- The relative strength of the two most seminal influences on village population change—job opportunities and geographic proximity.

The data for this analysis are derived from published reports and my firsthand knowledge of the histories of Aleut villages gained from field work in the Aleutians over the past six years. Since published reports on economic developments in the Aleutians are sketchy and village migration data are virtually nonexistent, firsthand knowledge of village histories is necessary to supplement and enrich these reports and to fill gaps in information. The year 1890 is the baseline for the analysis because it represents a turning point in Aleut economic development—a shifting from traditional reliance on sea mammal hunting and subsistence production to primary dependence on wage employment.

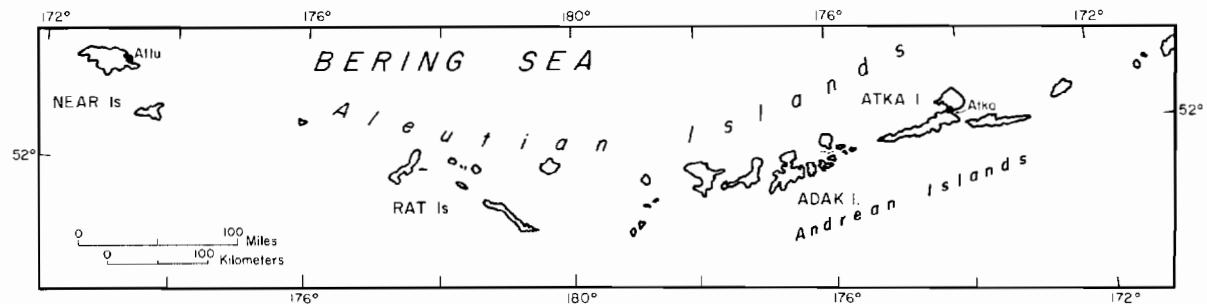
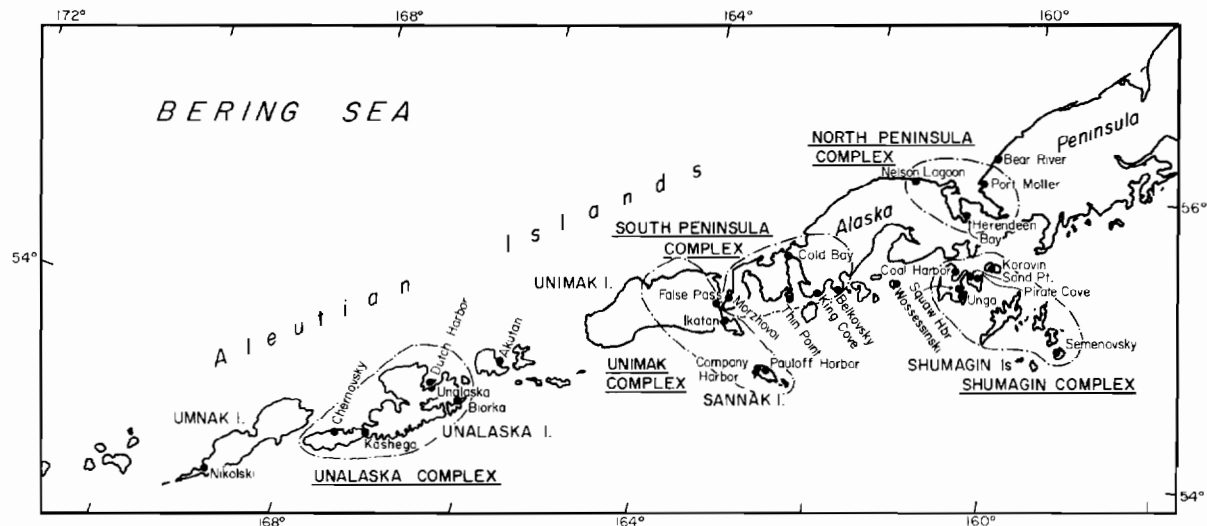
BACKGROUND

The Aleutian area covers the Aleutian, Shumagin, and Pribilof islands, and the Alaska Peninsula west of Port Moller; anthropologists have established Port Moller as the cutoff between Peninsula Aleuts and Eskimos² (see Map, page 3). Because I am unfamiliar with the two villages on the Pribilof Islands, I have excluded them from the analysis.

When the Russians first occupied the Aleutians in the mid-eighteenth century, Aleuts inhabited hundreds of villages in the

²William S. Laughlin, "The Earliest Aleuts," 1963, p. 75.

VILLAGES AND VILLAGE COMPLEXES IN THE ALEUTIANS



area. After a century of Russian occupation, only thirty-nine villages remained.³ The attenuation of the villages was due to Russian-introduced diseases, massacres by the Russians, and village consolidation policies of Russian administrators.⁴

In 1890 the U.S. government census of the Aleutians recorded twenty-two villages. By 1970, excluding the two villages on the Pribilofs, eleven were recorded.⁵ Since one of these eleven villages, Pauloff Harbor, had only three residents in 1971 according to recent migrants from there, it is not counted as an extant village. Four of the ten extant villages were settled after 1890 as were three that arose and died between 1890 and 1970.

Most Aleuts no longer live by subsistence production; they depend primarily on wage employment. Therefore "local economy" in this paper refers to commercial rather than subsistence activities, and primarily to the commercial fishery, which is the only viable industry in the Aleutians today. (There are three sheep ranches in the Aleutians, but these are marginal industries and employ only a few Aleuts.)

Until recently the commercial fishing industry was concentrated in the eastern portion of the Aleutians—from Unimak to the Shumagin Islands. Since the 1960's it has moved westward to include the Aleut villages of Unalaska and Akutan as well as Adak, a naval station. Atka and Nikolski to the west of Akutan and Belkofsky and Nelson Lagoon to the east have no fish processing plants in their villages.

³In 1834 Father Veniaminov, the most reliable early recorder of Aleut history and ethnography, reported twenty-eight villages, but his census did not include the eleven Aleut villages in the Andreanov, Rat, and Near islands (see Ales Hrdlicka, *The Aleutian and Commander Islands and their inhabitants*, 1945, pp. 6 and 32-43).

⁴S.B. Okun, *The Russian-American Company*, translated by Carl Ginsburg, 1951, pp. 9-21.

⁵Robert P. Porter, *Report on the Population and Resources of Alaska at the 11th Census*, 1893, p. 163. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1972, pp. 3-10 and 3-11.

Because of a longer history of commercial fishing and white contact, the villages in the eastern portion of the Aleutians, with one exception, are more acculturated than villages in the western Aleutians. A number of white fishermen, primarily northern Europeans, married Aleut women and settled permanently in the eastern villages. In addition to transmitting Western values, these men taught commercial vessel fishing and construction skills to Aleuts.

POPULATION MOVEMENT IN THE VILLAGE COMPLEXES

Population movements in the Aleutians are fundamentally influenced by a village's proximity to other villages. When two or more villages are close enough to permit regular exchange of visits and services, they develop interdependent ties and tend to operate as a socioeconomic unit, forming a *village complex*. Except for the most westerly villages—Attu, Atka, Akutan, and Nikolski—all Aleut villages in existence since 1890 are part of such a complex. I have identified five village complexes in the Aleutians (see Table 1).

Although the dynamics of Aleut migration are complicated, one pattern occurs most frequently within each village complex: the population of most villages that lack a strong enough local economy to afford employment opportunities relocate to the village in the complex that offers the best job opportunities and highest level of community services. Such a village becomes the nucleus of the complex or the *nuclear village*. This pattern appears in its most complete form in two village complexes—Shumagin and Unalaska—where a significant part of the population of every village has consolidated in the nuclear village.

Variations to this pattern appear in the other three village complexes. In the South Peninsula village complex, one village without a local economy has failed to merge with the nuclear village. In the Unimak village complex, recent migrants of one village chose to migrate outside the village complex. The North Peninsula is unique because migration to the nuclear village was complete by the 1930's. Since that time, the nuclear village has essentially become an isolated village whose members have no further options for relocating within the complex.

Table 1
Village Complexes and Isolated Villages
in the Aleutians, 1890 to 1970^a

Village Complexes	Present 1890	Arose Subsequent to 1890	Present 1970
Shumagin Village Complex	Sand Point ^b Pirate Cove Unga Coal Harbor Korovin Wossnessinski Semenovsky	Squaw Harbor	Sand Point Squaw Harbor
North Peninsula Village Complex		Port Moller Herendeen Bay Nelson Lagoon	Nelson Lagoon
South Peninsula Village Complex	Morzhovoi Belkofsky Thin Point Ozernoi	King Cove	Belkofsky King Cove
Unimak Village Complex	Company Harbor ^b Pauloff Harbor	Ikatan False Pass	False Pass
Unalaska Village Complex	Unalaska Kashega Makushin Biorka Chernovsky		Unalaska
Isolated Villages	Attu Atka Akutan Nikolski		Atka Akutan Nikolski

^aSource: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, 1972; *Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. 1, 1953; and *Fourteenth Census of the U.S. Taken in the Year 1920*, Vol. 1, 1921.

^bPirate Cove and Sand Point (then called Humboldt Harbor) were not listed separately, but as Popof Island; similarly, Pauloff Harbor and Company Harbor were not listed separately, but as Sannak Island.

Shumagin Village Complex

The Shumagin village complex includes the deserted villages of Coal Harbor, Unga, Pirate Cove, Korovin, Semenovskiy, and Wossnessinski,⁶ and the extant villages of Sand Point and Squaw Harbor. After sea otter hunting ended, none of the now deserted villages attracted new industry. Their populations tended to move to the economically viable villages in the complex. During the twentieth century, two villages have occupied the nuclear position in the Shumagins: Unga until the 1940's, and Sand Point since then.

Unga

Economy: Already one of the most affluent sea otter hunting villages in the Aleutians, Unga became a boom town with the discovery of gold in the late nineteenth century, and remained the largest and most economically viable village in the Shumagins until the 1940's. From 1891 to 1904 the Apollo gold mines at Unga employed about 150 persons.⁷ (Because of abundant economic activity at Unga from 1890 to 1900 and because informants indicate that Unga's population grew during this period, the census figure for 1900 showing a population decrease of 79 percent since 1890 appears to be in error, see Table 2.)

Gold mining was followed by intensive activity in the cod and fur industries. Shumagin Aleuts had trapped fur-bearing animals on a small scale until the 1920's, when fox fur prices rose sharply and entrepreneurs planted foxes on numerous uninhabited islands in the Aleutians. However, the boom in fox farming was

⁶Wossnessinski is not considered part of the Shumagin Islands, but I have included it in the complex because of its proximity to the Shumagins.

⁷U.S. Department of the Interior, *Geology and Mineral Resources of Parts of the Alaska Peninsula*, Geological Survey Bulletin 467, 1911, p. 126. Donnis S. Thompson, "Thirteen Years in Unga," 1960, pp. 32-34, 49. Early in the century, the Apollo Mines also operated on a small scale at Squaw Harbor on Unga Island. Between 1870 and 1890, a small-scale coal mine operated at Coal Harbor on Unga Island (see Porter, p. 86).

Table 2
Population of Aleut Villages, 1890 to 1970^a

	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
Shumagin									
Village Complex									
Sand Point	146 ^b			60	69	99	107	254	360
Pirate Cove				98					
Unga	157	(33) ^c	108	313	(150) ^c	152	107	43	0
Coal Harbor	15								
Korovin	41								
Wossnessinski	43	20							2 ^f
Semenovsky	3					13			
Squaw Harbor ^d						79	45		21 ^g
North Peninsula									
Village Complex									
Port Moller						45	33		
Herendeen Bay						13			
Nelson Lagoon ^d									43
South Peninsula									
Village Complex									
Morzhovoi	68	81		60	22	17			
Belkofsky	185	163		129	123	140	119	57	59
Thin Point	231								
King Cove						135	162	290	283
Ozerno ^e	45								
Unimak									
Village Complex									
Pauloff Harbor	132 ^b			62	52	61	68	77	3 ^h
Company Harbor		14		45	22				
False Pass					59	88	42	41	62
Ikatan							29		
Unalaska									
Village Complex									
Unalaska	317	269	281	299	226	298	173	218	306 ⁱ
Makushin	51	71				10			
Chernovsky	78	61		51	38	26			
Biorka	57	48		46	22	20			
Kashega	46	52		51	38	26			
Isolated Villages									
Attu	101	98			29	44			
Atka	132	128		56	103	89	85	119	88
Nikolski	94			83	109	97	64	92	57
Akutan	80	60		66	71	80	86	107	101

NOTES TO TABLE 2

^aThe primary source is the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, 1972; *Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. 1, 1953; and *Fourteenth Census of the U.S. Taken in the Year 1920*, Vol. 1, 1921. Exceptions are: (1) the 1900 figures, which are based on Hooper's 1897 census (U.S. Census Bureau figures for the Aleutians that year are very incomplete); and (2) the 1970 figures for Wossnessinski, Squaw Harbor, Pauloff Harbor, and Unalaska, which are based on my household censuses of those villages. The reasons for these substitutions are included as separate notes on the respective villages.

^bThe 1890 census furnished only one figure for Popoff Island where Sand Point and Pirate Cove are located, and only one figure for Sannak Island on which Pauloff Harbor and Company Harbor are located.

^cThese figures appear to be significantly in error because the 1890's and the 1920's were both periods of heightened economic activity in Unga.

^dSquaw Harbor was settled in the early 1900's, and Nelson Lagoon was settled about 1906. However, population data before 1940 are unavailable.

^eThe only information about Ozernoi other than its inclusion in Porter's 1890 census is Moser's 1898 report indicating the operation of a cannery there between 1889 and 1890.

^fWossnessinski was not included in the 1970 census. This figure is based on my visit to the village.

^gThis figure is based on my 1971 census of Squaw Harbor. I have substituted it for the official 1970 census figure to show the population decline in the village.

^hThis figure is based on information provided by emigrants from Pauloff Harbor in 1971. I have used it to show the decline in the village population.

ⁱThis is based on my detailed census of Unalaska taken in 1970. I have substituted it for the official census figure, which is significantly in error.

short lived. Blue fox fur prices reached a peak in the 1920's with an average selling price of over \$100 per pelt in some years. Prices dropped throughout the 1930's, and by the 1940's, fox production became unprofitable when the market collapsed for long-haired furs.⁸

The Shumagins were located in the heart of the cod and salmon fisheries. ~~From 1876 when the first cod station in Alaska opened at Pirate Cove,~~⁹ Shumagin Aleuts turned increasingly to fishing and salting cod.¹⁰ During the 1920's, Unga produced most of Alaska's dry salt codfish pack (71 percent in 1925 and 91 percent in 1928). However, the boom in cod fishing was also short lived. Pacific cod production reached a peak during World War I. By 1933 it had declined to a seriously low level and was discontinued in the early 1950's.¹¹

The decline in fox and cod production presaged the end of economic viability in Unga. This occurred despite the fact that salmon fishing was becoming a dominant economic activity in the Shumagins in the 1930's. Unga's harbor was inadequate to handle the larger fishing vessels then coming into use;¹² the gill netters

⁸Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge Report, "Proposed Plans for the Administration of the Aleutian Islands Wildlife Refuge," 1939. "Demand Strong for Wild Mink, Muskrats in East," *The Fur Journal*, June 1948, p. 22.

⁹D.L. Alverson, A.T. Pruter, and L.I. Ronholt, *A Study of Demersal Fishes and Fisheries of the Northeastern Pacific Ocean*, 1964, p. 24.

¹⁰While Aleuts were accustomed to hunting sea mammals in skin boats, with spears and throwing boards, those in the Shumagins appear to have rather quickly made the transition to line fishing for cod from wooden dories. The presence of European fishermen who transmitted commercial fishing and boat construction skills to Aleuts facilitated this transition.

¹¹*Pacific Fisherman Yearbook*, 1926, p. 158; 1929, p. 161. Alverson, p. 24.

¹²Unga is located at Delarof Harbor which is unprotected, has poor anchorage facilities, and is too shallow for entrance and exit at all stages of the tide. Leo Otis Colbert, *U.S. Coast Pilot*, Part II, 1938, p. 274.

and increasingly large purse seiners used for salmon fishing could not be beached at Unga during the winter.

Consequently, no companies built canneries at Unga village, which meant that Unga residents had no local outlet for their fish and no local fish processing jobs. This, in itself, was not critical to Unga's continued existence. Unga residents could still earn an income; they could work or sell their fish at the Squaw Harbor cannery, only seven miles away. But Unga fishermen were limited to small boats, and thus were at a competitive disadvantage with other fishermen in the area.

This handicap still did not necessarily doom Unga to extinction. For example, Nelson Lagoon on the North Peninsula survived as a salmon fishing village despite its similarly poor harbor, use of small boats, and resulting economic disadvantage. However, there was an important difference between these two villages. Nelson Lagoon residents had no options for relocating within their village complex, while Unga residents did. Two villages in the Shumagins offered better economic opportunities than Unga.

Community Services: In addition to being the most economically viable village in the Shumagins during the first forty years of the century, Unga also had the highest level of community services and facilities. In the 1930's Unga had many impressive frame houses designed by a San Francisco architect, community water and power systems, both Protestant and Russian Orthodox churches (the Russian Orthodox religion had become integral to Aleut culture), a dance hall, jail, U.S. Marshall, monthly mail service, and a school. Built in 1886, the school was the first in the Shumagin area. By the 1930's it provided a full twelve-year program.¹³

Until the 1940's, Unga was clearly the nuclear village of the Shumagins. Members of dying villages in the complex migrated to

¹³Colbert, p. 275. Thompson, p. 34. Vernon Middleton, *Methodism in Alaska and Hawaii*, 1958, p. 33.

Unga, and Aleuts from Sand Point and Squaw Harbor frequently visited—for holidays and other special events, to attend community dances for which Unga became noted, to shop at the stores, to meet the mail boat, and for transportation (the mail boat also carried passengers).

Emigration: Unga's population began to decline seriously in the 1940's. Some Unga residents developed a dual residential pattern, living at Sand Point or Squaw Harbor during the summer salmon season and the rest of the year at Unga. However, this pattern and a growing disillusion about the economic potential of the village apparently had disruptive effects on community cohesion. In 1947 the Unga high school paper featured editorials decrying the disintegration of community services and community cooperation as well as the growing lawlessness and drunkenness.¹⁴

During the 1950's an increasing number of Unga residents emigrated until the population was small enough to warrant closing the school in 1959.¹⁵ During the next eight years, everyone left the village, the last family in 1967.

Unga Aleuts had only two options for migration within their village complex. Coal Harbor, Pirate Cove, Wossnessinski, Semenovsky, and Korovin no longer existed.¹⁶ Sand Point and Squaw

¹⁴Editorial, *The Alaska Peninsula* (Unga High School Newspaper), November 1947.

¹⁵Lorraine N. Robinson, Statistical Information assistant, Alaska Department of Education, Juneau: personal communication, February 5, 1973.

¹⁶Coal Harbor, which came into being in response to the coal mining operation there, went out of existence when the mining operation closed. Pirate Cove arose in response to the boom in cod fishing and declined after cod fishing became unprofitable. Korovin and Wossnessinski had poor harbor and anchorage facilities and never attracted commercial fishing enterprises. Since 1919, only one family has lived at Wossnessinski, and when I visited there in 1971, only two members of this family inhabited the village. The last residents of Korovin left in the 1930's, and the last from Semenovsky in the 1940's.

Harbor were the only other remaining Shumagin villages. Both had commercial fishing economies and both were familiar to Unga residents. But while Squaw Harbor was closest to Unga (on the same island, only seven miles away), Unga migrants showed a distinct preference for Sand Point, in part because it offered steadier employment opportunities than Squaw Harbor.

There were only five Unga migrants in Squaw Harbor in 1972. By contrast, my 1971 household census of Sand Point revealed fifty-six migrants from Unga, 94 percent of whom had migrated to Sand Point in the 1950's and 1960's. Using 1950 census figures as a base, this indicates that 52 percent of Unga's 1950 population had moved to Sand Point (Table 2). Thirteen of these migrants had first moved to Squaw Harbor or outside the Aleutians before making the final move to Sand Point. Not only did Squaw Harbor fail to attract Unga migrants, but its own population has declined, despite the presence of a cannery there for the past fifty years.

Squaw Harbor and Sand Point

Squaw Harbor offered limited economic opportunities. It was settled early in the century in response to Apollo gold mines and cod and salmon salteries. In 1922 the Shumagin Packing Company opened a salmon cannery,¹⁷ which processed salmon until 1954 when it became a fish camp, purchasing fish from local fishermen and sending them to a sister cannery at King Cove for processing. In 1960 the cannery reopened to process crabs, but then turned its crab operation over to the King Cove cannery in 1969 and converted to shrimp processing.¹⁸ Thus, in most years the Squaw Harbor cannery processed only a single species, and work there was largely seasonal.

¹⁷*Pacific Fisherman Yearbook*, 1923, p. 43.

¹⁸Jack L. Lind, Superintendent, Squaw Harbor Cannery (Peter Pan Seafoods, Inc.): personal communication, February 20, 1973.

Recent settlement at Sand Point occurred in the 1880's when a customs house, cod stations, and a supply station for cod fishing and fur seal fleets were established. Until the early 1930's economic activity in Sand Point was limited to cod and salmon salteries, fox farming, and two small-scale gold mining operations—one early in the century and the other in the 1920's. The population remained quite small during this period because only a few persons were required to run the supply station and salteries. Sand Point began to grow after a salmon cannery opened in 1931. Canneries operated in Sand Point for most of the years between 1931 and 1953, reaching a peak during the salmon boom years of 1938 and 1939 when four companies operated there.¹⁹

Sand Point's economy received a tremendous boost in 1947 when Aleutian Cold Storage Company built a freezer plant there. Wakefield Fisheries leased the plant in 1948 and purchased it in 1966. Unlike the Squaw Harbor cannery, Wakefield has always engaged in diversified processing, beginning with halibut and salmon, and adding crab in 1953. This diversification has provided nearly year-round employment for local fishermen and fish processors, a precedent in the Aleutian area. Wakefield also operates on a larger scale than the Squaw Harbor cannery; in 1971 Wakefield employed about ninety workers (excluding fishermen) compared to thirty-one in Squaw Harbor.²⁰

Unga migrants perceived another difference between the job situations in Squaw Harbor and Sand Point. Some Unga families who moved to Squaw Harbor in the 1950's and 1960's found company practices there offensive and unacceptable, primarily

¹⁹Porter, p. 85. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Alaska Fishery and Fur Seal Industry Reports*, 1931, p. 52. *Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1932-54.

²⁰Lowell Wakefield, "King Crab King—That's Wakefield," *Pacific Fisherman*, September 1958, pp. 13-18. Alaska State Housing Authority, *City of Sand Point, Comprehensive Plan*, 1970, p. 21. Superintendent, Wakefield Fisheries at Sand Point: personal communication, July 1971.

secure the modern services and facilities that were becoming available in Sand Point. Other than the school, water, power, and small store with very limited supplies, there are no services or facilities in Squaw Harbor—no airfield, air service, local roads, mail service, telephones, health service, movie theater, community hall, saloon, or restaurant. And, the school service is intermittent. Built in 1924, the school closed in 1946, reopened after the Unga school closed in 1959, and closed again in 1970.²¹

While Squaw Harbor's population was declining, Sand Point's was increasing rapidly. It more than doubled between 1950 and 1960, and increased by 42 percent in the next decade (Table 2). In addition to a school that opened in 1923,²² Sand Point has acquired an airfield, twice weekly air service (weather permitting), local roads, health clinic, local and long distance telephone service, church, community building, library, jail, large store, liquor store, bar, restaurant, two movie theaters, and a bakery.

Clearly government and industry decisions to concentrate services and facilities in Sand Point rather than in Squaw Harbor reinforced the migration trend already in progress.

Flock Migration: The tendency of migrants to follow relatives and friends to new villages also sustains migration. When people have relatives and friends in another village, they frequently visit, and in the course of these visits they expand their network of social relations in the host village. Then, as pressures to emigrate mount, they exhibit a natural tendency to follow their friends and relatives to the new village. This tendency is more or less characteristic of all the Aleut village complexes.

²¹Lorraine N. Robinson, Statistical Information assistant, Alaska Department of Education, Juneau: personal communication, February 5, 1973.

²²Alaska Department of Education, *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, 1924, p. 65.

Summary

The intervillage migration of Shumagin Aleuts in the twentieth century indicates a common pattern. Shumagin Aleuts tended to migrate within their village complex; geographic proximity and familiarity were key determinants of their choice of village. Equally important, they migrated to the nuclear village, which offered the best job opportunities and highest level of community services. This migration trend was reinforced by government and industry policies favoring the location of services in villages that were already attracting migrants, and by the tendency of migrants to follow friends and relatives to a new village.

Unalaska Village Complex

The Unalaska case shows another way that government policy affects village migration; government resettlement policies in the Unalaska village complex hastened the process of migration to the nuclear village. Unlike the wholly voluntary nature of consolidation at nuclear villages in the Shumagins, consolidation of Unalaska Aleuts entailed some coercion.

The voluntary migration occurring in the Unalaska village complex before World War II reflected the same processes as the Shumagin case. The now deserted villages of Biorka, Kashega, Chernovsky, and Makushin did not have local economies sufficient to support their populations after sea otter hunting ended. Makushin did have a floating salmon cannery, but it operated only periodically between 1916 and 1928.²³ In the prewar period, members of these villages were moving to Unalaska, the nuclear village, which offered the best job opportunities and community services in the Unalaska village complex.

This migration was interrupted early in World War II when the federal government evacuated all Unalaska Aleuts to southeast-

²³*Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1916-29.

ern Alaska.²⁴ When the evacuation ended in 1945, the government completed the consolidation process; it returned evacuees to Unalaska Village, and officials informed them that no government services would be provided to the other villages.²⁵

Unalaska Village

Economy: The economy at Unalaska Village has been volatile throughout the century. Unalaska Village was out of the mainstream of both the cod and salmon fisheries and attracted no canneries. Limited by the amount a family could process by hand, Aleuts fished for cod and salmon only on a small scale. But other economic activity occurred there on an intermittent basis, providing periodic jobs for members of other villages in the complex.

Early in this century thousands of prospectors en route to the Nome gold rush passed through Unalaska Village, many remaining the winter. This created abundant construction jobs for a few years until the boom in gold mining subsided. During the 1920's fur trading companies operated from Unalaska Village, and between 1928 and 1935 Unalaska Village and adjacent Dutch Harbor were major producers of cured herring in Alaska. Throughout the century a supply station for ships bound for the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean has operated in Dutch Harbor, providing jobs at the supply station, warehouse, and docks.²⁶ With no means of cash employment in their own villages, Aleuts from Makushin, Biorka, Chernovsky, and Kashaga temporarily or permanently moved to Unalaska Village.

²⁴ All Aleuts west of Unimak Island were evacuated to Southeastern Alaska in 1942. While no official reason for the Unimak cutoff was given, to my knowledge, it is noteworthy that all the commercial canneries in the Aleutians were located at or east of Unimak Island.

²⁵ Jones, Field Notes.

²⁶ Murray C. Morgan, *Bridge to Russia: Those Amazing Aleutians*, 1947, pp. 131-34. Lois D. Kitchener, *Flag Over the North*, 1954, p. 129. *Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1929-36. Jones, Field Notes.

Community Services: The relatively high level of community services and facilities at Unalaska Village before World War II encouraged continued migration to the village. An American school has served Unalaska Village since 1890, while only one other village in the Unalaska village complex, Kashega, ever had a school, which operated only between 1926 and 1933. Supply ships, mail boats, and Coast Guard cutters called at Unalaska Village. For several decades early in the century, a doctor, associated with a Methodist mission, was stationed in the village. In 1934 the Bureau of Indian Affairs built and staffed a hospital. Unalaska Village also had two markets and usually a bar. Most importantly, it was an administrative center for the Russian Orthodox church and the site of the most impressive Russian church edifice in the Aleutians. The priest who served the area was also stationed at Unalaska Village.²⁷

Migration: The populations of the four now extinct Unalaska villages had declined seriously by 1940. Chernovsky had only a few residents (it was not even reported in the official census), and Kashega, Biorka, and Makushin had only twenty-six, twenty, and ten members respectively (Table 2). A 1940 household census of six Aleut villages, including Unalaska Village, shows that of thirty-seven migrants from Chernovsky, Makushin, Biorka, and Kashega, thirty-five had moved to Unalaska Village.²⁸

Summary

Like the Shumagins, migration in the Unalaska village complex followed the pattern of consolidation at the nuclear village. But unlike the Shumagins, the Unalaska case involved a coercive government resettlement policy which rendered the people involved helpless to control their pace of change.

²⁷ Emil Kowalczyk, assistant area director, education, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior: personal communication, February 12, 1973. Mary Winchell, missionary at Unalaska between 1911 and 1923: personal communication, November 11, 1967. Jones, Field Notes.

²⁸ Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge Census, 1940.

Unimak Village Complex

The Unimak village complex includes one case that varies from the characteristic pattern of consolidation within the village complex. A majority of residents from one dying village moved outside the Unimak area.

The Unimak village complex includes Pauloff Harbor and Company Harbor on Sannak Island and Ikatan and False Pass on Unimak Island. At their closest point Sannak and Unimak islands are separated by thirteen miles, and the villages on these islands functioned as an interdependent unit. The only extant village in the complex is False Pass.

Economy

Recent settlement of Unimak and Sannak islands began early in this century with the introduction of cod stations. Cod fishing and salting were the dominant economic activities until the 1920's when the industry declined.²⁹ After that Unimak and Sannak villagers concentrated on fox farming and salmon fishing.

The salmon industry began in the Unimak area in 1916 when Pacific American Fisheries opened the only cannery to exist in the Unimak village complex at Ikatan. In 1928 the company moved the cannery from Ikatan to False Pass where it has since operated continuously.³⁰ False Pass, then, became the only economically viable village in the complex.

Because of the existence of a cannery in the area where men could sell their fish, Unimak Aleuts turned increasingly to salmon fishing. However, the cannery at False Pass was not sufficient to

²⁹U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1906-11; 1913-22.

³⁰*Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1917-65. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, *Alaska Commercial Fishery Operators*, 1961-71.

sustain the populations of the other three villages. The populations of both Ikatan and Company Harbor dispersed during the 1930's and 1940's. Though precise data are lacking, fragmentary evidence suggests that a significant proportion of these migrants moved to False Pass, and some to Pauloff Harbor.

Pauloff Harbor Migration

The population of Pauloff Harbor proved more enduring. It did not decline seriously until the 1960's. By 1971 only three persons remained in the village.

Despite better job opportunities and community services in False Pass than Pauloff Harbor, despite the geographic proximity of these villages, and despite their long history of interdependence, False Pass did not attract a substantial number of Pauloff Harbor's recent migrants. Between 1960 and 1970, the population of False Pass increased by twenty-one persons; if we attribute even half of this increase to immigration from Pauloff Harbor, that would represent only 13 percent of Pauloff Harbor's 1960 population (Table 2).

Three factors explain False Pass's inability to attract Pauloff Harbor migrants. First, the economy at False Pass is limited to the summer salmon season. Second, the harbor is relatively unprotected, requiring fishermen to move their vessels considerable distances during the frequent Aleutian storms and high winds.³¹ Third and most important, Pauloff Harbor villagers' *orbit of mobility* exceeded the limits of the Unimak village complex. They acquired large enough vessels in the 1950's and 1960's to travel to villages outside the Unimak area. Many Pauloff Harbor fishermen were as familiar with King Cove on the South Peninsula and Sand Point in the Shumagins as they were with False Pass, and both of these villages offered better job opportunities and community services than False Pass.

³¹Robert F.A. Studds, *U.S. Coast Pilot*, Vol. 9, 1955, p. 331. Robert D. Jones, Manager, Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge: personal communication, February 1973.

King Cove, the closer of the two villages, lacked space to accommodate immigrants. Sand Point, however, attracted a substantial proportion of Pauloff Harbor migrants: twenty-two during the 1950's, representing 32 percent of Pauloff Harbor's 1950 population, and thirty-two during the 1960's, constituting 41 percent of Pauloff Harbor's 1960 population.

Sand Point attracted Pauloff Harbor migrants because it offered better opportunities than either King Cove or False Pass: available land for houses and nearly year-round employment. In addition, Pauloff Harbor emigrants perceived a comfortable life in Sand Point because of the high level of public services there and the similarity in acculturation levels between the two villages.

The Pauloff Harbor to Sand Point migration dramatically illustrates the pattern of flock migration. Several large extended families from Pauloff Harbor drifted into Sand Point, sister following brother, parent following offspring, and so forth. Of the two major native residential sections in Sand Point, one is now called "Little Sannak," after the island on which Pauloff Harbor is located.

Summary

The Pauloff Harbor migration to a village outside the village complex reveals that extended mobility produces another variation in the characteristic Aleut migration pattern. Because Pauloff Harbor Aleuts had means to travel regularly to places beyond their village complex, they became familiar with more villages, and increased their alternatives.

South Peninsula Village Complex

Conditions exist in the South Peninsula village complex which mitigate the influence of both job opportunities and geographic proximity on village migration patterns. The only existing

village without a local economy has failed to merge at the nuclear village in the village complex or at any other Aleut village.

The South Peninsula village complex includes the deserted villages of Ozernoi, Morzhovoi, and Thin Point and the extant villages of King Cove and Belkofsky. The only information about a village at Ozernoi other than an 1890 census figure is from a government fisheries report indicating the operation of a cannery there between 1889 and 1890.³² Neither Morzhovoi nor Thin Point attracted canneries, and their populations dispersed early in the century. Belkofsky, however, persisted. It is the only Aleut village without a viable economy that persists in the presence of an economically strong village in the village complex, King Cove, located only thirteen miles away.

King Cove

Economy and Settlement: King Cove was settled in 1911 when Pacific American Fisheries opened a salmon cannery there.³³ The early settlers to the village included a significant proportion of European fishermen. Of the first ten families to move to King Cove, five were headed by a European father and an Aleut mother. As in other eastern Aleut villages, white forbears had a profound impact on acculturation levels, resulting in the replacement of many traditional culture forms with Western ones.

Since its inception in 1911 the King Cove salmon cannery has operated continuously, diversifying to crab processing in 1958, and adding a fish roe processing operation in the 1960's.³⁴ As a

³²Jefferson F. Moser, *The Salmon and Salmon Fisheries of Alaska*, 1899, pp. 171-72.

³³U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1912, p. 49. This cannery is now owned by Peter Pan Seafoods.

³⁴*Pacific Fishermen Yearbooks*, 1917-65. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1961-71.

result of its relatively stable economy, King Cove attracted migrants continuously until the 1960 to 1970 period when migration levelled off (Table 2).

Community Services: Like other growing villages in the Aleutians, King Cove obtained many modern community services and facilities, probably achieving a higher level than any other Aleut village. In 1969 King Cove had a school, teachers' quarters, church, airfield, air service, dock, marine railway, three stores, gift shop, liquor store, bar, post office, health clinic, and community water, power, and sewer systems. In addition the village had secured a grant for a small boat harbor.

Village Saturation: Despite its relatively stable economy and high level of public services, King Cove's population stopped growing in the 1960's because space in the village became saturated. King Cove is located on a sand spit between a bay and lagoon. The land across the lagoon has not attracted residents because the entrance to the lagoon is difficult to cross. The company owns twenty-seven of the fifty-five acres of the sand spit; the rest of the spit is the only land available for private houses in King Cove.³⁵ Nearly all of this land was occupied by the mid-1960's.

Village saturation explains why migration to King Cove was limited in the past decade; it does not explain why Belkofsky failed to merge with King Cove in the fifty years before then.

Belkofsky

Economy: Belkofsky was not an aboriginal village site. In 1823 the Russians settled the village with Aleuts because of the large sea otter banks nearby. Located on a bluff on the south slope of a mountain, the village has no harbor or anchorage.³⁶

³⁵ Alaska State Housing Authority, *City of King Cove, Comprehensive Development Plan*, 1967, p. 24.

³⁶ Porter, p. 87.

During the halcyon days of sea otter hunting, Belkofsky was probably the most affluent village in the Aleutians. In 1880 three rival stores competed for Belkofsky's trade. Aleuts there imported building materials and furniture for their homes from San Francisco. They built an impressive Russian Orthodox church, and Belkofsky became the church administrative center for the eastern portion of the Aleutians.³⁷

By the end of the sea otter hunting period, however, Belkofsky was impoverished. Because it had no harbor or anchorage, fisheries companies did not locate there. Like other Aleuts, those in Belkofsky engaged in fox trapping in the 1920's and 1930's, but the lack of big fox-producing islands in the area limited trapping activities considerably. Belkofsky men developed a work pattern characteristic of many Alaska native villages—leaving the village each summer for wage employment. They worked on fishing boats, at the King Cove cannery, or at the seal rookery on the Pribilof Islands.

Community Services: Without a cannery or any other local means for earning income in this century, Belkofsky has not grown, and therefore has been unable to secure most modern conveniences. In contrast to King Cove, Belkofsky has no store, clinic, bar, or communication and transportation services, and Aleuts there still use gas and kerosene lamps, water hauled from the creek, and outhouses.

Migration: Considering that Belkofsky Aleuts frequently visit, and at times, temporarily move to King Cove—for summer work, medical care, mail, communication and plane services, and to shop at the markets, liquor store, and bar—one would expect them to follow the same pattern as the Unga migrants to Sand Point.

Some Belkofsky Aleuts did move permanently to King Cove, but never to the extent that Unga's population migrated to Sand

³⁷Ivan Petroff, *Report of the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, 1884, pp. 18-19. Porter, p. 87.

Point. A 1940 household census of King Cove reveals only twelve Belkofsky immigrants. Even if we assume that all these migrants moved to King Cove in the prior decade that would represent only 9 percent of Belkofsky's 1930 population. A 1950 household census of King Cove indicated an additional ten Belkofsky immigrants, representing only 7 percent of Belkofsky's 1940 population. No detailed 1960 census exists for King Cove, but my household census of the village taken in 1969 shows a total of twenty-eight additional Belkofsky immigrants in the prior two decades, representing less than a quarter of Belkofsky's 1950 population (Table 2).³⁸

Although King Cove's space became saturated in the 1960's, this does not explain why Belkofsky's population failed to consolidate at King Cove during the previous fifty years. On the other hand, very disparate levels of acculturation have existed between Belkofsky and King Cove Aleuts. This may well explain Belkofsky's failure to follow the general consolidation pattern of other village complexes in the Aleutians.

Acculturation Disparity: There is an upward acculturation cline in the Aleutians from west to east stemming from the greater number of white settlers and whites married to Aleuts in the east where the fisheries industries were concentrated. Thus, the villages in the Unimak village complex and to the east of it show much higher levels of acculturation than the westerly villages, with one exception—Belkofsky. Because Belkofsky attracted no canneries and few white fishermen, white contact there has been minimal.

The acculturation disparity between King Cove and Belkofsky is striking. To mention only the most visible signs of acculturation difference, King Cove has no Russian Orthodox church or church organizations, no chiefs or elders, no community-owned steam bath, and few speak the Aleut language. In Belkofsky, on

³⁸U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1940 and 1950 Censuses. Dorothy M. Jones, Household Census, 1969.

the other hand, there is still an active chief who serves traditional functions such as organizing the village for joint activities and arbitrating disputes. Belkofsky has community steam baths; the Russian Orthodox church has remained a dominant influence in the village, and the Aleut language is widely spoken.

When Unga migrants moved to Sand Point the transition was relatively comfortable because acculturation levels were similar in the two villages. When Belkofsky Aleuts visit or temporarily move to King Cove, however, they may well experience a strong sense of discomfort.

Summary

This analysis of the relations between two villages in the South Peninsula village complex reveals another condition that has modified the characteristic Aleut migration pattern. In this case neither improved job opportunities nor geographic proximity led to the merger of an economically nonviable village with the nuclear village because of significant differences in acculturation levels in the two villages.

North Peninsula Village Complex

Nelson Lagoon, the only remaining village in the North Peninsula village complex, persists without a fish processing plant in the village and with few modern conveniences.

The North Peninsula village complex includes Port Moller, Herendeen Bay, and Nelson Lagoon, all located on the open Bering Sea, an inhospitable setting. Nonetheless, this area has been a commercial fishing center throughout most of the century.

Port Moller has been the most active fishing area in the village complex. Salmon canneries operated there between 1912 and 1963. Since then, Port Moller has served as a fish camp, sending its

purchases to canneries at False Pass and King Cove.³⁹ Despite abundant fishing activity at Port Moller, it has never developed a permanent population because it has lacked a water supply during the winter.⁴⁰

Herendeen Bay was the site of a salmon cannery between 1913 and 1931.⁴¹ After the cannery closed, Herendeen Bay's population soon dispersed, a large proportion of it moving to Nelson Lagoon. Since then, Nelson Lagoon has been the only village in the area with a permanent population.

Nelson Lagoon

Because of the excellent fishing resources at Nelson Lagoon and nearby Bear River, salmon packing companies became interested in the site early in the century. Nelson Lagoon was settled about 1906 with the introduction of a salmon saltery. To attract workers to Nelson Lagoon, the superintendent of the saltery lured natives from Bear River, twenty-three miles away, with the promise of opening a store.⁴² Between 1915 and 1917 a salmon cannery operated periodically at Nelson Lagoon.⁴³ No local processing plant has operated there since, and Nelson Lagoon fishermen market their fish at Port Moller.

The cannery at Nelson Lagoon probably closed because of poor harbor facilities. Nelson Lagoon's harbor could not accom-

³⁹Dean E. Siverson, Peter Pan Seafoods, Inc., Seattle: personal communication, February 26, 1973.

⁴⁰The Port Moller cannery was located a long way from a freshwater source. The above-ground water pipe could not be used during the winter because it had to be drained to prevent freezing.

⁴¹*Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1917-32.

⁴²U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1906, pp. 41-42.

⁴³*Pacific Fisherman Yearbooks*, 1916-28.

moderate the larger fishing vessels that were coming into use. Like Unga fishermen, those in Nelson Lagoon were limited to using small boats that could be beached during the winter.

Unlike Unga, Nelson Lagoon persisted despite its competitive disadvantage in the salmon fishing industry. Its persistence is even more perplexing when we consider that the village lacks most modern conveniences. It has no water, power, or sewer facilities. The private wells in the community produce brackish water so that people must drink rain water. As there is no store, Nelson Lagoon natives must depend on an annual supply ship that calls at Port Moller. The closest mail service is at Port Moller, and until recently, when two Nelson Lagoon residents made private planes available, villagers used dog sleds for transportation.

The central reason for Nelson Lagoon's persistence appears to be its isolation. Nelson Lagoon natives have no option for migration within their village complex, and they have never developed regular contact with villages outside the complex. Located on the open Bering Sea and limited to small boats, they had no means for travelling to other Aleut villages.

One might argue that Nelson Lagoon persists not because its population is isolated from and unfamiliar with other villages, but because the villagers are not bereft of a means of livelihood. Despite their competitive disadvantage in the fishing industry, fish resources in the Nelson Lagoon area are rich enough to provide some cash income for villagers, and they do not have to leave the village for work. But this argument is not borne out by the following analysis of villages that have been isolated throughout the century. Two of these isolated villages persist without any local means of earning an income. This indicates that isolation is a more potent force in village persistence than having a source of income in the village.

ISOLATED VILLAGES

Of the four Aleut villages that have been isolated throughout this century, only one, Attu, has disappeared, and this was due to

a government relocation policy. In 1945 when the Attuans returned from imprisonment in Japan, the government offered them the option of living in southeastern Alaska or at the Aleut village of Atka. Attuans chose to live at Atka.⁴⁴

Only one of the three extant isolated villages, Akutan, provides local employment; wage employment has been available there almost continuously throughout this century. From 1912 to 1940, a whaling station operated in Akutan Bay. Akutan was also an active cod fishing village during most of this period.⁴⁵ Currently, Wakefield Fisheries operates a crab processing ship in Akutan Bay, which provides employment for virtually the entire Akutan labor force.

As a result of relative affluence, Akutan has been able to provide a number of modern services and facilities including a locally constructed hydroelectric system. Akutan also has air service.

In addition to providing jobs and relatively modern conveniences, Akutan is a very cohesive village. This stems, in part, from the fact that few whites have settled there, and the traditional system of decision making by chief and elders has endured.

The reasons for Akutan's persistence, then, seem clear. Life in the village is physically comfortable, cash-paying jobs are available, and social bonds are relatively secure and gratifying. The first two of these conditions do not exist in Atka and Nikolski, the other isolated Aleut villages.

Atka and Nikolski

Atka and Nikolski persist decade after decade despite impoverishment, few modern conveniences, and the near absence of local job opportunities.

⁴⁴Jones, Field Notes.

⁴⁵Phillip T. Spaulding, "An Ethnohistorical Study of Akutan: An Aleut Community," 1955, p. 22.

Community Services: Community services and facilities in Atka and Nikolski are meager. Both villages have a cooperative market, Russian Orthodox church, and elementary school. Atka also has a community water system. While Nikolski has an airfield and air service, Atka's only means of transportation is by navy tug which calls once a month. Neither village has boats large enough to permit travel to other villages.

Economy: After sea otter hunting ended, neither Atka nor Nikolski had a viable local economy. Both villages were out of the mainstream of the cod and salmon fishing activities.

With the boom in fox farming in the 1920's, however, both Atka and Nikolski became relatively affluent for a few years. Located near big fox-producing islands, both village corporations and individuals secured licenses to farm these islands. In some years the profits from fox enterprises were considerable for an Aleut village, reaching a peak of over \$65,000 in Atka in 1931. Nikolski Aleuts realized sufficient profits from fox farming to purchase a relatively large vessel, the *Umnak Native*, which was wrecked in 1933.⁴⁶

The crab industry that developed in the Aleutians in the post-World War II period never took hold in Atka or Nikolski. Nikolski has a very poor harbor, limited to boats that are small enough to haul up on the beach. Although Atka's harbor offers somewhat better anchorage than Nikolski's,⁴⁷ the processing plants in the vicinity are at Adak, a naval station that offers advantages not available at Atka—excellent water, communication, and transportation systems.

There are few local jobs in Atka and Nikolski today. A sheep ranch, introduced at Nikolski in 1926, provides about five summer

⁴⁶The Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge Report, 1939. Gerald D. Berreman, "Inquiry into Community Integration in an Aleutian Village," 1955, p. 52.

⁴⁷Robert F.A. Studds, pp. 401, 427.

jobs and one full-time job. The schools in both villages hire a janitor. The Indian Health Service hires a part-time health aide in each village, and the U.S. Postal Service hires a postmaster in Nikolski.

While relying to some extent on subsistence production, Atka and Nikolski Aleuts also require cash. Consequently most of the men leave the villages for summer employment. A few Atka men work at the Pribilof seal rookery and crab freezing plants at Unalaska. Most Atka men, however, fish at Port Williams near Kodiak. This pattern began shortly after World War II when the chief of Atka, working on a supply ship in the Atka area, met the skipper of a fishing vessel from Port Williams. Impressed with the chief's work stamina, the skipper invited him to join his crew.

While a few Nikolski men fish during the summer, most do other work—seal processing at St. Paul in the Pribilofs, warehouse work at the Cold Bay airport, sheep shearing at ranches on the other side of Umnak Island and at Chernovsky on Unalaska Island, and fish processing, primarily at Unalaska Village.

Migration: Despite the poverty, dearth of local jobs, lack of modern conveniences, growing emigration of the young (characteristic of all native villages in Alaska), and hardship and psychological stress caused by the men's periodic absences from the village, Atka and Nikolski persist and show no signs of consolidating with another Aleut village.

The places where Atka and Nikolski Aleuts work have failed to attract a significant number of permanent migrants from the two villages. Chernovsky and Umnak sheep ranches are not part of villages and have no permanent populations. Cold Bay primarily comprises white Federal Aviation Administration and state employees who maintain the airport there. Cold Bay had only two Nikolski and no Atka migrants in 1970.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Jones, Field Notes.

One of the Aleut villages where both Atka and Nikolski Aleuts work is St. Paul on the Pribilofs, which offers only seasonal employment. Although no detailed migration information exists for St. Paul, a 1966 census shows a total of only seventeen immigrants without indicating their origin.⁴⁹ Even if half were from Nikolski and Atka, it would not constitute a significant migration.

On the surface, Unalaska would seem an attractive place for Atka and Nikolski Aleuts to move. It is now the center of the king crab industry in the Aleutians; it also has a higher level of community services and facilities than Atka or Nikolski, and a permanent native population. Yet, Atka and Nikolski Aleuts who work there apparently find it unattractive. Few migrate there permanently; my 1970 household census of Unalaska reveals only one Nikolski and two Atka immigrants. This may be because Nikolski and Atka are relatively cohesive, close-knit traditional villages, while Unalaska has become a white-dominated, fractionated community, especially since the crab boom there in the 1960's and an increasing number of whites.⁵⁰

SUMMARY

This paper examines intervillage migration patterns in the Aleutians and the factors that influence them. Most intervillage migration is to nearby villages with which migrants are familiar and have interdependent ties. I use the term *village complex* to signify a cluster of geographically close and interdependent villages. There are five village complexes in the Aleutians, and there are four villages that are isolated from the others.

⁴⁹Don C. Foote, Victor Fischer, and George W. Rogers, *St. Paul Community Study*, 1968, p. 33.

⁵⁰Dorothy M. Jones, *A Study of Social and Economic Problems in Unalaska, An Aleut Village*, 1969, pp. 54-65.

Although no fish processing plants are located at Nelson Lagoon, the rich fishing resource at and near the village enables residents to earn a living. The question arises whether Akutan and Nelson Lagoon persist primarily because they have local means of earning an income or because they are isolated from and therefore unfamiliar with other Aleut villages. The persistence of Atka and Nikolski in the virtual absence of local means of earning an income indicates that isolation is, indeed, the stronger determinant of village persistence. If the lure of jobs were a stronger force, Atka and Nikolski would have long since disappeared.

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