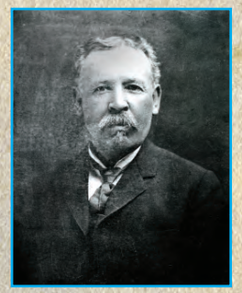
National Park Service — U.S. Department of the Interior Lake Clark National Park and Preserve

The Life and Times of John W. Clark of Nushagak, Alaska, 1846–1896



John B. Branson

JOHN W. CLARK (1846–1896) was one of the first Euroamerican residents of Alaska, arriving at St. Michael with the Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition to build a worldwide telegraph line in 1866.

He was a distinguished trader on the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Nushagak Rivers between 1868 and 1896. Clark lived at Nushagak nearly twenty years and was a founder of the world-renowned Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishing industry. He was an entrepreneurial fur trader and merchant and likely the first English speaking resident of the Bristol Bay region. Clark was a close friend of the Native people of western Alaska and traveled widely about the region by dog sled and baidarka. He married and established a large extended family in western Alaska.

Despite having Lake Clark, Lake Clark Pass and Clarks Point named after him, very little is known about Clark's early life. For the first time, some of Clark's enigmatic life is revealed in this biography of a pioneer of nineteenth century western Alaska.

> **September 26, 1891:** At Nushagak...there has lived for nearly a score of years a man whose personal qualifications for a worldly career, whose reading, breeding, manly characteristics, and genial traits have been a loss to the world for all time. I refer to John W. Clark. His object in devoting himself to such a hermit life has not been material gain, but his peculiar, thoughtful qualities of mind have given him that taste for solitude and the natural grandeur of Alaska which has been displayed by many other brilliant men who have visited that mysterious Territory. —**Alfred B. Schanz,** *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*

COVER PHOTOGRAPHS:

Watercolor painting of Nushagak village by Henry W. Eliott, circa 1879, with the newly constructed Alaska Commercial Company buildings on the back cover. Eliott reported the Nushagak trading station specialized in reindeer hides and walrus ivory.
Courtesy of University of California, Berkeley, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology.

Front cover portrait of John W. Clark, circa 1887–1888.
Courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

ISBN 978-0-9796432-6-2
9 780979 643262

The Life and Times of John W. Clark of Nushagak, Alaska, 1846–1896 John B. Branson

The Life and Times of John W. Clark of Nushagak, Alaska, 1846–1896

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
240 West 5th Avenue, Suite 236
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering the conservation of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.

The Cultural Resource Programs of the National Park Service have responsibilities that include stewardship of historic buildings, museum collections, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, oral and written histories, and ethnographic resources.

Our mission is to identify, evaluate and preserve the cultural resources of the park areas and to bring an understanding of these resources to the public. Congress has mandated that we preserve these resources because they are important components of our national and personal identity.

Research/Resources Management Report NPS/AR/CRR-2012-77

Published by the United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve

Date: 2012

ISBN: 978-0-9796432-6-2

Cover: "Nushagak, Alaska 1879, Nushagak River, Bristol Bay, Alaska, Reindeer and Walrus ivory trading station of the Alaska Commercial Co.," watercolor by Henry W. Elliott, 17-237, courtesy of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, California. Inset: John W. Clark photographed in San Francisco circa 1887–1888. Photo courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

The Life and Times of John W. Clark of Nushagak, Alaska, 1846–1896

John B. Branson

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
2012

A circa 1880s photograph that belonged to Clark and was annotated, possibly by him: "Eskimo caches or store houses with entrance to a hut." Salmon hang from the left cache while the center cache has king salmon filets, or possibly seal skins, hanging from a drying pole. The column on the hill at Nushagak marks the grave of village founder Fedor Kolmakov. Photo courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection, U.S. National Park Service.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vii

GLOSSARY x

LIST OF MAPS xiii

INTRODUCTION 1

TIMELINE OF THE LIFE OF JOHN W. CLARK 5

CHAPTER 1: Obscure Roots 7

CHAPTER 2: The Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition, 1866–1867 15

CHAPTER 3: The Alaska Commercial Company and Trading on the Yukon River, 1868–1874 41

CHAPTER 4: Clark Trades on the Kuskokwim River, 1874–1878 49

CHAPTER 5: Clark Becomes Ensconced on Nushagak Bay, 1879 53

CHAPTER 6: The U.S. Signal Service-Smithsonian Years in Nushagak, 1881–1885 65

CHAPTER 7: The Demise of Charles McKay and His Legacy of Scientific Inquiry 79

CHAPTER 8: The Moravian Missionaries Arrive at Nushagak Bay in 1884, and the Dawn of the Bristol Bay Canned Salmon Industry 93

CHAPTER 9: Clark Marries, and Rival Churches Spar, 1887 113

CHAPTER 10: Clark and the Bristol Bay Commercial Salmon Industry 123

CHAPTER 11: Clark and the Wood River Fish Trap 153

CHAPTER 12: The Alaska Commercial Company and Trader Clark 159

CHAPTER 13: Clark and the Naming of Lake Clark, 1890–1891 167

CHAPTER 14: The Last Years of John W. Clark of Nushagak 199

CHAPTER 15: Clark's Contribution to Alaska History 219
BIBLIOGRAPHY 225
INDEX 241

Acknowledgments

ALTHOUGH writing is essentially a solitary endeavor, a book such as this relies on the assistance and prior work of many others. I freely quote many other writers in order to fully flesh-out the life and times of John W. Clark; James W. VanStone and John A. Hussey being two of the most important. There are many other people and institutions due my gratitude for helping me every step of the way as I researched and wrote.

First to credit are Tim Troll, Executive Director of the Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood Tikchik Land Trust, with whom the National Park Service has a cooperative agreement to produce a biography of John W. Clark, and Jerry Liboff, expert on Bristol Bay history. Both encouraged me to write about Clark and freely shared their own research with me. Also, I want to thank Hjalmer "Ofi" Olson, local historian and emeritus CEO of the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, for reading an early draft of the book and sharing his knowledge of Nushagak Bay history.

Several Clark descendents gave me encouragement and material help in the form of family lore and the sharing of family photographs. First among those was the late Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich, the last remaining grandchild of Clark at the time of her death on February 27, 2011, and her sons Herman Herrmann, Jr., and Dennis Herrmann. In addition, the late John W. Nicholson supported my research about his grandfather, and his sons William and Hans Nicholson have been very helpful. Robin Samuelsen of Dillingham, John Clark's great-great grandson, read a draft manuscript and gave me much encouragement.

Another direct Clark descendent, a great-great-granddaughter, Georgia Tolbert of Anchorage, who was a history student of mine forty-three years ago at the Bristol Bay High School in Naknek, documented her Thiele families' kindred ties to Clark for me while he was trader on the lower Kuskokwim River in the 1870s.

A debt of gratitude is also due to Jo Antonson, Alaska State Historian, who encouraged me to use the context of Clark's life in Alaska to supplement the paucity of primary source materials. Roz Goodman, a librarian, read the first draft and made important suggestions to improve the book.

Kathie Arndt of the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Elmer

E. Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Andrei Znamenski of the University of Memphis both kindly provided me previously unpublished facts about Clark translated from Russian Orthodox Church records.

Ann Fienup-Riordan shared some of her research with me. Ray Hudson read the manuscript and offered good advice. Ray also put me in contact with San Francisco area researcher Marvin Collins, who generously shared materials he had on Clark and on nineteenth-century Bristol Bay history. Historian Walt Borneman read the manuscript and offered some constructive advice.

John Weise shared his genealogy of the Vasili Orlov family of Nushagak, which significantly adds to the knowledge of the background of many Clark descendents. A special thanks is due to Sharon Prien, librarian at the Alaska Resources Library & Information Service (ARLIS), who kept me in books and articles related to nineteenth-century western Alaska history.

Kay Shelton, formerly of the Alaska State Historical Library in Juneau and other staff there, helped me improve the manuscript, including Anastasia Tarmann. Bruce Parham, Director of the Regional Archives at the National Archives and Records Administration Anchorage office; Steve Henrikson, Curator of Collections of the Alaska State Museum; and Aron Crowell, Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Arctic Studies Center in Anchorage, have been of great assistance.

Other Alaskans who assisted me include—Mel Brown; Melvin Monsen, Sr.; archeologist Matt O'Leary; Yup'ik translators Marie Meade and Monica Shelton; Bruce Merrell of the Loussac Library; Rose Speranza and Rachel Seale at the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks; and Bryan Taylor, Reference Specialist at the Atwood Resource Center of the Anchorage Museum.

A number of researchers assisted me in attempting to trace the obscure early years of Clark. Researcher Mary L. White of Ithaca, New York, first made the suggestion that Clark might have been an orphan. Professor Tyler Anbinder of George Washington University suggested I contact researcher Mary Elizabeth Brown of New York City in an attempt to locate Clark's Catholic roots in the city. In addition, Ms. Brown introduced me to researcher and graphic designer Janice Carapellucci of Brooklyn, New York, who spent many days trying to trace Clark's still-elusive background.

Janice copy-edited and designed this book—my sincere thanks to her for all she has done to make the Clark biography attractive, historically factual and informative.

Mitchell Toda of the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Harold Wallace and Ellen Alers at the National Museum of American History, historian and author Sandra Schlachtmeyer, staff, including Hannah Palin at the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, and Greg Schmitz, media conservator at Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association, helped.

Peter J. Blodget and Anne Reid from The Huntington Library, David Kessler and Susan Snyder from the Bancroft Library, Victoria Bradshaw and Alicja Egbert from the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, Susan Goldstein from the San Francisco Public Library, staff at the California State Archives in Sacramento, staff members at the California Historical Society in San Francisco and staff at Stanford University's Cecil Green Library, Special Collections, all accorded me much assistance. Ruth Steele from Western Washington University Archives & Records Center and Lanie Graf at the Moravian Church Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, gave me access to records and photographs pertinent to Clark.

Several of my colleagues from Lake Clark National Park and Preserve are also owed my thanks and acknowledgment for the help. Elizabeth Wasserman, Katie Myers, Dan Young and Ginger Irvine helped me in innumerable ways to make this project succeed. My supervisor Jeanne Schaaf, Chief of Cultural Resources, and Superintendent Joel Hard always gave me the utmost encouragement and support in the endeavor to tell the story of Clark.

Lastly, I would like to thank the tremendous generosity of Bob Gillam and his son Rob Gillam of McKinley Capital Management in making the biography of John W. Clark come to fruition. I also want to thank the Bristol Bay Native Corporation and its Shareholder & Corporate Relations Manager Andria Agli and for their interest in and support of the project. Thanks to Mark and Sandy Lang of Port Alsworth for their kind support of the book.

John B. Branson
Port Alsworth, Alaska
August 2011

Glossary

Baidara Russian word for a large open skin boat similar to the Eskimo-made umiak, occasionally fitted with a sail.

Baidarka Russian word for a portable skin boat used by Eskimos, Aleuts and Dena'ina Athabascans which holds one to three persons. The baidarka is a form of kayak.

Barabara Russian word for a Native Alaskan semi-subterranean house, used by most Natives of western Alaska in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Beach gang Salmon cannery crew responsible for launching scows and boats, unloading scows of salmon, and stowing them at the conclusion of the fishing season.

Break-up Time during spring when winter ice is transformed into liquid water and travel is difficult or impossible until there is open water. **Freeze-up** Time during fall when waters turn to ice and travel ceases until the ice is thick enough to support dog teams.

Columbia River salmon boat A sprit-rigged, 25-foot, open, wooden sail boat, pointed at both ends, used in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery during the late nineteenth century.

Creole Person of mixed ancestry, usually with a father who was Russian and a mother who was Alaskan Native. Creoles were often literate and trained to work in positions of leadership for the Russian America Company. Two pairs of prominent father and son Creoles who explored the western Alaska region were Fedor and Petr Kolmakov and Semen and Ivan Lukin.

Dog fish Air-dried salmon used to feed sled dogs, frequently red or sockeye salmon, the most common wild salmon in the Bristol Bay region.

Hegumen The head of a monastery.

Ice pack Floating masses of ice on the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean that prevented sailing ship and steamship navigation from November until late May or June.

Kamleika or **camalaika** Hooded, waterproof, knee-length, marine sea mammal or bear gut outer coat worn by baidarka travelers to keep out water.

Musher Person who drives a dog team.

Odinochka Small trading station run by a single individual.

Outside Refers to any place outside of Alaska, especially the continental United States.

Promyshlenniki Fur hunters, carpenters, shipbuilders, guards, sailors and laborers associated with Siberian merchant groups who came to Russian America to gather furs.

Skiff Shallow-draft, open, wooden boat with pointed bow and square stern propelled by oars, sail or power.

Whaleboat Wooden rowboat, about 25-feet long, pointed at both ends, similar to a Columbia River salmon boat without its sprit sail.

Map 1 The Bristol Bay basin from the book *Bristol Bay* (Alaska Geographic Society, 1978), showing the haunts of John W. Clark, including the village of Kwigillingok on the north side of the mouth of the Kuskokwim River where Clark lived and traded circa 1874–1878. Locations that figure prominently in the story of John W. Clark are circled. Map is copyrighted by Alaska Geographic Society and reprinted with permission of Graphic Arts Books, P.O. Box 56118, Portland, Oregon 97238-6118.

List of Maps

Map 1 Bristol Bay Basin by Alaska Geographic Society, 1978, page xii.

Map 2 Bristol Bay-Cook Inlet-Kodiak Island by Ivan Petroff, 1884, page xiv.

Map 3 Alaska by Ivan Petroff, 1884, page 48.

Map 4 Nushagak and Kvichak Bays, Western Alaska by Hubbel W. Waller Engineering Corporation for the Alaska Steamship Company, 1946, page 78.

Map 5 Andrei K. Glazunov's *Travels in Russian America*, 1841, page 168.

Map 6 A. B. Schanz's Outline Map of the Leslie Expedition of 1890–1891, page 187.

Map 7 Henry Schenck Tanner's North America Map from *A New Universal Atlas*, 1836, page 212.

Map 2 One of Ivan Petroff's maps that accompanied his book on Alaska's 1880 population and resources showing a very small, round Lake Clark. Petroff erroneously ascribed Kichik village to the wrong side of the lake.
Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska by Ivan Petroff, Alaska State Historical Library, HA 201 1880. A 4 P45.

Introduction

"Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away:
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day."[1]
Isaac Watts

John W. Clark photographed in San Francisco circa 1870s or 1880s. H-662
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

THE early life of John W. Clark is an enigma, and the rest of his 50-year life is far from an open book. His name is attached to some important places in Alaska, but no one knows much about him. Lake Clark, a gem of a lake, is endowed with world-class beauty. Lake Clark Pass is the busiest civil aviation route through the southern Alaska Range. Clarks Point is a well-known fishing village in the world's last and greatest wild salmon fishery, the Bristol Bay fishery. Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is one of the best-kept secrets in the United States National Park System. Yet no one knows very much about Clark, the namesake of these fascinating places. Those few who do, know him mainly as the chief trader at the Alaska Commercial Company's post at Nushagak on the Bering Sea coast during the late nineteenth century, but he was much more than that.

Why was Clark enigmatic? He apparently revealed little about himself to his contemporaries and family, and even his numerous descendants know very little about him. With the possible exceptions of a missionary's 1884 account of a conversation with Clark and a reporter's 1891 description of his character, there is nothing definitive known about

1 Charles W. Eliot, *John Gilley of Baker's Island,* first published in *The Century Magazine* in 1899 and as a book in 1904: reprinted by Eastern National Park and Monument Association in cooperation with Acadia National Park, Maine, 1978, 1.

Clark's parents and educational background. Other than his date of birth, October 7, 1846, and a birthplace in California or New York, his first twenty years remain blank.

This sorry state of affairs results in part from virtually none of Clark's papers surviving very far into the twentieth century. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake's fires burned the Alaska Commercial Company headquarters to the ground and likely all of Clark's business-related letters and account books from his Nushagak years between 1879 and 1896.

Perhaps wiser biographers would shy away from a subject such as J. W. Clark, as he was also known, because there are few primary source materials on him. But it seems to me Clark's life was so compelling, because he lived entirely in nineteenth century Alaska, and because so much of those times are not well known by visitors to Lake Clark National Park and Preserve or the public at large. Fortunately for researchers, a number of people met Clark in Russian America in 1866 and 1867—and later in Alaska—and recorded their impressions of him. Those accounts, along with the results of more recent research, provide much of the substance of this book.

It is appropriate for the historian of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve to undertake such a task, because so many park visitors ask, "Who was Clark?" The time is long past due to shed light on the life of Clark.

One incentive to write a biography of Clark came about after an August 20, 2005, speech by Senator Ted Stevens at the memorial service for the late Governor Jay S. Hammond, a long-time resident of Lake Clark. Senator Stevens stated he would introduce a bill in the United States Senate to rename Lake Clark National Park and Preserve the Jay S. Hammond National Park and Preserve. There was an understandable concern by Clark descendants, who were proud of John W. Clark and did not want to see his name removed from the park. Additionally, the Hammond Family did not wish to change the park's name, knowing that Governor Hammond did not approve of such name changes.[2] Senator Stevens asked me to compile a list of Clark descendants living in the Bristol Bay region so he could canvas their sentiments on the possible name change. I sent his office a list of seventeen Clark descendants, and, after consultation and further thought, the Senator never pursued the issue.

2 Bella Hammond (Mrs. Jay Hammond), personal conversation, April 11, 2011.

An additional reason for writing a Clark biography arose in 2008 when the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery celebrated its 125th anniversary, and some people associated with the fishery sought definitive answers to the extent of Clark's long-speculated role in the development of the commercial salmon fishing industry.

In 2008, a cooperative agreement was struck between the Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood-Tikchik Land Trust and Lake Clark National Park and Preserve to develop a traveling historic photo exhibit of the Bristol Bay sailboat fishery, "Sailing For Salmon," and to research the life of John W. Clark and produce a biographical sketch. This book is the product of the partnership.

In discussing the ironies and challenges of Clark research with Alaska State Historian Jo Antonson, she urged an emphasis on the historic context in which Clark lived in western Alaska. Because little has been written about Western Alaska during the late 1800s, my strategy entailed gleaning all the pertinent facts from previously published works that dealt with events in which Clark participated. In addition, new data needed to be located from little-known manuscript materials to offset the paucity of Clark's own papers. Last, I have been the beneficiary of several other people's research, and they have graciously shared their relevant findings on Clark with me.

While doing research, I learned of primary and secondary sources mentioning Clark's involvement in the earliest American activities in the latter days of Russian America—the Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition, 1865–1867. There are a number of other sources chronicling Clark's activities while he was chief trader at the Alaska Commercial Company post at Nushagak, including his pioneering efforts with shore-based salmon salting stations. Because many historic details are lacking from Clark's life, it seemed necessary to tell his story by explaining in detail his involvement in all the developments in which he participated.

Clark also was involved in several other important episodes in the history of western Alaska. He assisted Captain Charles Raymond of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers on the first Federal survey of the "inside" of Alaska's interior in 1869. He worked for the Alaska Commercial Company on the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Nushagak rivers between the late 1860s and mid-1890s; and later as an independent trader and entrepreneur at Nushagak and throughout the Bristol Bay region. He was a

witness to the growth of the Moravian Church in western Alaska, and had a close relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church. He fostered the first scientific collecting of baseline information on the Bristol Bay region by the Smithsonian Institution. And he participated in the growth and development of the Bristol Bay commercial salmon industry.

Clark had a warm and extensive relationship with the Alaska Native people of western Alaska. Several direct descendants of Clark have been kind enough to share their genealogical research, and I have attempted to explain some of the complex connections between families on the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Nushagak rivers. I am afraid I have only touched the surface of this fascinating subject, and ultimately a clearer picture will emerge only after a linguist translates Russian Orthodox Church records into English.

The story of Clark is inextricably linked to the mid- to late-nineteenth century history of Russian America and the early American era in Alaska. Clark was a participant of many important enterprises in western Alaska, beginning by at least the summer of 1866 in St. Michael. He was one of the first permanent Euroamerican residents of Alaska, the first permanent English-speaking resident of Bristol Bay, and one of the very first resident "snow-birds" of Alaska.

Clark was an interesting character, and he lived in a vibrant time in American history. His adult life offers a fascinating glimpse of nineteenth-century Alaska as it emerged from the control of Russia and became part of the United States.

Timeline of the Life of John W. Clark

1846	Born October 7, probably in California or New York
1847–1866	Whereabouts unknown, presumed in New York and San Francisco
1866	In Russian America with Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition by July
1867	In Russian America and arrives in San Francisco on October 8
1868	In San Francisco, in Alaska as a Yukon trader for Pioneer Company at St. Michael, and possibly in New York via steamship and the Isthmus of Panama
1869	In St. Michael and Anvik on the Yukon River as a trader for Alaska Commercial Company (ACC)
1870	In San Francisco, possibly as a telegraph operator
1871	In San Francisco, possibly as a clerk
1872	In San Francisco, possibly as a U.S. Mail Agent
1873	In San Francisco, possibly as a postal clerk
1874	In Kwigillingok and the lower Kuskokwim River as a trader for ACC
1875	In Kwigillingok as a trader for ACC
1876	In Kwigillingok as a trader for ACC
1877	In Kwigillingok, Unalaska, San Francisco, and possibly New York, travels to San Francisco via transcontinental train from New York
1878	In San Francisco as a fur dealer and in Nushagak for possible visit
1879	Arrives Nushagak to take over ACC trading station in September
1880	In Nushagak, Petroff visits

1881 In Nushagak, McKay is a neighbor

1882 In Nushagak, McKay is a neighbor

1883 In Nushagak, McKay dies, Rohlffs and Fortmann build first cannery

1884 In Nushagak, Moravians Weinland and Hartmann visit

1885 In Nushagak, Alaska Packing Company builds second cannery in Bristol Bay, the Scandinavian

1886 In Nushagak, Wolff arrives to build the Moravians' Carmel Mission, Bristol Bay Canning Company builds the Bradford cannery at Kanakanak

1887 In Nushagak and San Francisco, Clark marries Natalia Vasilieva Orlov at Nushagak on June 27.

1888 In San Francisco and Nushagak, Nushagak Canning Company builds the fourth cannery on Bristol Bay at Clarks Point

1889 In Nushagak and San Francisco

1890 In Nushagak, Wood River salmon trap brouhaha

1891 In Nushagak and Lake Clark

1892 In Nushagak

1893 In Nushagak, Father Shishkin departs

1894 In Nushagak, Reverend Wolff departs

1895 In Nushagak

1896 In Nushagak, Clark dies on December 8

CHAPTER 1

Obscure Roots

"Mr. Clark is quite a pleasant gentleman, 37 years old and he first came into the country with the Telegraph Expedition. Has been trading under various companies ever since. Was stationed for several years at St. Michael…[and] on the Kuskokwim and later, came to Nushagak [1878]."[3]
Henry H. Weinland, June 3, 1884.

ALASKA pioneer John William Clark was born on October 7, 1846, possibly in California or New York. His daughter Feodora Clark Nicholson reported her father was born in California but provided no details.[4] Feodora's daughter, Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich, said her grandfather might have been born in Los Angeles but offered no evidence.[5] Perhaps she heard it from her mother. So far as is known, none of Clark's descendents know where he was born or who his parents were.

In 1840 there were an estimated 400 Anglo-Americans living in Alta California. Most Californians were Native American, Mexican, Spanish or mestizo.[6] On Clark's birthday of October 7, 1846, Los Angeles was still Mexican territory and in the midst of a battle during the Mexican War. The Battle of Dominguez Rancho occurred on October 8–9, 1846, when 310 American Marines, sailors and volunteers attempted to conquer the Pueblo de Los Angeles and were defeated by 50 Californios (Spanish-speaking, Catholic Californians) who killed four sailors and wounded six while not losing any of their own.[7] It would be very unusual for Clark to have been born there then, but possible.

The pueblo and environs were populated by very few people; Anglos were rare, but there were some. However, a search of the existing

3 Henry H. Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," Henry W. Weinland Collection, The Huntington Library, June 3–4, 1884.

4 Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Kanakanak, Alaska, Third Judicial District, Entry 26629, Sheet 4-B.

5 Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich, personal conversation, March 15, 2009.

6 Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History,* University of Washington Press, 1965, 23.

7 http://www.militarymuseum.org/NavyMexWar.html; Sally Cavell Johns, *Viva Los Californios! The Battle of San Pasqual,* http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/73fall/sanpasqual.htm.

records did not list any people by the name Clark, nor was Clark listed in the first census for Los Angeles in 1850. A search of all males named Juan—or males who had Juan as part of a variant name—who were baptized during the 1840s in all the missions in Alta California (there were 450 such names) failed to locate a John William Clark.[8]

There seems to be only one person listed in the *Early California Population Project Database* at The Huntington Library who could be Clark's father—Guillermo Luis Clark (William Louis Clark) who was baptized as an adult at the San Francisco Mission on October 22, 1827. This individual was from Scotland and a Protestant before conversion. However, since we do not know the name of Clark's father, we cannot know if this man was his father.[9]

A possible New York birthplace for Clark is based on the 1870 U.S. Census for San Francisco. A person by that name who was 24, single, born in New York, employed as a telegraph operator and with real estate valued at $500 was listed. The scant description of John Clark fits as to age and occupation as a "telegraph operator," and would seem to comport with Clark's employment with the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1866–1867 in Russian America. Although he worked as a laborer in Russian America, Clark might have been a company employee in New York or San Francisco before joining the expedition to Russian America and thus familiar with telegraphic operations.

The Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition diarist, George R. Adams, first mentions John Clark at St. Michael in October 1866.[10] Another Western Union veteran, Fred Smith, lists Clark in an unpublished reference in Russian America perhaps as early as July 1866.[11] On October 9, 1867, the *Alta California* reported on the arrival of the Western Union Telegraph Company's clipper ship *The Nightingale* in San Francisco Bay, having come from Plover Bay in Eastern Siberia carrying most of the company's party, including J. W. Clark.[12]

---

8 Patricia Keats,The Society of California Pioneers, e-mail message,November 8 and 10, 2011; Anne Reid, e-mail message, November 1,3,10, 2011, The Huntington Library, *Early California Population Project Database,* 2006.

9 Anne Reid, e-mail message, November 10, 2011, op. cit., Guillermo Luis Clark, San Francisco Delores Mission 06505a, The Huntington Library, *Early California Population Project Database,* 2006.

10 George R. Adams, *Life on the Yukon 1865–1867,* edited by Richard A. Pierce, Limestone Press: Kingston, Ontario, 1992, 9.

11 Fred Smith, "Diary of Fred Smith of Western Union Telegraph Surveys, 1865–1867," unpublished, copy at University of Washington, Charles S. Hubbell Collection, Special Collections Libraries, Allen Library.

12 *Alta California,* "Arrival Of The Nightingale," October 9, 1867.

Yukon trader Francois Xavier Mercier documents Clark trading at St. Michael and the Yukon River in 1868.[13] But a person by the name of John W. Clark or J. W. Clark is listed as making two arrivals on steamships in San Francisco, from the east via the Isthmus of Panama—in May 1868 with an unnamed wife, and again in December 1868.[14] Research at the New York City Municipal Archives revealed a marriage between a John Clark, age 22, and Martha Steen on July 17, 1868, but that Clark's age is a year off. It does not appear that the groom and the Nushagak Clark were the same person.[15] John W. Clark was also documented on the lower Yukon River trading at Anvik for the Alaska Commercial Company during the summer of 1869.[16]

Two John Clarks are listed in the San Francisco city directories between 1871 and 1873.[17] One was a clerk living at 10th Avenue, and the other managed a hotel and lived at 286 Stevenson. In 1872 and 1872–73, the combined directories only have one John Clark, a United States Mail Agent who worked in the San Francisco Post Office and lived at the Russ House Hotel. This same John Clark is listed in the city directories for 1873 as a postal clerk continuing to reside at the Russ Hotel. Clark might have left the telegraph company for some reason and become a postal clerk, as both jobs required literate, reliable, honest people. Clark was no longer listed in the 1874 city directory, and Francois Xavier Mercier documented him trading on the lower Kuskokwim River that year.[18]

The 1870 Census for San Francisco notes Richard Clark, a 28-year-old "clerk in store," born in New York, with his 25-year-old wife, Georgiana, born in Michigan, living in the same household as John Clark, age 24.

Attempting to follow Clark's early years is difficult, and, in spite of a considerable research effort in New York and San Francisco, his early years remain largely vague and lacking specificity.

---

13 Francois Xavier Mercier, *Recollections of the Youkon: Memories from the years 1868–1885,* edited by Linda Finn Yarborough, Alaska Historical Society, Anchorage: 1986, 67–70.

14 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 22, 2011; there was a J. Washburn Clark living in San Francisco listed in the City Directory in 1858. This man also was referred to as J.W. Clark and was a wool commission merchant in partnership with J.H. Coghill & Co. They also dealt as importers and jobbers of groceries and provisions. Both Clark and Coghill had connections with New York, as well living in San Francisco at 615 Harrison Street during the years 1860–1865. It is not known if J. Washburn Clark was related to the subject of this biography. San Francisco City Directory 1860, 96.

15 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, April 14, 2011, based on a visit to the New York City Archives, marriage certificate 3133, John Clark to Martha Steen, July 17, 1868.

16 Charles Raymond, *Report of A Reconnaissance of the Yukon River, Alaska Territory, July to September 1869,* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1871, 2, 15–16.

17 Patricia Keats, librarian, Society of California Pioneers, e-mail message, March 12, 2008; Susan Goldstein, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, e-mail, March 15, 2008.

18 *Ibid.*

Unfortunately, Clark seemed to confide little to his family or friends about his family roots, except his date of birth. By way of explanation, one researcher thinks Clark's reticence suggests the possibility that he was raised in an orphanage, often a source of shame in nineteenth-century America. If Clark were raised in an orphanage, he seems to have been well educated there, or perhaps he was "vended out" as an indentured servant to an enlightened master and may have benefited from such a situation.[19]

Russian Orthodox Church records state that Clark was a Roman Catholic, but a search of 15 parish records in New York City and one, very old, substantial parish in Albany, New York, which were extant in 1846, did not locate a baptismal record. Moravian missionary William H. Weinland also mentioned Clark was Catholic in 1884.[20]

Nothing is known of his parents. However, the 1850 Census for New York lists a John W. Clark, age 3, living with a father, John Clark, age 30, a merchant born in Ireland and a mother, Cornelia, age 28, also born in Ireland.[21] But that same 1850 Census also lists another John Clark as a 4-year-old "pauper inmate" at the New York House of Refuge on Randall's Island in the East River.[22] Could one of these John Clarks be the eventual John W. Clark of Nushagak? We simply do not know.

At present, uncertainty about Clark's beginnings is a burden that cannot be overcome, partly because the name John Clark was common in nineteenth-century New York. For example, the New York City directories of the 1850s and 1860s, list hundreds of John Clarks without middle initials.[23] If he were raised in an orphanage, records before the 1860s from those institutions do not generally exist.[24]

Perhaps records could be located documenting where and when Clark was hired by Western Union Telegraph Company. Was it in 1865, 1866, or before? Was it in New York or California? The elucidation of his early years might come into sharper focus if these questions were

19 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, November 18, 2009; Mary White, e-mail messages, March 11, 2009 and July 30, 2009.

20 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, Febuary 22, 2011; Katherine Arndt, e-mail message, March 5, 2009, states that when Clark married Natalia Vasilieva Orlov on June 27, 1887, he declared he was a Roman Catholic. Alaskan Russian Church Records. Vital statistics records for Nushagak parish. Microfilmed by Manuscript Division, Libray of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 201.

21 Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, August 26, New York County, New York, Ward 12, dwelling number 1147, family number 1345, Randall's Island on which is located a branch of the County Alms House for Children [hand-written in first column of sheet], page 220 [of 29 pages for the institution, which are hand-numbered 207 to 236 and list 1,229 residents], line 38: John Clark, age 4 years, male, place of birth New York State, attended school within the year, pauper. NARA Roll M432–549, Page 110B, Image 117.

22 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, November 19, 2009, and February 22, 2011.

23 *Ibid.,* December 5, 2009.

24 Tyler Anbinder, e-mail message, October 19, 2009.

answered. As it stands, Clark's roots and background remain obscure and perhaps ultimately not completely knowable.

> With the rarest exceptions, the death of each human individual is followed in a short time by complete oblivion, so far as living human memories are concerned. Even family recollection or tradition quickly becomes dim, and soon fades utterly away. Few of us have any clear transmitted impression of our great-grandparents; some of us could not describe our grandparents.[25]

Aside from his daughter and her daughter, those who knew him in Alaska and Russian America apparently did not document anything about Clark's parents or the circumstances of his upbringing. In 1891, a New York City reporter wrote glowingly about Clark's character but offered no details, other than to say he came from good "breeding," which is another way of saying he was well mannered. This implies he had conscientious parents or guardians—or that a young Clark benefited from a very responsible orphanage staff.

A great-grandson of Clark speculated that Clark was related to explorer William Clark of the 1804–1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition fame.[26] But in a conversation with a direct descendant of William Clark, Peyton "Bud" Clark, at the annual meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation at Mount Olive, Mississippi, in 2009, he said he was sure there was no direct connection between the two families.[27] However, he said it was possible that there might be some collateral line of mutual descent between Clark and one of William Clark's brothers or his father's brothers. Yet that connection seems unlikely as John Clark was apparently born in California or New York and was a Roman Catholic, while William Clark's new world roots were in colonial Virginia and were Episcopalian. James Holmberg, archivist at the Filson Society in Louisville, Kentucky, and biographer of William Clark concurred, saying it was almost certain there was no family connection between the American explorer William Clark and John Clark of Nushagak.[28]

25 Eliot, *John Gilley*, 1–2.
26 William Nicholson, personal conversation, July 18, 2009.
27 Peyton Clark, personal conversation, October 6, 2009.
28 James Holmberg, personal conversation, October 6, 2009.

Although of prime age for the Union Army during the height of the Civil War, no definitive documentation of Clark's participation in the war has been located. Researcher Janice Carapellucci did locate a John Clark, age 18, who enlisted in the 136th New York Infantry Regiment in 1862 from New Hudson, New York, which is in western New York near Buffalo.[29] If this is the eventual Nushagak John Clark, it might explain a connection with the telegraph, since many Union soldiers received training in telegraph operations and construction. But like most things to do with Clark's background before he came to Russian America, it is all speculation, since there was no definitive connection. At the present state of the research, there simply is no nineteenth-century individual John Clark in California or New York who can be traced unerringly to John W. Clark of Nushagak.

It is possible he was in the employ of the Western Union Telegraph Company in New York City, perhaps as a clerk, when an opportunity beckoned to sail to San Francisco in 1865, or again in 1866, for work and adventure in Russian America on the telegraph line. Alternatively, he might have arrived in San Francisco on his own and been hired there by the Western Union Telegraph Company.

There is no common thread connecting John W. Clark of Nushagak with a Catholic baptismal record in California or New York in 1846, followed by years at an orphanage during the 1850s and early 1860s, followed by service in the Union Army during the Civil War from 1864–1865, followed by employment with Western Union Telegraph Company in San Francisco or New York in 1865, and finally landing in Russian America in July 1866.[30] These are all plausible scenarios for Clark's early years, but they are not facts; they are informed conjecture.

In the next chapter, readers will observe John Clark teaching an Eskimo friend to speak English in Russian America during the winter of 1866–1867, and, subsequently, Clark learned to speak Russian and Yup'ik. In a later chapter is an example of his eloquent writing. These facts, and others, bespeak of Clark's intelligence and strongly suggest he had some exposure to formal education.

29 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, December 3 and 5, 2009, *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York For The Year 1899,* Albany: various authors, New York State Printer, 1899?

30 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message, April 7, 2011. The John Clark on Randall's Island at the House of Refuge in 1860 was 11 years old and thus too young to be John W. Clark of Nushagak who was born in 1846 and would have been 14 years old. Also this John Clark was born in Ireland. Eighth Census of the United States, July 16, 1860, New York County, New York, Free Inhabitants of Randall's Island, Boys Nursery, New York, New York, page 146, line 2: John Clark, age 11 years, male, place of birth Ireland, attended school within the year, pauper. NARA Roll M653-802, page 226, image, 740. Family History Library Film 803802.

During the 1850s and 1860s, there were three Catholic seminaries or prep schools in operation in New York City. The seminaries enrolled any students (all male) who wanted a Catholic education, not necessarily to become priests, though, of course, many did. All students would have taken Latin, and we now know that early education in a second language often enables adults to be facile in learning additional languages. Perhaps Clark's ability to learn Russian and Yup'ik as a young adult was a result of his early exposure to Latin at a Catholic prep school in New York in the 1850s.[31]

Records from the 1850s are scant, but there are some extant from St. John's College, the original name of Fordham University, which are tantalizing and worth considering with reference to Clark's educational background. Fordham Prep was founded in 1841, five years before Clark's birth, to prepare young men to enroll in St. Johns College—or simply to obtain a Catholic education. Fordham Prep was divided into three divisions: the First Division, which is now Fordham University, the Second Division, which is present-day Fordham Prep, and the Third Division, which was analogous to a grammar or middle school and no longer exists.[32]

A John Clark, no middle name listed, residing in New York City, attended St. Johns College, Third Division, for one semester in 1853–1854 before withdrawing. If this lad was John W. Clark, he was young, but, at age 7 or 8 years, not too young to attend grammar school.[33] If this Clark were the John W. Clark of Alaska, then this early formal education might help explain his later accomplishments in life and is likely only a small glimpse of his broader educational career, at home or school. But this scenario is an example of the overall conundrum presented by Clark's early years, which are shrouded in obscurity, speculation and ultimately confusion.

Despite two trips to the Smithsonian Institution to review Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition records, nothing was found on Clark's employment with the company in New York or Russian America. That is not to say that there is not a record someplace in those voluminous archives. It may very well exist, but according to two retired experts at the Smithsonian Institution on the Western

31 Louis Di Giorno, e-mail message to Janice Carapellucci, August 17, 2011.
32 Janice Carapellucci, e-mail message to John Branson, August 15, 2011.
33 Louis Di Giorno, e-mail message to Janice Carapellucci, August 19, 2011.

Union Telegraph Company Russo-American collection, Clark's name did not sound familiar.[34]

Despite all the research efforts expended attempting to ferret out Clark's background, few facts have surfaced about his first twenty years of life. Perhaps this book will inspire a Clark descendent or a student of Alaska history to redouble these modest efforts and discover the facts of Clark's early years before his arrival in Russian America. On the other hand, one must accept the possibility that no records documenting Clark's early years exist.

What can be said is by virtue of his employment with the Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition in 1866 and 1867, Clark was one of the first fifty or so Euroamericans to live in Russian America. The 1880 Census counted some 400 Euroamericans in Alaska[35], and by that year Clark had already been in Alaska the better part of fourteen years. Clark was one of the first Euroamericans to permanently reside in Alaska.

Arriving at Nushagak in the fall of 1879, Clark was to become the first permanent Euroamerican resident of the Bristol Bay region. He was a pioneering entrepreneur of the Bristol Bay commercial salmon industry. By virtue of his experience, intelligence, hard work, business acumen and kindness and respect for Alaska Native people and visitors alike, Clark became a legendary figure at the remote Alaska Commercial Company trading post on Nushagak Bay.

34 Harold Wallace, e-mail message, April 26, 2011 after conversation with his colleague Bernard Finn.

35 Bruce Merrell, personal conversation, February 11, 2008.

CHAPTER 2

The Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition, 1866–1867

THE Western Union Telegraph Company's efforts in Russian America between 1865 and 1867 were part of an audacious development scheme to string a telegraph line from the west coast of the United States, through British Columbia and Russian America, under the Bering Strait to Siberia and on to St. Petersburg.

In 1861, the New York City-based Western Union Telegraph Company, the largest communications company in the world, had successfully spanned North America with a transcontinental telegraph line connecting New York with San Francisco.[36] By 1864, American entrepreneur Cyrus Field had made five unsuccessful attempts to lay an Atlantic cable from London to New York. Another American entrepreneur, Perry M. Collins, conceived of a line connecting America and Europe via an overland route through Russian American and under the Bering Sea as early as 1856. In the late 1850s, Senator William H. Seward of New York was a supporter of Collins' overland telegraph plan, because he saw it as enhancing the prospects of the eventual United States hegemony over North America.[37]

In 1864 Collins was able to sell the concept of the overland telegraph venture to Western Union Telegraph Company, as the more viable route than Field's problem-plagued line under the Atlantic Ocean. Collins obtained charters from both the British and Russian governments, so the overland line could be built in Canada, Russian America, Siberia and Russia. Congress approved of the project, partly because no government funding was required. Colonel Charles Bulkley, U.S. Army, who had been the superintendent of military telegraphs in the southwest (then Louisiana,

36 Morgan B. Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska 1865–1900,* Yale University Press: New Haven, 1965, 16.
37 *Ibid.,* 16.

Mississippi and Tennessee) during the Civil War, was to be Engineer-in-Chief, in charge of overall Western Union Telegraph Company efforts.[38]

The 1860s had been a time of rapid change in global communications, with widespread growth of the techonogically advanced telegraph communications. Cyrus Field's Atlantic cable company sparred with the Western Union Telegraph Company over control of the emerging global communications market, and the Civil War spurred the spread of telegraph lines in the United States, as President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton sought rapid communication with generals in the field. Secretary Stanton had a telegraph office within the War Department.[39] As a result, many Union soldiers became skilled in line construction and telegraph operations.

Beginning in August 1864, Colonel Bulkley was on leave from the Union Army to oversee the Western Union Telegraph Company Overland project. The Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Telegraph Expedition was run as a quasi-military service, with several officers holding military rank. Naturalist Major Robert Kennicott was in charge of the Russian America Division and the Scientific Corps and, after his death, his successor was Captain William H. Ennis. Captain William Scammon was in charge of the Marine Service. Captain Ennis was to be John W. Clark's supervisor while he worked building the line north of Unalakleet in 1866–1867.

In the fall of 1864, Western Union began hiring employees in New York City and purchasing cable and other supplies in support of their three expeditions—one in Canada, in Russian America and in Siberia. It is possible that 18-year-old John W. Clark was hired at this time by the Western Union Telegraph Company, but there is no documentary proof to that effect.

Beginning in November 1864, the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition, with employees, supplies and baggage, boarded the steamers *George S. Wright* and *Ariel*, the schooner *Milton Badger* and the bark *Clara Bell* in New York, and set sail for the Isthmus of Panama, Nicaragua and San Francisco. Colonel Bulkley established his headquarters in San Francisco by April 1865. Major Kennicott left New York

38 Rosemary Nearing, *Continental Dash: The Russian-American Telegraph,* Ganges, British Columbia: Horsdal & Schubart Publishers Ltd., 1989, 27.

39 A. W. Greely, U.S. Army, "Photographic History of the Civil War," Volume IV, "The Civil War Military Telegraph Service, 2–3; http://www.civilwarhome.com/telegraph.htm; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln,* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005, 558–560.

City on March 21, 1865, on a steamer, probably the *Ariel*, traveled to the Isthmus of Panama and crossed overland by mule or wagon to the Pacific coast where he boarded another ship for San Francisco, arriving 35 days after he had departed New York City.[40]

We are not sure when Clark arrived in San Francisco. The *Ariel* only steamed between New York City and the eastern side of the Isthmus of Panama. Passengers and freight had to be taken across the divide, a swampy and disease-plagued route, before they embarked on a San Francisco-bound steamer, such as the *Constitution* or the *Arizona*. If all went smoothly, the New York to San Francisco route would take three to four weeks. Generally, only cabin-class passengers were listed in the San Fransisco-based *Alta California* newspaper by name, and there is a good chance Clark was not listed on any passenger lists if he was in steerage. Clark might have been on the *Ariel* with Kennicott to Greytown, Nicaragua, the eastern isthmus port, and, after a difficult mosquito-plagued crossing, boarded the *Constitution* on the Pacific and steamed to San Francisco, arriving on April 28, 1865.[41] Clark might have been one of the 313 passengers not listed by name on the steamer.[42] If Clark arrived in San Francisco in 1865, it is plausible to suggest he stayed and worked for Western Union Telegraph Company in San Francisco until the summer of 1866, when he and other young laborers went north to Russian America as a work crew to build the overland telegraph line.

The Western Union Telegraph Expedition, in concert with Spencer Baird, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, was responsible for bringing some of the very first American scientists and explorers to Russian America. For example, Major Robert Kennicott, by virtue of having spent the years 1859–1861 in Canada and wintering at Fort Yukon, was the foremost American expert on Russian America, which indicates the huge dirth of knowledge about Alaska existing in the United States only a few years before the 1867 purchase of Russian America. Kennicott, who collected zoological and ethnographic specimens for the Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Smithsonian Institution, arrived at Fort Yukon after traveling by way of the Porcupine and Mackenzie rivers with Canadians and Koyukons.[43] In 1865, Kennicott was placed in charge

40 Nearing, *Continental Dash,* 27; Debra Lindsay, *Science in the Subarctic: Trappers, Traders and the Smithsonian Institution,* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993, 106, 108.

41 Sandra Spatz Schlachtmeyer, *A Death Decoded, Robert Kennicott and the Alaska Telegraph,* Alexandria, Virginia: Voyage Publishing Inc., 2010, 36–37.

42 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 28, 2011.

43 Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land,* New York: Harper Collins, 2003, 102.

of Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Division operations and head of the Scientific Corps.

The Western Union Telegraph Company's corporate sponsorship of the Scientific Corps was an example of a private-public partnership, but in reality the corporation wanted to build the telegraph line through Russian America much more than they were interested in cooperating with scientific research and the collecting aims of Kennicott and the Smithsonian Institution. The most notable scientists were to be naturalists William H. Dall, Henry W. Elliott, botanist J. T. Rothrock, entomologist Ferdinand Bischoff and paleontologist and meteorologist Henry M. Bannister. Colonel Bulkley was not very committed to giving Kennicott and the other scientists the kind of time and material support they needed to make collections, and this caused great frustration and mental anguish in Kennicott. Dall felt that the company was not interested in collecting new scientific information about Russian America.[44]

Kennicott and his employees and supplies sailed north from San Francisco around July 10, 1865, and arrived at St. Michael, on Norton Sound just north of the mouth of the Yukon River, sometime in August 1865. Only a few Western Union men remained at St. Michael, including James Bean and Henry Bannister, who stayed to care for company supplies, to make meteorological readings and to collect natural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institution.

Kennicott lead a detachment of 15 men on a reconnaissance up the Yukon River, hoping to reach Fort Yukon where the telegraph line, being built through British Columbia, was to eventually unite with the Russian-America line. Another small group of Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition men were to survey a route for the telegraph line between Nulato, on the Yukon River, and the Bering Strait.[45]

Unfortunately Kennicott's plan to steam up the Yukon River was dashed when the small steamer, the *Lizzie Horner*, transported on board the *George S. Wright* from San Francisco, was made inoperative because of equipment failure. Kennicott was a high-strung individual with a mercurial temperament who, during the long Alaska winter, might have worried himself sick. There was dissension within his small party.[46]

44 Henry M. Bannister,"Meteorological Journal of Henry M. Bannister, March 1, 1866, to August 31, 1866," Collection, 1865–1867, Box 2, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7213, Western Union Telegraphic Expedition Collection 1865–1867, Box 2; Sherwood, *Exploration*, 18.

45 *Ibid.*, 18, 23, 25.

46 William H. Dall, letter to Spencer Baird, April 26, 1867, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7001, Box 18.

Kennicott fretted and bickered with others over a myriad of problems, most due to poor expedition outfitting by Colonel Bulkley and to Kennicott's realization that the Western Union Telegraph Company was largely indifferent to the Smithsonian's desire to collect scientific data in Russian America. Kennicott was the only American on the expedition who knew what to expect during a Russian-American winter and what it took to survive. Nevertheless, Colonel Bulkley and other Western Union Telegraph Company officials gave short shrift to Kennicott's advice when they outfitted their northern-bound employees, thus setting the entire venture up for certain failure. The biggest problems in Russian America experienced by Western Union Telegraph Expedition personnel were caused by inadequate food, clothing, shelter and equipment, including a lack of sled dogs and poor-quality tools. Moreover, even with Kennicott's prior experiences at Fort Yukon, he and the company were operating in a vacuum of geographic knowledge about Russian America. As far as the Americans on the expedition were concerned, much of interior was terra incognita. As for Kennicott's party, only the Creole Ivan Lukin knew the route upriver from the mouth of the Yukon River.[47]

Robert Kennicott died on the banks of the Yukon River near Nulato on May 13, 1866, at the age of 31. George Adams, who was part of Kennicott's 15-man crew, thought he might have committed suicide by taking strychnine, but a modern forensic investigation has concluded that he died of heart failure.[48]

Ivan Lukin helped build his airtight coffin. Lukin's father, Semen Ivanovich Lukin (?–1855), a Creole who was raised by Aleksandr Baranov in Sitka, first arrived in the Bristol Bay region in 1819, at Nushagak Bay, where he helped Fedor Kolmakov, another Creole, build Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt, the first Russian outpost in western mainland Alaska.[49] Later in 1832, Lukin again helped Kolmakov establish Kolmakovskiy Redoubt on the middle Kuskokwim River. The Lukins, father and son, were considered to be "the true *coureurs de bois*, the Mountain Men, the voyageurs of Alaska," by noted historian Morgan Sherwood.[50] By 1879, when Clark began living there, Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt had been anglicized to Fort Alexander and was commonly referred to as Nushagak.

47 Keith Wheeler, *The Alaskans,* Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1977, 96–98.

48 Schlachtmeyer, *A Death Decoded,* 9–14, 118–121.

49 Lindsay, *Science,* 119; James VanStone, *Russian Exploration in Southwest Alaska: The Travel Journals Of Petr Korsakovskiy (1818) And Ivan Ya. Vasilev (1829),* translated by David H. Kraus, Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1988, 66.

50 Sherwood, *Exploration,* 21, 27.

Ultimately, three of the Western Union men did manage to visit Fort Yukon. Frank Ketchum, Kennicott's hand-picked successor in the Yukon division, Mike Lebarge and Ivan Lukin left Nulato on May 26, 1866, in a baidarka, made a successful trip to upriver Fort Yukon and returned to Nulato before freeze-up. Ketchum and Lebarge were in good hands, as Lukin had already ascended the Yukon River from St. Michael to Fort Yukon in 1863. Lukin was the first person recorded to travel from the mouth of the Yukon to Fort Yukon. Besides becoming familiar with the middle Yukon River, it does not appear that Ketchum's foray upriver accrued the Western Union Telegraph Expedition any practical or scientific benefits.[51]

Meanwhile, on July 28, 1866, far away on the Atlantic side of the continent, Cyrus Field's Anglo-American Telegraph Company finally laid the underwater cable successfully connecting London and New York City. This might have been the same time Clark arrived on a Western Union Telegraph Company ship in Russian America, because he is first mentioned as being there in July 1866. However, it would be about one year before Clark and the rest of the Western Union men in Alaska received word of the Atlantic cable's success.[52]

On September 24, 1866, Western Union's re-supply ship, the ex-slaver *Nightingale*, arrived at St. Michael, and it is possible Clark was on board with the forty or so laborers who were to build the telegraph line from Unalakleet northwest toward the Seward Peninsula.[53] Also on board the ship were naturalist William H. Dall, the British artist Frederick Whymper, and the Swedish-born surveyor, Ferdinand Westdahl.[54] It is also plausible that Clark was one of the 50 men Kennicott authorized William Ennis, who was in charge of the scientific corps' journal, to hire in San Francisco the summer of 1865. It is possible Clark spent the winter of 1865–1866 either in San Francisco or at St. Michael, assisting the company quartermaster, James Bean, managing supplies. The first published reference to his presence in St. Michael is in October 1866, although there is also an unpublished reference that he was in Russian America in July 1866.[55]

51 *Ibid.,* 21–22.

52 Nearing, *Continental Dash,* 193, 196.

53 Octavius T. Howe and Frederick C. Mathews, *American Clipper Ships: 1833–1858,* Volume II, Salem, Massachusetts: Marine Research Society, 1927, 426-438.

54 Ferdinand Westdahl, "Alaska 1878," BANC MSS P-K 23–32, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, 3; Nearing, *Continental Dash,* 181.

55 Lindsay, *Science,* 110–111.

George Adams, a young man born in Maine who worked in his father's San Francisco drugstore, wrote that Westdahl joined the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition in San Francisco in April 1866.[56] Perhaps Clark was also hired at that time as part of the re-supply crew. Before landing at St. Michael, the *Nightingale*, had previously landed at Plover Bay on the Gulf of Anadyr, where the Siberian Division of the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition was headquartered.[57]

By the fall of 1866, Adams was a 21-year-old who already had put in one tough year in Russian America with the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition, having been part of Kennicott's crew of 15 men who wintered at Nulato. Adams claimed that he and his fellow San Franciscan drugstore employee and diarist, George Smith, were the only two members of the original Western Union (Russian America division) employees from 1865 hired in California. Adams knew what it took to survive in Alaska, having been ill-clothed, ill-supplied and poorly led. In October 1866, Adams was working under the direction of William Ennis and was to be in charge of building the telegraph line from Unalakleet to Nulato and to the northwest toward Port Clarence on the Seward Peninsula.[58] Ennis was promoted by Bulkley to take over the management of the Russo-American division line construction after Kennicott died.

However, historian Debra Lindsay states that Ennis hired 50 people for the expedition in San Francisco and cites an 1867 letter from Dall to Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution, as documentation. John Clark might have been one of those hires, but Dall does not list him. However, he does not list all 50 men either, so that does not exclude him.

There is no specific evidence of the exact date of Clark's hire by the Western Union Telegraph Company or of his arrival in Russian America. Like his infancy, his parents and his education, Clark's arrival in Russian America remains a vexing mystery.[59]

There is, however, Fred Smith's diary of his Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition years, 1865–1867, which mentions Clark 8 times.[60] The first reference was written in July 1866 on the inside of the back cover under the heading, "Wagers Bets and Gambling Accounts." Smith's cryptic references are without explanation.

56 Adams, *Life,* 9; Schlachtmeyer, e-mail message, April 19, 2011.

57 Nearing, *Continental,* 181.

58 Adams, *Life,* 171.

59 *Ibid.,* 21.

60 Smith, *Diary,* note #6, Chapter 1. Smith was a veteran of the Western Union Telegraph Company Russian America Division and he supervised Clark during the winter of 1866-1867.

"July 1866 to F. E. Ketchum French Dinner with Wine. July 1866 to John Clark French Dinner. Clark bet $5 that the *Clara Bell* makes better sailing to France. John Clark tickets to theater."

Perhaps Clark was in Russian America by July 1866, but he does not show up in other documentation until Adams mentions him for the first time on October 31, 1866, as being at the Unalakleet, an Inupiaq village of 300 to 400 people, where the Western Union Telegraph Expedition established a base.[61]

> This morning Captain Ennis came to me and told me that I was to start for St. Michael today with two bidarrars [*sic*], one manned with 5 Indians, the other one I was in with Americans Thomas, Wilson, Clark, Woods and myself at the helm.[62]

Most of the written accounts by Western Union men referred to the Alaska Natives of western Alaska as "Indians" and to a lesser extent as Malemutes. The Native people of this section of western Alaska are in fact, the Yup'ik Bering Sea Eskimos, who speak the Central Yup'ik language. However, just 60 miles north up the Norton Sound coast at Unalakleet, the people are Inupiaq North Alaskan Eskimos. In addition, inland and north from Unalakleet along the Yukon River at Kaltag and Nulato, most of the people were Athabascan Indians. In short, this area was a divide between different cultural and linguistic Alaska Native people.[63]

Daniel B. Libby, who was in charge of the telegraph construction operating around present-day Teller, near Grantley Harbor on the southwestern coast of the Seward Peninsula, wrote about his very favorable impressions of the Inupiaq people. On June 20, 1867, he wrote of trading with the Inupiaq.

> The Natives have many things that are serviceable to us, and we cannot get along well without them, but to purchase them we must have goods of the right kind, and quantity…I have passed several years in the Western Territories and Rock Mts.

61 Smith, *ibid.,* inside back cover.
62 Adams, *Life,* 171.
63 Mel Brown, personal conversation, April 29, 2011.

Two watercolors painted by British artist Frederick Whymper of the Western Union Telegraph Company's dog sleds approaching the Yukon River and the company's complex at Unalakleet in 1867. Clark spent his first year (1866–1867) in Russian American in and around Unalakleet while laboring on the telegraph line. Courtesy of the Alaska Collection, Anchorage Public Library.

> From Dakotah to the Rio Grande and have dealt much with Indians but I have never yet seen a tribe possessing so many good traits of character as the Esquiumaux.[64]

In October 1866, the Adams party was stationed a few hundred yards away from Unalakleet. The Western Union men spent much of October winterizing their houses, covering them with dirt, decking the earthen floors with planks and building new fireplaces. The officers, including Adams and Fred Smith, lived in the old, Russian blockhouse. They covered the interior walls with caribou hides for insulation.[65]

64 Daniel B. Libby, "Journal and Letters of Colonel Charles S. Bulkley 1865–1867," June 20, 1867, copy at ARLIS Library, Anchorage.

65 Adams, "Diary of George R. Adams Russian America 1866–1867," University of Washington Special Collection

More preparations for the upcoming winter were accomplished in early October. Adams remarked that his men covered the "old houses" with dirt to ward off the wind and cold. New fireplaces were built, and they also apparently had an iron cook stove.[66] "Finished the outside of the houses today…all you can see is two high mounds, but they are very comfortable."[67]

Among those who lived in the officer's quarters were, Ennis, Fred Smith, Ferdinand Westdahl and Adams. Adams reported to Ennis, while Clark and the other laborers worked for Adams. There were 34 men under the command of Ennis at Unalakleet in the fall of 1866, but Westdahl wrote that there were 40 men.[68] Be that as it may, the newly arrived Western Union laborers, including Clark, had to outfit themselves in the fashion of the country, just as the first telegraph employees, such as Ennis, Adams and Smith, had the previous fall. The laborers were paid $45 per month.[69]

The Western Union Telegraph Company men were the first Americans to live on the Alaska mainland and to have day-to-day contact with the Yup'ik and the Inupiaq Eskimo people and the Athabascan Indians of western Alaska. They learned a great deal from the local people about such basics as how to survive and how to travel during a Russian-American winter. The Western Union Telegraph men were ill prepared for Russian-American climatic conditions, including the severely cold winter temperatures and mosquito-plagued summers, but necessity demanded they learn to cope with the elements in order to work and survive. Whymper wrote that a considerable number of Native men and women were employed by Western Union with positive results. Women sewed parkies, caps, mukluks and fur socks, with keen competition and high prices, payable in $5 dollar gold pieces. Men worked as laborers, bull cooks, dog mushers, messengers and the like.[70]

In the fall of 1865, the Western Union men first realized they needed to adopt Alaskan N ative foods, such as dried fish and seal oil, native dress, such as mukluks, and native travel modes, such as skin boats and dog sleds, if they were going to survive and accomplish any of the telegraph line reconnaissance and construction. The men began to go on purchasing expeditions to obtain dried fish, dogs, sleds, harnesses and dried caribou

Libraries, Seattle, October 5 and 20, 1866, 34.

66 Frederick Whymper, *Travels and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska,* John Murray: London, 1868, 145.

67 Adams,"Diary," October 6, 1866, 21.

68 Westdahl, *Alaska 1878,* 3.

69 Adams,"Diary," 34; Nearing, *Continental Dash,* 192.

70 Whymper, *Travels,* 144.

meat, an animal they referred to as reindeer. Adams wrote, "we have adopted 'the Russian name' Parkie for these reindeer skin coats." He went on to describe a parkie, "It is a long garment reaching to the knee, and having a hood attached to it, to slip on over the head. It was rather tight about the neck…once on it is very warm and comfortable. It is worn by all the inhabitants of the country." The Americans did wear their wool pants under their parkies. Adams and the rest of the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition men also switched from leather boots to mukluks made of caribou skin, with seal skin soles, filled with dried grass, which were "very warm and comfortable."[71]

The Western Union Telegraph Company had sent army rations adequate in the United States, but insufficient in the cold climate of Alaska. Their basic provisions consisted of graham flour, tea, sugar, dried apples, bacon, beans and rice, but it was never enough to meet the huge appetites of men engaged in vigorous labor and winter travel in the north. A favorite of Adams' crew was a simple variation of the flapjack—called by the men, a slapjack—a concoction of flour and water fried in seal oil, similar to fry bread without the leavening, washed down with gallons of tea.

The Western Union Telegraph men soon learned to augment their bare-bones American diet with Alaska Native foods such as ptarmigan, spruce grouse, caribou, moose meat, frozen fish and dried salmon. Perhaps the favorite dish of the Western Union crews was "telegraph stew," a fusion of Native and Euroamerican foods that produced a tasty, nourishing stew that literally elicited excitement within the Western Union ranks when it was prepared. Dall described the dish and claimed it was invented by one of Kennicott's party during the winter of 1865–1866.

> The frozen reindeer meat [or ptmarigan] was cut into small cubes about ½ inch in diameter. An equal amount of back fat was treated in the same way. Hardly covered with water, this was simmered in a stew pan for nearly an hour; water, pepper, and salt being added as needed. When nearly done, a little more water was added, and the fine broken biscuit from the bread-bag slowly stirred in, until the whole of the gravy was absorbed…It was known among the initiated as

71 Adams, "Diary," October 1, 1865, 2–3; Westdahl, *Alaska 1878,* 15.

> 'telegraph stew,' and the mere mention of its name would no doubt touch, in the breath of any one of them, a chord of electric sympathy.[72]

Nevertheless, western Alaska can be lean country in the winter and early spring, so it was frequently difficult for the expedition to live off the land because game was scarce. Another nourishing and convenient meal for the Western Union Telegraph Company men on the trail was described by Westdahl.

> When we went out on journeys we used to cook up a whole sack full of beans into bean soup. Before it was entirely cold we would pour it into a sack & let it freeze & take that with us. When we wanted to stop for supper we took out an axe and chopped off a little bean soup. Make a fire & our supper was ready immediately.[73]

On October 13, 1866, Adams wrote that his men, working with 200 residents of Unalakleet, hauled the small steamer, *Wilder*, out of the water for the winter. Most of the Western Union crew at Unalakleet was young, and Adams described their enthusiasm on December 12, 1866.[74]

> They are full of life and 'gas' now. Am afraid when they get at work some of the high spirit will vanish, jokes will be fewer and growls be heard from every mouth. Already many wish themselves back and wonder what could have induced us to stay here the second year.[75]

Social life for the ardent young men of the Western Union Telegraph Company crew consisted of performing in their own minstrel shows and attending dances in the *qasgi*, the men's ceremonial dance house, or as Adams called it, "the big house," at Unalakleet. Whymper says that

72 W. H. Dall, *The Yukon Territory: The Narrative of W.H. Dall, Leader of The Expedition To Alaska in 1866–1868,* London: Downey & Co. Limited, 1898, 29; Nearing, op. cit.,184.

73 Westdahl, *Alaska 1878,* 7.

74 Adams, "Diary," October 13, 1866, 34.

75 *Ibid.,* December 12, 1866.

the Western Union Telegraph boys received invitations from local people to attend dances at the *karigi*.[76] While waiting for the telegraph line construction to begin in February, Captain Ennis' crew at Unalakleet also put on "theatrical and minstrel performances." It is highly likely that John Clark participated in the entertainment, as he seemed to enjoy the theater.[77]

After getting their living quarters at Unalakleet winterized, the next pressing task to be accomplished before freeze-up was hauling provisions from the Western Union storehouse at St. Michael to Unalakleet for crews who would soon be out in camps setting telegraph poles along the route. After freeze-up occurred, the Western Union crews would have to rely on scarce dog teams to haul freight—or even resort to converting some of the eager young men into draft animals. On November 22, 1866, Adams wrote of one such incident, and perhaps Clark was one of his beasts of burden, since Clark seemed to enjoy hard labor.

> Left St. Michael at nine o'clock this morning, had on our sled about six hundred pounds, two hundred pounds flour, the rest our baggage. The four men were hitched in front of the sleigh two abreast, I was behind pushing and guiding the sleigh it was very heavy. We kept a long day at a steady gait and at one place the ice would be smooth and at another very rough. At dark we made about 15 miles. We kept on and arrived at Ekiktow [perhaps Klikitarik] at 10 o'clock very tired and hungry.[78] The last two hours had all I could do to keep the boys a moving they were entirely played out… Found a good…Indian summer house it was deserted and a little airy but it did not smoke, and, we found plenty of dry wood and it was very comfortable. One or two quite

76 *Ibid.,* October 20, 1866, 3; Whymper, *Travels,* 141. The *karigi* and the *qasgi* are the Unupiaq and the Yup'ik word respectively for the men's communal house, William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell, *Crossroads of Continents, Cultures of Siberia and Alaska,* Washington, D.C.: Simithsonian Institution Press, 1988, 44; Ann Fienup-Riordan, *The Way We Genuinely Live, Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival,* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007, 31.

77 Harold F. Taggart, editor, "Journal of William H. Ennis, Russian America Telegraph Exploring Expedition," *California Historical Society Quarterly,* March 1954, Volume 33: 1, 166.

78 Klikitarik a location seventeen miles east of St. Michael, Dall documented it in October 8, 1866. Donald J. Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names,* Geological Survey Professional Paper 567, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967, 530.

> lame and all of us tired, drank about a gallon of tea and felt better.[79]

The Alaskan education of John W. Clark and his fellow, newly arrived, Americans began by observing the Russians and Creoles and emulating the Yup'ik, Inupiaq or Athabascans in dress, food, travel and shelter. By working with more experienced Americans, such as Adams and Smith, and by observing and working with local people around St. Michael and Unalakleet, the most perceptive new arrivals, such as Clark, were able to adapt to the climatic demands of Alaska. The Alaska education of Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition men was gained through contact with local people, as well as through experiencing the natural world and then emulating many aspects of the native life-ways.

Western Union Telegraph Company crews employed Native men to haul supplies and in so doing they copied the Natives, learning how to handle open skin boats in the Arctic waters and how to drive dog teams. Clark would have learned dog mushing and skin boat paddling by working with the Natives. They also hired women to sew clothing and dog harnesses. Additionally, the newcomers socialized with Natives in the ceremonial dance houses. In fact, Clark's first Alaska child was born in the St. Michael area in 1867, a daughter, Matrena, indicating the closeness of contact between some of the Western Union Telegraph Company men, such as Clark, and the people of St. Michael and Unalakleet in 1866 and 1867. Clark fathered another daughter, Agniia or Agnes, around St. Michael in 1871.[80] A few men from St. Michael and men from Unalakleet were elevated to important positions by the telegraph men, such as cooks and messengers for the Western Union crews. Adams mentions two in particular, "Lunchy" and "McGuffin." Clark became fond of Lunchy, as will be seen later. Adams described how Lunchy came to be a valued Western Union employee, in a December 12, 1866, diary entry.

> My favorite, the noble 'Lunchy' was noticed as being regular in his attendance, at our quarters, about the time we took our noon day meal, regu-

79 Adams, "Diary," November 22, 1866, 6.

80 Katherine L. Arndt, translator, prepared by translator on August 12, 1999. Alaskan Russian Church Archives, Vital Statistics Records, Nushagak, Kwikhpak, St. Michael parishes, microfilm Manuscript Divison, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The Clarks mentioned in the Russian Church vital statistics all seem to be related to John W. Clark. The records do not list the mothers of the children, but it is perhaps possible to find their names if the confessional lists were translated.

> lar he [was] kicked out, but like many old 'bummers' in 'Frisco' would not take these little hints, and still kept on coming to lunch, amused at his pertinacity, we at last allowed him the privilege of seeing us eat, and gave him the name of Free Lunches. This was after for convenience shortened to '[L]unchy.' At last he was engaged to go on a trip where few 'Malemutes' would go into the interior of the country here he made himself generally useful for some time and then made bearer of dispatches to Unalakleet…After some three months during which time he made a number of trips with us, his perseverance was rewarded, and he was 'taken in and done for'… He was faithful always ready and on hand to do anything called upon to do and is a general favorite…They [Lunchy and McGuffin] had learned a few words such as 'Give me half dollar,' 'Bully Boy,' 'Bully for you,'…when Lunchy bade the Colonel [Bulkley] good bye he said, 'Bully Boy,' and departed well pleased with himself, as having made quite an impression with his English which he undoubtedly did…[81]

Ennis' crew stayed in camp at Unalakleet until February, when it was decided to establish a series of spike camps and begin putting up telegraph poles. The poles were cut from white spruce trees, averaged about fifteen feet in length, and were set in the frozen ground three feet deep. There was no wire available, so the poles were erected, with the wire to be strung in the future. The men used crowbars and pick-axes to chop through the frozen ground to set up the poles.[82] Whymper said that on a good day a man using a pick-axe and a crowbar could dig six holes through rock-hard ground. Shovels were only used to remove the frozen pieces of soil from the holes, and the tools were constantly breaking and in need of sharpening.[83]

81 Adams, "Diary," December 12, 1866, 9.
82 Westdahl, *Alaska 1878,* 4, 5, 7.
83 Whymper, *Travels,* 240.

It was during the winter of 1867 that various Western Union chroniclers began to record the activities of Clark on a regular basis. First, Adams and his crew were part of what was called the Norton Bay and Bering Strait Division of the Western Union Overland Telegraph Company.[84] Ennis assigned Adams the task of building the line from Unalakleet toward Nulato, a route of nearly 200 miles, but it is estimated the Adams crew only was able to build about 28 miles of line north of Unalakleet.[85]

Later in the spring, the Adams crew was assigned the building of the telegraph line on the Seward Peninsula, toward Libby's headquarters at Grantley Harbor at Point Clarence, near present-day Teller, Alaska. Earlier, it had been Libby's responsibility to build the line northwest of St. Michael toward the Seward Peninsula, and he was expected to join-up with the line being built by the Ennis-Adams crew.[86] Libby's crew was of similar size as the Ennis-Adams party, about thirty to forty men, but they ran out of food in January 1867 before they could get started on the telegraph line. Ennis wrote that Libby's crew ultimately built 30 miles of telegraph line, apparently in the area near Port Clarence.[87]

As Ennis' crew began their work north of Unalakleet, some men were tasked with building brush camps, while other men cut spruce trees for poles and hauled them on sleds with dog teams to the line, where others were chopping through the frozen ground and setting up the poles.

Adams described one such camp as being in the woods near a small hill, "the back and sides is made of small brushy spruce covered about a foot deep with soft spruce brush." The roof was covered by, "a sail and have closed up the front with a blanket, we have plenty of fresh air but are protected in a great measure from the wind and snow." Adams described "Camp Adams," another brush camp as being 24 feet square, with sides 3 feet high [at the eave], covered with spruce boughs, with a space 5 feet wide running the length of the camp to let the smoke from fires escape.[88] On February 4, 1867, Fred Smith wrote in his diary, "5 miles north of Unalakleet…46 below zero, with 3 sleds, 4 Indians and my party, 13 in number… I started off 6 men with shovels 7 crowbars digging post holes

84 Adams, "Diary," December 12, 1866; William Ennis, letter to Charles Bulkley, August 15, 1867, Smithsonian Institution, Record Unit 7713, Western Union Telegraph Expedition Collection, 1865–1867, C-22/05/03 Box 1.

85 Adams, "Diary," January 20, 1867, 17–19.

86 Adams, *Life on the Yukon,* 202; Orth, *Dictionary,* 567, 386.

87 Nearing, *Continental Dash* , 198, 202; Taggart, *Journal,* 167.

88 Adams, "Diary," undated, 2, and February 11, 1867.

under charge of Mr. Clark."[89]

On February 5, 1867, Adams mentioned camp conditions and Lunchy once again.

> Arose at 6 A.M. Slept cool,…28 below zero. Went to work at daylight, cut and distributed some two miles of poles. The poles are up five miles from Unalakleet. The ground is frozen hard. It is just like digging through granite. Had a supper of beans, went into them with gusto. Lunchy is our Boss Cook he has two Indian assistants. He is very high toned and talks a heap of English to his assistants who do not understand a word he says. Built a rousing fire, set around it. Sang songs, talked of Frisco …[90]

Adams refers to Clark again between February 6 and 9, 1867. The scene was Adams and a few Western Union Telegraph Expedition men sharing a small 10- by 12-foot Yup'ik house with 16 Natives and 11 dogs. They were cooking some slapjacks over an open fire outside when a gust of wind blew Adams' meal off his plate, and it was quickly devoured by a sled dog.

> Took it into my head to take a trip down to Unalakleet started with Clark and after fighting with the storm for an hour and a half reached Unalakleet it looks deserted made up a rousing fire in the large house and took things easy two others of the party following us down and we have had a good square meal, and anticipate a good night's sleep.[91]

On February 11, Smith wrote his crew was moving camp and he was leaving for Unalakleet.

89 Smith, *Diary,* February 4, 1867, 29.
90 Adams, "Diary," February 5, 1867, 20.
91 *Ibid.,* February 6-9, 1867, 20.

> …leaving the superintendence of the moving to Mr. Clark.[92] [On February 20th, Smith described the winter conditions they faced and the work they accomplished, despite of the weather.] Blowing a gale as usual the post hole diggers had to come into camp but the choppers & teamsters stuck it out as they were better protected being in the woods…Clark and myself staked out to the 11th mile …-30.[93]

On February 20, 1867, Adams provided a description of the kinds of rugged work his men were performing and scenes from camp life. The laborers chopped down 15 trees on the 20th, but the diggers could only work 5 minutes before retreating to camp because of gale-force winds. By evening the gale subsided and the temperature was thirty-eight degrees above zero and it was snowing.

> We had a good fire in camp tonight and the snow on the rafters has melted and run down on our blankets…It would be interesting to an outsider to step in camp now and see how we are engaged. There are three fires …on one side of the fire near the back of the camp sets Clark teaching Lunchy who is comfortably rolled up in his blanket to speak English—on the opposite side of the fire sets Dick Thomas smoking a pipe…I think his thoughts are wandering to some more congenial clime. C.C. Smith has half made his bed, but got choked with smoke and has thrown himself down on his blankets completely disgusted with every thing. Fred [Smith] is drying his boots and I am going to bed perhaps to dream that I am at home.[94]

92 Smith, *Diary,* February 11, 1867, 29.
93 *Ibid.,* February 20, 1867, 31.
94 Adams, "Diary," February 20, 1867, 22.

In spite of their hardships, the young Western Union men still maintained their upbeat outlook on life that Adams referred to as "gas." On February 21, Adams recounted the events of the day saying it was 24 above zero and snowing, and his crew had cut 24 poles that day. Sitting up in a brush camp after all hands had curled up in their blankets, Adams wrote:

> Could see nothing of them but mounds of snow where they slept. The snow had drifted in and covered everything…I wish I had a dry goods box to sleep in…That would be considered exceedingly high toned here…[the crew was] laughing and singing and making so much noise that I could hardly write. They commenced speaking different languages but Fred [Smith] and I tied them up speaking Russian.[95]

Smith referred to the living and working conditions on February 28. "Weather bad, worse crowbars, dog feed scarce & poor of its kind, men living on two meals a day one of which only we can afford to have salt meat & the ground also hard as Pharaohs heart."[96]

On March 2, Adams again wrote about Clark:

> Today I changed with John Clark. He to cut poles and I to set them up with Fred [Smith] for one week. One of the men went down to Unalakleet for provisions and I found that Clark had volunteered to take this man's place digging post holes…He offered to change back but I told him no, I would try it for one day…it was just like drilling through rock and at night I was very tired.[97]

Clark must have had a facility for building brush camps because he was frequently tasked to do it. On March 7, Adams reported:

95 Adams, "Diary," February 21, 1867, 22.
96 Smith, *Diary,* February 28, 1867, 32.
97 Adams, "Diary," March 2, 1867, 23.

> Clark and Fitzgerald went ahead about three miles today to build a new camp. No work done today, the crowbars are so dull that it is misery to work with them. Every time you strike…into this hard frozen ground you get an electric shock equal to any battery I ever saw.[98]

On March 12, Smith and party were working about 5 miles north of Shaktoolik, and he mentioned, "Clark returned from below to day," presumedly from the company storehouse at Unalakleet.[99] Again on March 15, 1867, Clark and Fitzgerald went ahead to build a new camp for the crew. On March 21, Adams wrote, "Sent Fitzgerald & Clark to make a new camp. Capt. Ennis took his blankets & went with them. Staked out a mile of line through the woods." And again on March 30, Clark and Fitzgerald went ahead to build another camp.[100]

The Western Union newspaper, *The Esquimaux*, published at Libby's camp, "Libbysville" or "Libby Station" at Grantley Harbor, mentioned Clark in the context of his brush camp construction north of Unalakleet in a March 18, 1867, issue.[101] "Our next was Camp Comfort on Egavik Creek then Camp Clark and now Beaver Camp." This camp was about 22 miles north of Unalakleet.[102] *The Esquimaux* was likely the first newspaper published on the Russian-American mainland.[103]

With the arrival of spring break-up, work on the telegraph line was altered because holes filled up with water as soon as they were dug. On April 26, Adams reported:

> We all of us bag and baggage came here to Unalakleet on the 11 & 12. On the 14 Fred [Smith], Westdahl, Cortin, Clark & myself & two Indians went to St. Michael with six sleds & 45 dogs to bring up enough flour & fish to last ourselves & dogs until open water. We returned on the 18 bringing up 600 lbs. of provisions on

98 *Ibid.,* March 7, 1867, 24.

99 Smith, *Diary,* March 12, 1867, 33.

100 Adams, *Life on the Yukon,* 198.

101 Orth, *Dictionary,* 955.

102 *The Esquimaux,* Volume I, published at Port Clarence, Russian America and Plover Bay, Eastern Siberia, edited by John J. Harrington, 1866–1867, 39.

103 Orth, *Dictionary,* 955.

> each sled, more than has been brought up before for some time.[104]

Adams elaborated on the futile attempt of his crew to work toward Libby Station. Ennis, Adams, Fred Smith and "a dozen men [among them probably Clark] tried to make a start on the line that would lead west from Norton Bay to D.B. Libby's section of line, suspending work only when spring thaw came, and water filled each hole as soon as it was dug." Captain Ennis' crew was reported to have built between 30 and 50 miles of telegraph line near Norton Sound in a northwesterly direction from Unalakleet.[105]

With the coming of spring there was another nemesis besides water to make the laborers' work impossible, a plague of mosquitoes. Adams knew how to control pests:

> The only way to get clear of them is to keep smoking, 'Woe to the person who cannot smoke.' Cold is nothing it is fun compared to mosquitoes, of the two give me fifty below zero. For the past three nights Fred [Smith] & I have slept not a wink.[106]

On June 26, Adams apparently arrived back at Unalkaleet after a journey by baidara and upon arrival he met St. Michael quartermaster, James Bean.

> We wondered what he was doing here but our wonder ceased when he commenced to talk. The *Clara Bell* has arrived,…30 days from San Francisco. Company suspended operations, reason Atlantic Cable a success. We are all ordered home (much joy). United States bought Russian America for $7,000,000…from Russian government, and a torrent of news which left us almost speechless.[107]

104 Adams, *Life on the Yukon,* 201.
105 Adams, *Life on the Yukon,* 202; Taggart, *Journal,* 167.
106 Adams, "Diary," June 26, 1867, 34.
107 *Ibid.*

It was not until August 18, 1867, that the Western Union Telegraph Company ship left St. Michael with the Ennis and Libby men, including John Clark, and began a roundabout journey home. First the *Clara Bell* sailed across the Bering Strait to Plover Bay, on the tip of the Chukchi Peninsula. The combined members of Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition personnel from the Russian-American and the Siberian Division expeditions united at Plover Bay and numbered about one hundred and twenty men. Of all the men, only one had died in Siberia and another stayed with a Native girl he loved. Colonel Charles Bulkley arrived on board the *Nightingale* on September 6, 1867, and loaded all 120 Western Union Telegraph men on board and made a fast run to San Francisco, arriving on October 8.[108] A partial list of those sailing on the *Nightingale* with Clark to San Francisco reads like a who's who of the Russian-American Division of the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition: George R. Adams, Frederick M. Smith, Fredrick Whymper, Ferdinand Westdahl, Ferdinand Bishchoff, Frank Ketchum, James Bean, J. J. Harrington, and J. R. Chappell.[109]

While Clark was laboring on the telegraph line construction during the winter of 1866–1867, Dall, who had succeeded Kennicott as Chief of the Scientific Corps, and the artist Frederick Whymper joined Frank Ketchum and Mike Lebarge at Nulato. Dall collected specimens for the Smithsonian, and Whymper attempted to paint and sketch, despite the frequent sub-zero temperatures. In the summer of 1867, Dall and Whymper journeyed upriver to Fort Yukon in a skin boat.[110] The Dall party arrived back at St. Michael in July 1867, where they learned that the Atlantic Cable had been a success, that the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition work was suspended, and that the United States had purchased Russian America from the Russians.[111]

Dall was the only Western Union Telegraph Company employee to stay behind at St. Michael when the *Clara Bell* sailed for Plover Bay, Siberia, with the rest of the Western Union Telegraph Russo-American Division men. Dall stayed in the newly named Alaska to complete the gathering of natural history data begun by Kennicott in 1865. One of the chief legacies of the entire Western Union Telegraph Expedition was Dall's

108 Whymper, *Travels,* 241, 243.
109 *Alta California,* "Arrival of the *Nightingale*," October 9, 1867.
110 Borneman, *Alaska*, 103.
111 Wheeler, *The Alaskans,* 98.

work in listing mammal, bird, insect and plant species of Alaska.[112] Dall finally left Alaska in August 1868 and made his way to the Smithsonian Institution where he began to write his book, *Alaska and Its Resources*, which made him the leading Alaska authority in America for the next several decades.[113]

The partnership between the Western Union Telegraph Company and the Smithsonian Institution inaugurated an ongoing relationship between the institution and Alaska in pursuit of scientific inquiry that exists to this day. Today the Arctic Studies Center, part of the National Museum of Natural History, in partnership with the Anchorage Museum, supports research and education in circumpolar archeology, history and cultures.[114] Later, in the early 1880s, Clark would accord significant aid to the first two Smithsonian Institution biologists who collected natural history and cultural specimens in the Bristol Bay region.

Overall, the chief legacy of Western Union's two-year effort in Russian America was probably its Smithsonian Institution partnership. Scientists like Dall, Henry Bannister and Frederick Bischoff helped inform the Congressional debate about purchasing Russian America and began to slowly educate the broader American public about the many virtues of Alaska. Nevertheless, some historians think the role played by Western Union's "Scientific Corps" in fostering the purchase of Alaska from Russia and the subsequent Congressional debate to ratify the treaty of purchase was negligible.[115]

John Clark was on the *Nightingale* when it docked in San Francisco, thus ending his first term in Russian America, where he had surely earned an "under graduate" degree from the school of hard knocks in the fledgling discipline of the education of an American greenhorn. Clark's activities in San Francisco during the fall of 1867 are not known. Based on subsequent documentation, it can be surmised that Clark might have traveled back to New York to attend to his affairs in the fall of 1867. Like the rest of the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition veterans, he likely rested and socialized in the warm ambiance of San Francisco before traveling by ship to the Isthmus of Panama and New York. It appears he had a very busy 1868 with a short stint around St.

112 Borneman, *Alaska,* 105.
113 Sherwood, *Exploration,* 39–41.
114 Fitzhugh and Crowell, *Crossroads*, 92.
115 Sherwood, *Exploration,* 33.

Michael trading for the Pioneer Company and one or two round trips to New York via the Isthmus of Panama.

By virture of his experiences with the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, Clark was one of a select group of the first 50 Euroamericans to live in Russia America and Alaska. The expedition was one of the first United States enterprise of any kind in what became known as Alaska, but which was sovereign Russian territory in 1865–1867. This group of Western Union Telegraph Expedition alumi included such luminaries of nineteenth century Alaska history as Robert Kennecott, William H. Dall, Ferdinand Westdahl and Henry W. Elliott. But of those 50 men, John W. Clark, and perhaps Tanana River trader James Bean, appear to be the only ones who put down roots in Alaska and made the Great Land their permanent home.[116] As far as Euroamericans go, Clark is easily placed in the very first ranks of permanent Alaska residents. Living and working in Russian America in 1866–1867 is impossible for other subsequent Euroamerican settlers in Alaska to top, unless, of course, you were James Bean who arrived with Kennecott in 1865, but who died in California in 1888.

Clark's experiences with the Western Union Telegraph Expedition prepared him well for his future life in Alaska as a trader and entrepreneur of the Bristol Bay region, and it did not take Clark long to return to Alaska. According to Francois Xavier Mercier in his manuscript *Recollections of the Youkon,* Clark returned to the Yukon River as a fur trader for the Pioneer Company in 1868.[117] Nothing further is known of the Pioneer Company, but presumably it had an office in San Francisco and Clark was hired in that city. If Clark also made one, possibly two, round trips between New York and San Francisco in 1868, he could not have spent much time in Alaska with the Pioneer Company.[118] It seems likely that the J.W. Clark who twice traveled between the west coast and east coast in 1868 was not the subject of this biography but rather a wool commission merchant of the same name who lived in San Francisco.

Mercier also noted that Clark worked for the John Perotte (Parrott) Company and Hutchinson, Kohl and Company in the late 1860s and

116 James Bean was born in 1823 and died in San Francisco in 1888. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Rasmuson Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Archives Department, James Monroe Bean and Genevieve Suydam Bean Papers. Circa 1870-1880, "Finding Aid, Historical or Biographical Information." Ferdinand Westdahl (1843–1917) was born in Sweden and worked for the U.S. Coast and Geodatic Survey for many years. In addition he worked for the Alaska Commercial Company in 1880. Orth, *Dictionary*, 42.

117 Mercier, *Recollections,* 67–70.

118 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 22, 2011.

early 1870s. Parrott was a New England trader and banker in partnership with San Francisco banker Alfred Greenwald in the Alaska fur trade.[119] According to Mercier, Clark was trading at Kwigillingok (Quigalook), a Yup'ik village on the north side of the mouth of Kuskokwim Bay by 1874, presumably for the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC).

119 F. Gordon O'Neill, *Ernest Reuben Lilienthal and His Family,* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1949, 32; Mercier, *Recollections,* 14–15.

The principle owners of the Alaska Commercial Company in their offices at 310 Sansome Street in San Francisco circa 1880s. Left to right, Captain Gustave Niebaum, Lewis Gerstle and Louis Sloss. Ernest R. Lilienthal photograph collection, BANC PIC 2011.011, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

CHAPTER 3

The Alaska Commercial Company and Trading on the Yukon River, 1868–1874

"Less than a year after the formal transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States, there was formed under California law a corporation named the Alaska Commercial Company. Its home office was in San Francisco, but its activities were to center in Alaska, where it soon became a power in the land. Indeed, at some times and places it was the only effective power."[120]
Frank H. Sloss, 1977

IN the late 1860s and early 1870s, Clark, a veteran of the Western Union Telegraph Russo-American Expedition, was just the kind of seasoned hand American trading companies were seeking to run remote trading posts in Alaska. Writing in 1868, Clark's immediate supervisor from his Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition days, George Adams, could have been writing about Clark as much as himself in the following passage.

> Upon returning to San Francisco in September 1867, after my two years in the Territory of Russian America with the first American Exploring and Telegraph Building Expedition of 1865 to that country and finding that it had been purchased by the United States and re-named Alaska, I realized at once that my knowledge of that country and its resources in the way of sealing

120 Frank H. Sloss, "Who Owned the Alaska Commercial Company?" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly,* Volume LXVIII, July 1977, 120.

> and fur trading, that this would be a profitable business for me to engage in.[121]

Clark was to work for the Alaska Commercial Company and other trading companies at St. Michael, Anvik and the lower Kuskokwim River delta around Kwigillingok before he was stationed at Nushagak in the late 1870s. Since John Clark spent most of his Alaska life in the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company, starting in the first years of American control of Alaska, it is necessary to delve into the complex creation of the company.

The company formed in 1868 in San Francisco and, in a short time, became the major economic and political power in Alaska, making great profit from Pribilof fur seals, walrus ivory and land-based furs and hides, such as beaver, land otter, fox, bear and caribou.[122] The Alaska Commercial Company was created by the seven partners of the Hutchinson, Kohl and Company.

Hayward M. Hutchinson was a Baltimore businessman who supplied the Union Army with pots and pans during the Civil War. Hutchinson came to San Francisco in September 1867. He was an unofficial member of the commissioner's party that went to Sitka to participate in the ceremony transferring Alaska from Russian to American control. While in Sitka, Hutchinson purchased most of the property of the Russian America Company from Prince Dmitrii Maksutov, the last governor of Russian American Company.[123] Hutchinson acquired the contents of warehouses, most notably trade goods sought by Native Alaskans; trading posts at Kodiak, St. Michael, Unalaska, Nushagak and Kolmakov Redoubt, to name the most prominent in western Alaska; and company ships.[124] Before leaving for Sitka, Hutchinson borrowed capital from Louis Sloss and Lewis Gerstle of Louis Sloss and Company, a financial company in San Francisco, to finance his purchases. Sloss and Gerstle were German-Jewish immigrants to the United States who became pio-

121 George R. Adams, "First American Exploring Expedition to Russian America," "Pioneer Fur Sealing In Alaska,"1868, microfilm P-K 215, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley.

122 Harlan D. Unrau, *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Historic Resource Study: Alaska,* draft, Anchorage: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992, 169. On July 1, 1870 Congress passed the law that gave the company a twenty-year exclusive lease on the Pribilof Islands fur seal harvest. Sloss, *op. cit.,* 125.

123 The Russian America Company was a privately owned quasi-government controlled commercial trading company in Russian America between 1799 and about 1867 when the United States purchased Russian America from Russia. The Russian America Company built settlements in Alaska, Hawaii and California and traded furs for manufactured goods with Alaska Natives. The Russian America Company controlled the very lucrative Pribilof Island fur seal harvest until 1867.

124 Unrau, *Lake Clark,* 169.

neering businessmen in Sacramento in the early 1850s before moving to San Francisco.

A complex arrangement of financial partnerships was created between Hutchinson, Sloss, Gerstle and others, giving birth to the Hutchinson, Kohl and Company on January 31, 1868. The new firm consisted of seven partners: Hutchinson; William Kohl, an American ship owner and builder from Pennsylvania who lived in California; Sloss and Gerstle; fur trader August Wasserman of San Francisco; Leopold Boscowitz of Victoria, British Columbia, another fur trader; and Finnish sea captain and ship builder Gustave Niebaum, a Russian subject who became an American citizen and who had formerly been employed by the Russian American Company, based in Sitka, with its rich Pribilof Island fur seal harvest.[125]

Historian Harlan Unrau summed up the complex creation of the Alaska Commercial Company thus. "By the spring of 1868, Hutchinson, Kohl and Company had emerged as the commercial successor of the Russian American Company." When the new company began to harvest the Pribilof fur seals, it began to encounter competitors there, including the John Perotte Company from San Francisco. Hutchinson and Kohl essentially engulfed and devoured their Pribilof rivals, and in October 1868, established another company, the Alaska Commercial Company. The two companies co-existed with the same ownership until the early 1870s, when the latter company prevailed.[126] On September 28, 1870, the company took over all Alaska operations from the parent company, Hutchinson, Kohl and Company. Earlier, in Ju1y 1870, the United States Congress granted an exclusive 20-year lease to harvest fur seals in the Pribilof Islands to the Alaska Commercial Company, and this would become a source of major profits and significant controversy for the company.

The ownership of the Alaska Commercial Company reflected the ethnic and national diversity that had long been the key to success of many early settlements and commercial companies of the United States.

The company was made up of a remarkably diverse group of partners—American-born and European-born; Jews and Gentiles; fur traders, general merchants, and seafaring men; of two and perhaps three

125 *Ibid.,* 170.
126 *Ibid.,* 170.

nationalities; and hailing from such widely scattered places as Baltimore, San Francisco, Victoria and Sitka. [127]

Unrau summarized the results of all these complex business and political machinations.

> The ACC, which opened new offices at 310 Sansome Street [in San Francisco] in June 1871, continued to expand its operations for nearly 40 years, becoming a virtual monopolistic economic and political power in Alaska. While the principle business of the company…was fur sealing, [in the Pribilof Islands] large numbers of other marine and land-based furs were secured along the Aleutian chain, Seward Peninsula, the Yukon and Kuskokwim valleys, and the region around Kodiak, Bristol Bay and Cook Inlet. In this vast area the firm took over old Russian-American Company trading posts and constructed new ones, trading merchandise for furs and supplying Natives, miners, and prospectors.[128]

The Alaska Commercial Company was one of the first multinational corporations based in the United States with offices in San Francisco, New York City, London and Siberia.[129] According to Alaska Commercial Company scholar Molly Lee, the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire in San Francisco was a "catastrophic" event in the field of Alaska history, because most of the ACC records were destroyed. As a result of the fire, it is not possible to write a complete history of the Alaska Commercial Company and all its commercial activities in Alaska. The fire also was very detrimental to writing a biography of John W. Clark, because there is a paucity of primary source materials of his business activities since so many were destroyed.[130]

127 Frank H. Sloss and Richard A. Pierce, "The Hutchinson, Kohl Story, A Fresh Look," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly,* Volume 62, January 1971, 1–2.

128 Unrau, *Lake Clark,* 170.

129 O'Neill, *E. R. Lilienthal,* 47.

130 Nelson H. H. Graburn, Molly Lee and Jean-Loup Rousselot, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Alaska Commercial Company Collection, Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 19.

On July 22, 1868, the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Wayanda* under Captain J. W. White visited the Nushagak trading post owned by the Hutchinson, Kohl and Company. It marked the first documented visit by a federal government representative to Nushagak.

Hutchinson, Kohl and Company and, soon, its successor, the Alaska Commercial Company, sought to retain traders at the stations who had worked for the Russian American Company in the same capacity. In 1871, the Hutchinson, Kohl and Company trader at Nushagak was thought to be a Creole by the name of Nikiforoff.[131] As mentioned earlier, the Russians referred to the site as Alexandrovsky Redoubt, but during the early American era it was anglicized to Fort Alexander, and over time most Americans simply referred to the site as Nushagak. Nushagak is located about six miles south of present-day Dillingham and now is only occupied seasonally by set-net commercial salmon fishermen. By the fall of 1879, Nushagak was to become the home of John W. Clark.[132]

In 1869, Captain Charles Raymond of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers led the first federal efforts to explore the interior of Alaska via the Yukon River. Raymond and two associates traveled up the Yukon River on a small steamboat, the *Yukon*, owned by the Alaska Commercial Company, supplying its trading stations as far as Fort Yukon. It was on this trip that the company established its first trading post at Anvik, and John Clark was the first trader at the new station the summer of 1869.[133]

Before heading upriver, Raymond encountered Clark at St. Michael. Clark traveled upriver with a few Alaska Commercial Company traders and Raymond on the company steamer as far as Anvik, where he was to manage the company trading station. While at Fort Yukon, Raymond established that the post was located 121 miles inside American territory, not in Canadian territory. The first result of Raymond's survey was that Canadian fur traders immediately moved out of Fort Yukon for Canadian territory, abandoning the region to the Alaska Commercial Company.[134]

---

131 John A. Hussey, *Embattled Katmai, A History of Katmai National Monument,* San Francisco: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1971, 176. Nikiforoff is likely a variation of Nekeferoff.

132 *Wayanda*, ship log, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 24 12EL, Row 4, Compartment 3, Shelf 1, Box 2659, Washington, D.C.

133 Raymond, *Reconnaissance,* 112; James VanStone, *Ingalik Contact Ecology: An Ethnohistory of the Lower-Middle Yukon,* 1790–1935, Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, Fieldiana No. 71, 1979, 112; Gary C. Stein, *A History of the Middle and Lower Yukon River,* Juneau: Division of Research and Development, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1983, 33.

134 Wheeler, *The Alaskans,* 98.

Before fall navigation was closed by the growing ice pack, Raymond and his two companions made their way down the Yukon River to the coast to catch the last ship of the season headed south. Raymond made a small skiff of spruce logs and called it the *Eclipse*. Before heading downriver, the skiff was tied to the bank of the river near Fort Yukon with a moose hide rope. Hungry sled dogs ate the rope, and the skiff drifted downstream, but Raymond retrieved it and began his downstream journey on August 28, 1869, bound for St. Michael and a rendezvous with a ship headed for San Francisco.[135]

As the colder fall weather enveloped the Yukon valley, the Yukon River dropped in volume, making the exit at the river mouth difficult or impossible. By the time Raymond reached Anvik, it was apparent they would not arrive at St. Michael before the last ship was to leave for San Francisco. Therefore, Raymond enlisted the services of Clark to portage up the Anvik River and on to Norton Sound in order to catch the outgoing ship south.[136] In Raymond's account of his Yukon River travels, he freely credits Clark with extraordinary assistance.

> I am under obligation to…Mr. John Clark for his generous cooperation during our return journey to the coast.…To the traders of Northern Alaska and especially to those who were my companions during our journey up the Yukon I am indebted for ready and effective assistance on many occasions.[137]

On September 13, 1869, Raymond found Clark at Anvik in charge of the Alaska Commercial Company trading post with another man, Robert Bird.

> …Mr. Clark, being a new-comer to this part of the country, was unable to advise me, although he promptly volunteered to accompany me if I should decide to make the attempt, [to portage from the Yukon to the village of Ikikiktoik or

135 Sherwood, *Exploration,* 92.
136 Raymond, *Reconnaissance,* 15–16.
137 Raymond, *ibid,* 3.

> Klikitarik, on Norton Sound]. Mr. Clark went energetically to work, and in a few hours had procured six birch bark canoes and a sufficient number of Indians.[138]

The journey from Anvik was difficult, and they ran out of provisions because someone forgot to pack their food in one of the canoes, but they lived off the land. Mostly, they drank tea and ate a small amount of hard tack. Meager provisions, heavy on the tea with a few crumbs of hard tack, must have reminded John Clark of his time with the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition in 1866 and 1867.

Raymond continued to chronicle his canoe portage up the headwaters of the Anvik River across a divide where they left the canoes and hiked overland to the Norton Sound village of Klikitarik. Out of food in the abandoned village, the captain sent a messenger down the coast to St. Michael seeking assistance. Late in the day, William Ennis, Clark's former Western Union boss, arrived in a whaleboat and took Raymond and his party to St. Michael. It is not known whether Clark returned to Anvik once Raymond was in view of Norton Sound, or continued on with him to St. Michael. The captain and his men caught the sailing ship *Commodore* at St. Michael and arrived in San Francisco on November 6, 1869.

Clark's arrangement with the Alaska Commercial Company for manning the Anvik trading post for the entire winter is not known. Clark might have had a contract to work only during the open navigation season, returning to San Francisco before freeze-up kept out ships. Perhaps all lower Yukon River trading during the winter was run out of the St. Michael, Commercial Company post. But like much of Clark's early life, it is all just so much informed speculation.

138 *Ibid.*, 15–16.

Map 3 Census taker Ivan Petroff's 1880 map of south central and western Alaska showing a small oval lake northeast of Iliamna Lake which would be named Lake Clark in 1891 by Albert B. Schanz. *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska* by Ivan Petroff, Alaska State Historical Library, HA 201 1880. A 4 P45.

CHAPTER 4

John Clark Trades on the Kuskokwim River, 1874-1878

AS mentioned earlier, John Clark was listed as a telegraph operator in San Francisco in the 1870 census. Perhaps he worked in the Western Union telegraph office. By 1872, he might have clerked at the San Francisco Post Office. Clark must have returned to Alaska by 1874 when the city directories no longer list him.

Francois Xavier Mercier lists him as a trader at the large village of Quigalook (Kwigillingok), on the north side of Kuskokwim Bay near the mouth of the Kuskokwim River in 1874[139]. Not much information detailing Clark's trading activities on the Kuskokwim has surfaced other than that his trading partner at Kwigillingok was the Russian Nikolai Dement'ev (Demientieff).

Russian Orthodox Church records list at least two sons being fathered by Clark in the Kwigillingok area, Vasilii (William), born circa 1875 who died of tuberculosis and was buried at Nushagak in 1897, and Iakov (Jacob), born circa 1877 who died of tuberculosis and was buried at Kotlik in 1898. Russian language translator and historian, Katherine Arndt, speculates that perhaps Iakov was living with his sister or half-sister Matrena's (born 1867) family in Kotlik. Based on her translations of church records, Dr. Arndt believes Clark had families at St. Michael, Kwigillingok and Nushagak during the decades of the late 1860s, 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. The names of the mothers of Clark's children are probably documented in Russian Orthodox Church records and await translation into English.[140]

Another reference to Clark's prolificacy appears in the autobiography of the late Clarks Point elder, Joe Clark, *Nukalpiaq, A Good Hunter & Provider*. Joe Clark was born to John Dull and Helen Kituralrai at old Chefornak in 1925, near the mouth of the Kuskokwim River. He was ad-

139 Wendell H. Oswalt, *Historic Settlements Along the Kuskokwim River, Alaska,* Juneau: Alaska State Library Historical Monograph No. 7, Alaska Division of State Libraries and Museums, Department of Education, 1980, 51.

140 Katherine Arndt, e-mail message, Alaska Russian Church Archives, Vital statistics records, Nushagak, Kwikhpak and St. Michael parishes. Microfilm, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., March 5, 2009.

opted by Alexander Clark and his wife Elena, at about the age of two, and raised at Moroyak, which was located in the area between Kuskokwim Bay and Kinak Bay, perhaps near Kwigillingok.[141]

Joe Clark said his adoptive father, Alexander Clark, was the son of trader John Clark and an unknown Yup'ik woman, but gives no date of his birth. Alexander was likely born while John W. Clark was a trader at Kwigillingok, circa 1874 to 1878. Alexander's Yup'ik name was Kiayaksuk. He spoke English well and had a trading store and owned reindeer, at the village of Moroyak. John Dull met Alexander Clark at the Alaska Packer's cannery at Clarks Point, Nushagak Bay, where the latter was employed on the beach gang. The year they met is not known, but it was likely before 1920.

Joe Clark states that Alexander Clark had one, older, natural daughter, Anastasia, who would have been a granddaughter of John Clark. She was born about 1899 or 1900. Her full name was Marie Anastasia Clark, and, according to one of her granddaughters, her father's name was Max Clark. For the purposes of this biographical sketch, I consider Alexander and Max Clark to be the same person, with the discrepancy explained by different branches of the family assigning a different first name.

Alexander-Max Clark, left, and his second wife, Elena, circa 1930s at Moroyak, about 50 miles southwest of Bethel on the Kuskokwim River delta. Clark was the son of John W. Clark and an unidentified Yup'ik woman from the Kuskokwim delta.
H-2610 courtesy of Joe Faith and Sharon Clark.

A Thiele family story states that Max Clark's mother took him away and went into hiding with him when John Clark planned to send the boy to school in California. In spite of the lack of formal education, he was intelligent and hard working. Alexander-Max Clark married Sophie Andreanoff, who died in childbirth when their daughter Marie Anastasia was two years old. Later Alexander-Max Clark married again, this time to a woman named Elena.

In 1904, when she was about 5 years old, Marie Anastasia Clark was en-

141 Orth, *Dictionary,* 658, 544; Joe Clark, with Joe Faith, *Nukalpiaq, A Good Hunter & Provider,* Trafford Publishing: Victoria, British Columbia, 2005, 12–14, 19–21.

rolled in the boarding school-orphanage at the Holy Cross Mission on the lower Yukon River about, about 32 miles southeast of Anvik. She was educated by French nuns until 1912.[142] Marie Anastasia was confirmed in the Catholic Church in May 1910. While at the mission, she learned to sing opera and play the accordion. She is recalled by her children as being an amazing, talented and humorous person who could tie her own flies and always caught the first fish of the season.[143]

Marie Anastasia Clark Thiele, circa 1940 at her home on Alexander Creek, near the Susitna River. Her father was Alexander-Max Clark, and her mother was Sophie Andreanoff. Photograph courtesy of Georgia Tolbert.

There was also a Nathalia Clark, age 16, at the Holy Cross Mission in 1905, but it is not known if she was related to John Clark.[144] However, Clark and his future wife, Natalia V. Orlov, also had a daughter named Natalia who was born on September 27, 1884, which would have made her 21 years old in 1905. It is difficult to ascertain paternity from all these years' distance, but there is a good chance that the Nathalia Clark, age 16 and enrolled in the Holy Cross Mission in 1905, was related to John W. Clark. But to further muddle this picture, Moravian missionary, William H. Weinland, observed on June 3, 1884, that Clark and Natalia V. Orlov had one child when he first met them. This would conflict with the documented birth date of Clark's daughter Natalia in September of 1884. Perhaps the child Weinland saw with Mrs. Clark was a neighbor's child because the Nicholson family bible does not list a birth before September 27, 1884. To say there is considerable uncertainty about the number of children Clark fathered in western Alaska would be an understatement.

Marie Anastasia Clark married Carl Gustav Adolf Thiele about 1920, and they had six children. Thiele was a German immigrant who apparently came to Alaska because of the Klondike gold rush and stayed on and went to work for Alexander-Max Clark on the lower Kuskokwim as a fur buyer.

142 Orth, *Dictionary,* 426.
143 Georgia Tolbert, letter, June 28, 2008.
144 Holy Cross Mission Collection, Box 11, Folder 7, Enrollment 1901–1917, Gonzaga University Archives.

These parallel accounts of some of John Clark's descendants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries complement each other and corroborate each family's collective memory. Katherine Arndt's translations of Russian Orthodox Church records of births, deaths and baptisms tell part of the story, but in the case of Alexander-Max Clark, they seem to be silent. This suggests that Clark fathered children on the Kuskokwim delta that might not appear in Church records. Ms. Arndt believes translations of Church records might reveal additional information about John W. Clark's Yukon-Kuskokwim descendants.

CHAPTER 5

Clark Becomes Ensconced on Nushagak Bay, 1879

"This site of Nooshagak was an initial point of Russian influence and trade among the great Innuit [Yup'ik] people of Alaska,…A simple cylindrical wooden shaft twenty feet high, surmounted with a globe, stands erected to his [Fedor Kolmakov] memory on a small hillock overlooking the post below. The village itself is located on the abrupt slopes of a steep, grassy hillside which rises from the river's edge. The trading-stores and residence of the priest, the church, log huts of the natives and their barraboras are planted on a succession of three earthern terraces, one rising immediately behind the other. All communication from flat to flat is by slippery staircases, which are frought with great danger to a thoughtless pedestrian, especially when fogs moisten the steps and darkness obscures his vision.…The red-roofed, yellow-painted walls of the old Russian buildings, the smarter, sprucer dwellings of our traders, with lazy curvling wreaths of bluish smoke, are brought into very picturesque relief by the verdant slopes of Nooshagak's hillside, caught up and reflected deeply by the swiftly flowing current of the river below. The natives have festooned their long drying-frames with the crimson-tinted flesh of salmon; bleached drift-logs are scattered in profusion upon a bare sandy high-water bench that stretches like a buff-tinted ribbon just beneath them, and above, the dark, turbid whirl of flood and eddy so characteristic of a booming, rising river. A gleam of light falls upon a broad expanse of the estuary beyond that point under which the schooner lies at anchor…" Henry W. Elliott, 1875[145]

145 Henry W. Elliott, *Our Arctic Province, Alaska and The Seal Islands,* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886, 375–376.

THE Bristol Bay region of southwestern Alaska extends from Cape Newenham on the northwest to Port Moller on the southwest, a Bering Sea coastline of some 200 miles. The 55,000-square-mile Bristol Bay Basin drainage extends about 200 miles from tidewater to the divide in Lake Clark Pass, the ultimate source of the Iliamna Lake-Kvichak River system. It is a region of the interface of three major indigenous peoples, Yup'ik (Bering Sea Eskimo), Sugpiaq (Pacific Eskimo) and Dena'ina Athabascan (Indian). When Clark began living at Nushagak village, it had been considered the commercial and spiritual hub of the region. The first Russian Orthodox chapel in western Alaska was built at Nushagak in 1832, and the first church, dedicated to the Apostles Peter and Paul, was built in 1845.[146]

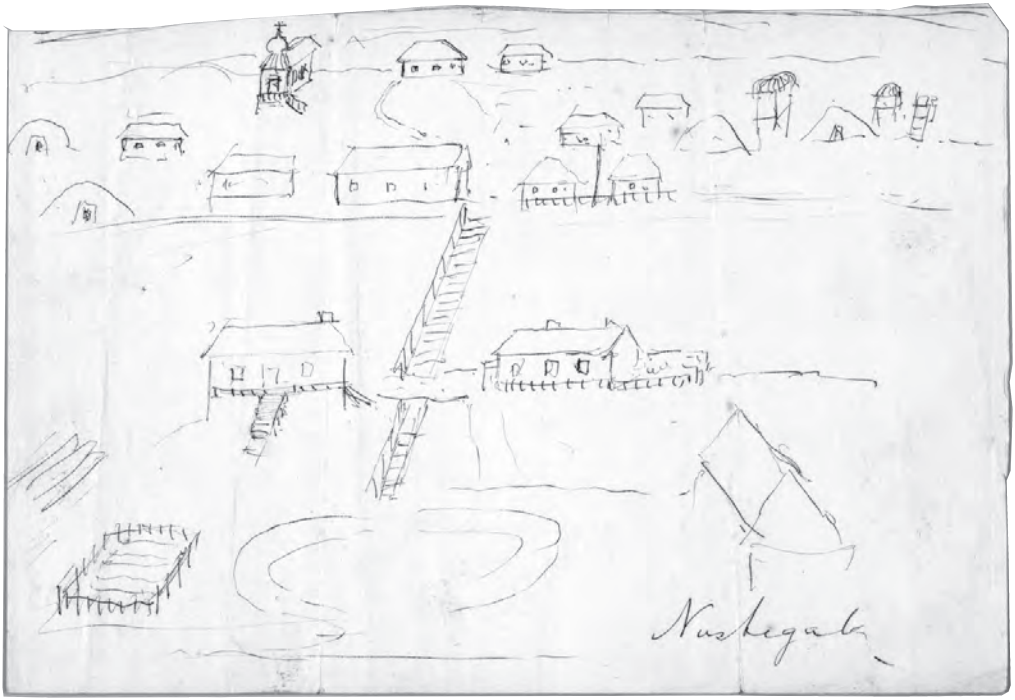
Bristol Bay had always been isolated by the geography of Aleutian and Alaska Ranges to the east and north and by the Bering Sea to the west and south. The Bristol Bay is a region with abundant big game and prodigious numbers of the five kinds of Pacific salmon. These abundant natural resources have supported the Bristol Bay Native people and defined their culture for thousands of years. After 1867, the rich, undeveloped salmon fisheries and the possibility of gold attracted American entrepeneurs and adventurers wanting to profit from the natural resources. Among them were the Alaska Commercial Company and John W. Clark.[147]

Mercier says Clark left the Yukon-Kuskokwim in 1877, which can be verified by a *San Francisco Alta* article from August 19, 1877, describing the arrival of the Alaska Commercial Company steamship *St. Paul* from Unalaska, a town in the Aleutian Islands, carrying Captain Gustave Niebaum, master, and one of the company owners. Also on board were a few passengers, including J. W. Clark with a large cargo of furs. The cargo included 75,526 fur seal pelts, 476 packs of dry furs, 76 packs of miscellaneous articles and 830 walrus ivory tusks.

Based on San Francisco newspapers from 1877 and 1878, a J.W. Clark traveled extensively during these years from San Francisco to New York, perhaps interspersed with time spent fur trading in Alaska. If the J. W. Clark or John W. Clark listed in the newspapers was the same man as the subject of this biography, then he was more widely traveled than one would expect possible in the era before the internal combustion engine. In February 1877, a John W. Clark or J. W. Clark arrived in San Francisco on the train

146 James VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak River: An Ethnographic History,* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967, 26.

147 Lael Morgan, *Bristol Bay Basin,* Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, Volume 5, Number 3, 1978, 13.



A sketch of Nushagak village done by Ivan Petroff, possibly in 1880. Clark's house and store are on the lower level. The Russian Orthodox Church is on the upper level, and the Yup'ik village is on the upper right. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Ivan Petroff Collection, C-B 989, folder 2, outgoing correspondence.

from the eastern part of the United States. On November 11, 1878, a person of that name arrived again in San Francisco via train.[148] The transcontinental traveling Clark was probably not the same person as the subject of this biography, instead he might have been a wool commission merchant, one J.W. Clark, who had business interests in San Francisco and New York City in the 1860s into the 1870s. It is confusing because both men went by J.W. Clark and both were around San Francisco during some of the same years.

During his stay at Nushagak village in the fall of 1880, census taker Ivan Petroff met John Clark who had recently moved there to become the chief trader at the Alaska Commercial Company trading post. The Russian-born Petroff was one of the most influential nineteenth century writers about Alaska and also one of the most mysterious visitors to Alaska.[149] Petroff says

148 Marvin Collins, e-mail, March 22, 2011.

149 Richard A. Pierce, "A Note on Ivan Petroff and the Far Northwest," *Journal of the West,* Volume III, October 1964, 436–439. The late historian Morgan B. Sherwood summed up the puzzling Petroff. "He was willing enough to gather, order, and disseminate information about Alaska, its history, its people, and its resources, but he was deliberately reluctant to distribute any great amount of information about himself…He is a likable character for all his delinquencies. As an authority on Alaska, only William Healey Dall could claim wider experience in the field, in the library, and in print….The influence of his two monuments—the Tenth Census report and Bancroft's *History of Alaska*—on subsequent investigations is incalculable. As recently as 1950, the 'Report on Population' was used in a government

Clark gave him a list of mean monthly temperatures in Nushagak starting in September 1879. But Clark also gave Petroff another set of temperatures in Nushagak beginning in November 1878. Perhaps Clark collected them himself, or he simply inherited them from his predecessor. However, Clark could not have returned to San Francisco in November 1878 and also have been living at Nushagak taking daily temperature readings the same month, because he would have had to leave in October to be on a boat that arrived in San Francisco in November. By November, the winter ice pack would have halted shipping in Bristol Bay. It seems plausible that Clark arrived at Nushagak to take over the trading post in September 1879, when he first began recording the temperature readings at Nushagak which he gave to Petroff. It seems likely that Clark began recording the temperatures as soon as he arrived at Nushagak village. Clark mentioned to Petroff that the winter of 1879–1880 had been very severe, with the mean temperature for January 1880 being 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit.[150]

The Moravian missionary, William H. Weinland, who first visited Clark at Nushagak on June 3, 1884, wrote that Clark was "stationed for several years at St. Michaels [and] on the Kuskokwim and later, (6 years ago) came to Nushagak." That would suggest that Clark first arrived at Nushagak in 1878.[151] It seems possible Clark first arrived at Nushagak to visit sometime in 1878, liked what he saw, and, after putting his various affairs in order, returned to put down roots in September 1879.

Petroff wrote about the Bristol Bay country's "astonishing numbers" of salmon, and certainly Clark would have been one of his chief informants in providing current population and economic conditions around the bay.

> On the upper Nushagak River and around the numerous lakes from which its waters flow a greater variety of fur-bearing animals and game exists…A single trading post at Alexandrovki's Redoubte [Nushagak] has drained all this extensive interior region for years past, and the trader [Clark] stationed there asserts that he did as much business in walrus-tusks from the coast

document to help determine the legal status of Alaska natives." Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska,* 57, 68–69.

150 Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska,* Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, Department of the Interior, Census Office, 1884, 16.

151 William H. Weinland, William H. Weinland Collection, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," Box 14 L Folder 15, June 3-4, 1884, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

> as in furs from the interior....we find everywhere traces of long and intimate intercourse with the Russians, who made this valley and series of lakes their highway of trade, connecting Bristol Bay with Kalmakovsky Redoubte and Sainte Michael,[152]

The 1880 census was taken in San Francisco on June 11, 1880, and lists a John Clark, with an estimated age of thirty-one, born in New York. His occupation was a seaman.[153] This John Clark is probably not the John Clark of Nushagak, who would have been thirty-four in 1880. Also, he couldn't have been in San Francisco in June, as the list of mean monthly temperatures he gave Petroff includes that month. The temperatures were taken from September 1879 to August 1880, at Nushagak. "These observations were taken by Mr. J.W. Clarke, the agent of the Alaska Commercial Company at that place [Nushagak],..."[154] Petroff met Clark at Nushagak in August or September of 1880 and probably counted him as the lone Euroamerican residing at the village, along with 91 Yup'ik people and 86 Creoles, for a total of 178 people, probably the largest village of the Bristol Bay region, and its commercial hub.[155]

It is quite possible that Alaska Commercial Company managers brought Clark to Nushagak in 1879, because he was an experienced Alaska hand, having been a fur trader since 1868. He was fluent in Yup'ik, and, just as importantly, he was conversant in Russian, the *lingua franca* of western Alaska in the nineteenth century. Clark understood Yup'ik culture. He respected Natives and Creoles and embraced their subsistence life-style, adopting major parts of it, such as the reliance on salmon, water fowl and berries for sustenance. Clark obviously had a first-rate temperament, and that would have enabled him to make friends and influence people. These personality traits helped Clark become a successful trader at Nushagak.

It seems quite likely that the Russian language was second only to Yup'ik at Nushagak at the time Clark arrived. Clark would have been the first English-speaking permanent resident to live on Nushagak Bay, and probably the entire Bristol Bay region. Over the subsequent years, Clark

152 Petroff, *Report,* 15.

153 Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, San Francisco, California, Roll: 73: Family History Film: 1254073: Page: 457C.

154 Petroff, *Report*, 16.

155 Petroff, "Alaska's Census, Conclusion of Mr. Petroff Enumerating Journey," *New York Herald Tribune,* January 10, 1881, 2; VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 151; James VanStone, *Nushagak, An Historic Trading Center In Southwestern Alaska,* Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, Volume 62, 1972, 16.

occasionally referred to being without other English-speaking conversationalists at Nushagak. Clark's future in-laws, the Orlovs, would have spoken Russian as their first language.

Henry Weinland wrote about John Clark's indifferent behavior toward the young woman, Natalia Vasilieva Orlov, who was the mother of his child, when Weinland first arrived at Nushagak in early June 1884. Natalia Vasilieva Orlov was the daughter of Deacon Vasili Efima Orlov, and thus, Clark was linked to the Orlovs by ties of the heart and by his friendship with Father Vasili Shishkin, the long-time Russian Orthodox priest at Nushagak, who seems to have been Orlov's mentor. The Clark-Shishkin-Orlov clan, to use Russian academician Andrei A. Znamenski's term, was made up of the three most influential families in all of the Bristol Bay region in the late nineteenth century. Between them, they controlled the commercial and spiritual reins of the region.[156]

Natalia Vasilieva Orlov was born August 31, 1868, probably in Nushagak, since her father began working for the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in 1860.[157] Her mother was Aleksandra Larionova who was born before 1839, probably in Sitka, but raised at the Russian agricultural colony at Fort Ross, California, where her father, Ivan Larionov, and mother Elena, were living. Aleksandra and Vasili Orlov were married at Kodiak Island in 1863. In addition, the Orlov's had a son and two other daughters.[158]

Vasili E. Orlov was the son of a Creole, Pelageia Nikifarovai Zyrianov, who was born in California between 1810 and 1838. His father was a Russian peasant, Evfimii Nikolaeva Orlov. Vasili was born in California, probably at Fort Ross in 1840. He was brought up and educated at the Kenai parochial school by Hegumen Nikolai and probably was about 20 years old when he arrived at Nushagak. Orlov only had a basic education, but he kept a journal and was a church song leader. In 1880, he became a deacon at the Nushagak church of St. Peter and St. Paul.[159] Having been raised and educated by Hegumen Nikolai, young

156 Andrei A. Znamenski, *Through Orthodox Eyes: Russian Missionary Narratives of Travels to the Dena'ina and Ahtna,* 1850s–1930s, Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003, 23.

157 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 33, 34.

158 Appendix I (Lists all persons known to have been stationed at Fort Ross), excerpted from the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, August 1997 by Sannie Kenton Osborn. John Weise, e-mail message, March 9, 2011; Znamenski, e-mail message, August 8, 2009.

159 Hegumen Nikolai was a Russian-born cleric and was the first priest to work on the Kenai Peninsula on a regular basis, moving there by 1845. In 1849, he baptized many Kenai Dena'ina people and vaccinated hundreds for smallpox. He also salted salmon at Kenai for local use, and the Russian-America Company sought to have him supply Sitka with salt Kenai salmon. However, by the mid-1860s he was too ill to do physically demanding labor. In 1846 he was put in charge of the Nushagak mission, and, although travel from the Kenai was difficult, he did travel to Nushagak and even Old Iliamna where he certainly became acquainted with the Russian-born Savva Riktorov

Vasili Orlov was well-prepared for his life at Nushagak and would have been skilled at winter travel by dog sled and summer travel by baidarka, a kayak-like skin covered watercraft that could carry 1 to 3 people. Orlov was well connected throughout the Bristol Bay region through his position with the Nushagak church and Father Shishkin.[160] Orlov's church position in the Bristol Bay region would have helped facilitate Clark's widespread trading activities in southwest Alaska by introducing him to people and informing him about conditions and needs throughout the region.

Vasili Shishkin was a Creole who was not as well educated as Vasili Orlov, but what he lacked in formal education he more than compensated for with longevity. He first arrived at Nushagak in 1842. He was there in 1852, but apparently was not there continuously until 1878. He retired in 1893 after serving at Nushagak for about fifty years. It is unclear whether Shishkin died at Nushagak or left for retirement in Sitka.[161] The Nushagak church ran a school, first mentioned in 1864, with Father Shishkin and Deacon Orlov teaching young people and adults songs and catechisms. Shishkin and Orlov were hearty outdoorsmen who traveled widely around Bristol Bay and upriver villages, including one extensive winter dog sledding trip of eighty-five days in 1883, on this trip they traveled all the way to lower Cook Inlet, probably via the Katmai Trail, and came back over the Bering Sea divide north to the Mulchatna River. They ministered to their parishoners, holding religious services, marrying couples and baptizing babies in the far-flung villages of their missionary district. Surely Father Shishkin and Deacon Orlov would have discussed their adventures on the long trip through the Bristol Bay country with Clark, including which trails they had traveled. The sharing of travel stories by the church men and by people like the Riktorovs who visited Nushagak to trade with Clark, would have enhanced the latter's overall knowledge of the region.[162]

Perhaps the managers of the Alaska Commercial Company saw Clark as the perfect man to establish a salmon salting station at Nushagak, which was needed to service a major company obligation. One of the requirements of the 1870 lease with the federal government whereby the company acquired an exclusive 20-year lease to harvest fur seals in the seal islands was an annual supply of 25,000 dried salmon to the residents of

---

who ran an odinochka for the Russian-America Company and was married to an Iliamna Dena'ina. They had many Creole children, some of whom would eventually work and trade for Clark in the 1880s and 1890s. Znamenski, *Orthodox Eyes,* 16–18, 22–23.

160 *Ibid.,* 15–17, 18.

161 Znamenski, telephone conversation, August 8, 2009.

162 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 36.

the Pribilof Islands who were all involved in the seal harvest. Clark could have supplied both salt and dried salmon to the Pribilof seal hunters and their families, by a direct voyage west from Nushagak to St. Paul of approximately 450 miles on board one of the company ships.[163]

Petroff described the fledgling commercial salmon industry along the shores of Nushagak Bay as he learned about it in the fall of 1880, undoubtedly from John W. Clark.

> The salmon…frequent in astonishing numbers the Nushagak and other streams emptying into Bristol Bay. The facilities for building traps and weirs are also extraordinary and American fishermen have for some years, been engaged here every season in reaping a rich harvest and shipping the fish, salted in barrels, to market. Hundreds of barrels have been filled with a single clean-up of the trap. The only drawback to this business is the short period over which the run extends, necessitating the employment of a very large number of hands while it lasts,[164]

Petroff wrote that John Clark, in addition to his business in furs and walrus ivory, also put up 700 to 800 barrels of salt cured salmon annually. It seems probable Clark relied on fish traps to catch sufficient numbers of salmon and processed them at a shore-based saltery. The exact location of the saltery is not known, but it probably was at Nushagak in front of Clark's home and company warehouse, or at Clarks Point, eight miles down the bay from Nushagak.[165]

John W. Nicholson, Clark's grandson, described the details of salting salmon at his father Hans P. Nicholson's salting station at the Snake River just west of Nushagak in 1912. The methods would have been essentially the same as employed by Clark at his nineteenth-century Nushagak Bay salting stations, sans the powerboat.

> These traps were extremely efficient, so my father hired a small crew to scoop out the fish. He used

163 O'Neill, *E. R. Lilienthal,* 41.

164 Petroff, *Report,* 16.

165 Petroff, "Alaska's Census, Conclusion of Mr. Petroff Enumerating Journey," *New York Herald Tribune,* January 10, 1881, 2; Van Stone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 151.

> a power boat for towing a miniature, flat scow for carrying fish. The workers would load the scow, and the salmon were transported to shore to be split and processed. The fish were then laid individually inside a big, round tank with rock salt covering the layers of salmon backs and bellies. After laying in the big tank for several days, the brine was drained. The fish were then taken out of the tanks and layered into two hundred pound barrels. Each barrel had a small hole on top, and was used to pour fresh brine into the barrel. The barrels were sealed, and the salted salmon was ready for shipment to market.[166]

Weinland wrote in 1884 that Clark had previously established a saltery "…at the fishing station started by Mr. Clark about 7 miles up river, the vessel was able to anchor quite close to shore. At Nushagak there is no timber [spruce]…but above the fishing station a short distance, the first timber is seen though very light." Weinland also said that Clark came on board the ship and piloted the vessel upriver about six miles to a small village, where a fishing station was operating. They attached the ship to the shore by ropes and used a small boat to ferry lumber to shore.[167] The location is a bit vague, but six or seven miles above Nushagak would locate it about three miles above Kanulik village and at the saltery that became known as the C. E. Whitney saltery on Rohlffs Slough at a location known as Ekwok, not to be confused with the village of the same name about 40 miles up the Nushagak River.[168]

Petroff states that John Clark established a small trading station on the seacoast near Togiak. On his way to the Nushagak trading post, Petroff and his party of Yup'ik guides and baidarka paddlers were on a near-starvation diet. In order to avoid the stormy seas off Cape Constantine, they portaged up the Kanik River at Kulukak Bay to Ualik and Amanka lakes, and down the Igushik River to Nushagak Bay. Petroff's guides left the incapacitated traveler in a tent near the mouth of the Igushik River

166 John W. Nicholson, *No Half-Truths: Reminiscences of Life in Bristol Bay, Alaska 1906–1995,* Anchorage, Alaska: Publication Consultants, 1995, 13–14.

167 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," May 17, September 15, 1884, Weinland Collection, Huntington Library, Box 14 L Folder 15, 114, 123–124.

168 Hjalmer Olson, personal conversation, November 2, 2009.

and went for help across the bay at Nushagak village. Petroff wrote: "The succor arrived on the following day, and after careful indulgence in…food the suffering census taker was enabled to reach one of the few stations on his journey, the trading post Nushagak, where he was hospitably received and entertained by Mr. Clark, the trader, during his brief sojourn."[169]

As Clark built his fur trading business, establishing several small village trading stations manned by ambitious village leaders, Togiak was a very important location because of its proximity to the nearby Walrus Islands. Henry W. Elliott had visited Nushagak Bay between 1872 and 1874 and wrote about Bristol Bay walrus.

> The seal and walrus hunters of Nooshagak district are those hardy Innuits [Yup'iks] who live at Kulukak and Ungalikthluk Bays, in plain sight of these walrus islets and shoals.…Down here at Nooshagak these Natives have earned a distinction of being the most skillful sculptors of the whole northern range. Their carvings in walrus-ivory are exceedingly curious, and beautifully wrought in many examples. The patience and fidelity with which they cut from walrus-tusks delicate patterns furnished them by traders are equal in many respects…[as those] made by the Chinese.[170]

Albert B. Schanz wrote about the status of Bristol Bay walrus herds after his visit to Nushagak in 1890 and 1891.

> In former times walrus ivory was an important article of trade in this district, and the huge pinnipeds were hunted by the Natives on sand dunes of Hagemeister Island and the north side of Alaska Peninsula, but now the animals have been well-nigh exterminated.[171]

169 Petroff, "Alaska's Census," *New York Herald Tribune,* January 10, 1881, 2; Johan Adrian Jacobsen, translated by Erna Gunther, *Alaskan Voyage 1881–1883: An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America,* Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 189–191. Johan Adrian Jacobsen visited a trading post near Togiak on or about April 24, 1883.

170 Elliott, *Our Arctic,* 400, 384.

171 Robert P. Porter, *Report on the Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census: 1890.* Chapter 6,

Elliott made a water-color painting of Nushagak village dated 1879, the same year Clark moved to Nushagak. Elliott entitled his painting: "Reindeer and Walrus ivory trading station of the Alaska Commercial Company."[172] It seems both species, caribou and walrus, had already been intensely hunted before Clark moved to Nushagak. Elliott wrote of the wanton destruction of caribou just for their hides possibly sometime in the 1870s.

> Reindeer cross and recross the Kvichak River in large herds during the month of September; as they range over to and from the Peninsula of Alaska, feeding, and also to escape from mosquitoes. At the mouth of this stream is one of the broadest deer roads in the country. The Natives run along the banks of the river when reindeer are swimming across easily and rapidly spearing those unfortunate animals as they rise from the water, securing in this way any number that fancy or want may dictate. At one time a trader counted seven hundred deer-carcasses as they lay here on the sands of the river's margin, untouched save by removal of the hides…[173]

The available Alaska Commercial Company records indicate Clark never collected many caribou hides for shipment in the 1880s and 1890s. Apparently most of the hides were used by Alaska Natives for bedding, boots and clothing. In 1902, biologist Wilfred Osgood found that the Alaska Peninsula caribou had "formerly [been] very abundant in this region, but are now much reduced in numbers."[174]

Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883, Albert B. Schanz, Chapter 6, "The Fourth or Nushagak District," 253.

172 Henry W. Elliott Collection, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California Berkeley.

173 Elliott, *Our Arctic,* 397.

174 Wilfred Osgood, *A Biological Reconnaissance of the Base of the Alaska Peninsula,* North America Fauna 24, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904, 27–28.

Charles L. McKay, U.S. Signal Service agent, and the first federal biologist to work in the Bristol Bay region 1881–1883. H-490 courtesy of Indiana University Archives.

CHAPTER 6

The U.S. Signal Service-Smithsonian Years in Nushagak, 1881-1885

DURING the late 1870s and early 1880s, while John Clark was transitioning from trading on the Kuskokwim delta to Fort Alexander at Nushagak Bay, the U.S. Signal Service, a branch of the U.S. Army, became the leading federal agency responsible for compiling meteorological data in Alaska. General William B. Hazen, Chief Signal Officer, collaborated with Professor Spencer F. Baird, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, in selecting young naturalists to gather data at meteorological-natural history stations. Stations were established at St. Michael, at Unalaska on the Aleutian Islands and at Nushagak.[175] Perhaps the most accomplished Signal Service agent was Edward Nelson, who was stationed at St. Michael between 1877 and 1881. Nelson made one 1,200-mile dog sledding collecting trip on the Yukon River delta between December 1878 and March 1879. Nelson, like John Clark, was an important informant to Ivan Petroff in documenting western Alaska for the Tenth Census of the United States in 1880.[176]

On March 2, 1881, Spencer Baird wrote to David Starr Jordan, a professor at Indiana University, telling him of a great,

> …opportunity…to some earnest student of natural history to acquire distinction, [by documenting] a vast region now unknown," to the wider world…I am anxious to find a first-rate man to go as signal observer to Bristol Bay, in Alaska, unquestionally [*sic*] the best locality for zoological discovery in North America. The fauna in winter is arctic, the reindeer, moose, brown bear,

175 Unrau, *Lake Clark,* draft, 200.
176 Orth, *Dictionary,* 25.

> etc., abounding; in summer, however, it is warm & pleasant, & at the different-seasons, all the birds of rarest species abound, Stellars Duck, the Emperor goose, etc.…The ethnological field is also one of wonderful richness, furnishing an opportunity for important discoveries & collections of all kinds can be made in vast amounts.[177]

The duties and responsibilities assigned to the observer at Nushagak were stated in a letter dated March 22, 1884, from Spencer Baird to James W. Johnson, the second observer at that post. "Your primary duty at the station, will be to make twice-daily observations in regard to the thermometer, barometer, rain gauge and next to that, to make collections of specimens of natural history and ethnology for the National Museum."[178] The observer was authorized to make purchases of trading stock from John Clark at the Alaska Commercial Company post, such as tea, hard tack-pilot bread, tobacco and flour, with which to barter with Natives for various artifacts and services, such as guiding and paddling baidarkas on collecting trips.[179]

The first Signal Service observer at Nushagak was Charles Leslie McKay. He was born near Appleton, Wisconsin on April 21, 1855, to Scottish immigrants, Hector and Sarah McKay. Hector McKay was a farmer. At a young age, Charles McKay did chores on the family farm with his brothers and demonstrated a great love of the natural world, in particular for birds and fish. He enrolled at the Appleton Collegiate Institute and became a student of David Starr Jordan, who would become president of Stanford University. Jordan was passionate about natural history. When McKay wanted to become a naturalist like Jordan, he first went to college in New York, at Cornell University. In the late 1870s, McKay followed his mentor Jordan to Butler University in Indiana and followed him again to Indiana University, where he graduated in 1881.[180]

For a short time during the winter of 1881, McKay worked for the U.S. Fish Commission in Washington, D.C., where he must have come to

177 Spencer Baird, letter to David Starr Jordan, March 2, 1881, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.

178 Baird, letter to J. W. Johnson, March 22, 1884, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 33, Volume 158, 448–449.

179 Baird, letter to J. W. Johnson, March 22, 1884, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 33, Volume 160, 467–470.

180 Barbara and Richard Mearns, "McKay of McKay's Bunting: a Native of Appleton, Wisconsin," *The Passenger Pigeon,* Vol. 55, No. 2, Summer 1993, 139–141.

the attention of Professor Baird. By late winter 1881, he had been selected by Baird to man the Signal Service station at Nushagak. McKay enlisted in the Signal Service on March 28, 1881, as a private.[181] McKay probably sailed from San Francisco to Nushagak in April or May 1881.[182]

McKay arrived at Nushagak in early June 1881, where he met Clark. Clark was nine years his senior and by this time an experienced Alaska hand. Clark was to be McKay's only English-speaking companion for the next two years. McKay lived in a small log house next to Clark's Alaska Commercial Company wood frame store. Twenty years later, biologist Wilfred Osgood, the third federal biologist to work in the Bristol Bay region, stayed in the same house.[183] The small cabin was made of carefully gooved logs chinked with moss. Clark was also McKay's liaison with the Yup'ik people of Nushagak Bay and with other upriver people who traded at the Nushagak trading post and visited the Russian Orthodox Church.

Clark was McKay's translator and chief local informant, sharing his knowledge of the Bristol Bay people and the locations of various natural and cultural resources suitable for museum collections. One immediate need Clark probably resolved was the hiring of local Yup'ik guides with a three-hatch baidarka to take McKay on collecting forays around Nushagak Bay. The pay would probably have been in trade goods, such as tea, tobacco or gun powder. Clark also loaned his own kayak to McKay, and soon McKay asked Professor Baird to pay for a kayak so he would not burden Clark. McKay wrote to Professor Baird at the Smithsonian of his need of a skin boat; "…I will get a bidarka for my own use this coming season. I have been using one of the Company's bidarkas, but I cannot always have it when I want it and it sometimes puts Mr. Clark to inconvenience. It would probably cost about $15."[184]

Just as Clark had shared his knowledge of the Bristol Bay country with Petroff, he would undoubtedly have recorded McKay's required, twice-daily weather reports while the young naturalist was away collecting specimens and artifacts. Clark had a genial and winning personality, and over the years he lived at Nushagak, he was helpful to all who visited his trading post.

181 J. N. Mills, letter to Spencer Baird, August 13, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 30, Office of Secretary, Correspondence 1882–1890, Box 15, Folder 10.

182 David Starr Jordan, "Charles Leslie McKay," *The Indiana Student,* Volume IX, No. 1, November 1882, Indiana University, 3.

183 Weinland, "Alaska Diary," April 17, September 15, 1884, 108; Wilfred H. Osgood, *A Biological Reconnaissance of The Base of The Alaska Peninsula,* North America Fauna No. 24, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904, 26.

184 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives, ACC. Accession no. 11460.

McKay began collecting as soon as he arrived at Nushagak village, as noted in Wilfred Osgood's *A Biological Reconnaissance of the Base of the Alaska Peninsula* acquiring a fox sparrow on June 6, 1881.[185] McKay wrote in July 1881 that he went to the head of Bristol Bay. By that, he seems to mean to the mouth of the Kvichak River. McKay went as "far south as the Solina River," (Dall called it the "Sulima River") which was the Ugashik River, where he collected ethnographic specimens, including a beaded headdress.[186] McKay wrote, "the whole coast around the head of the bay has a muddy shore." This characterizes the area between the mouths of the Kvichak and Naknek rivers perfectly. McKay hoped to go on a collecting trip north of Point Constantine to an area that was rocky (Kulukuk and Togiak), "if the weather quiets down sufficiently this fall."[187] It is doubtful that he ever traveled to Togiak himself, yet he might have collected specimens from that location with the help of a Togiak resident who ran a small trading station for Clark.

In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, travel was difficult at best in the Bristol Bay country. When the Bering Sea and the inland waters were ice-free, travel was by a kayak, baidarka, or baidara similar to the umiak. In the winter travel was by dog team. McKay was very limited in his travels by what the weather and conditions on the ground allowed.

McKay wrote Baird that he had "a smart young fellow…one of the agents of this company [Alaska Commercial Company] collecting for me on the other side of the bay."[188] McKay's few extant letters are often vague about locations and dates. He might have been referring to Togiak, Egegik, Ugashik or Koggiung villages or even Igushik, just west across Nushagak Bay. It is known that there was a small Alaska Commercial Company post at Togiak, one Clark had established.[189] McKay also wrote he had another person collecting for him at the head of Bristol Bay, perhaps referring to a trader at Koggiung, near the mouth of the Kvichak River.[190] It was company policy for its traders to aid in the collection of Native curios and artifacts to donate to museums and historical societies. It was also a practice of the company to sell these items to private collectors. Traders, such as

185 Osgood, *A Biological,* 76.

186 William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell, *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska,* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988, 49; Dall, *op. cit.,* 18; Aron Crowell, "Postcontact Koniag Ceremonialism on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula: Evidence from the Fisher Collection," *Arctic Anthropology,* Volume 29 (1), 1992, 18–37.

187 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives. Accession no. 11460.

188 *Ibid.*

189 Petroff, *The New York Herald Tribune,* January 10, 1881.

190 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 11460.

Clark, were also instructed to send specimens to the company headquarters in San Francisco.[191]

In an interesting ethnographic observation, McKay wrote that there were two Eskimo tribes in the region, the Kusquqvagmiut and the Aglurmiut. The latter he said, "formerly lived around Nushagak, but they were driven out after a bloody struggle, and moved over to the head of the bay on the other side."[192] In 1880, the Aglurmiut did have villages at Paugvik, at the mouth of the Naknek River, at Koggiung village, at the mouth of the Kvichak River, on the Alagnak River, east to Kukaklek and Nonvianuk lakes and at Egegik, at the mouth of the Egegik River.[193]

As a result of this Yup'ik internecine warfare, a domino effect occurred. For example, the Aglurmiut moved eastward from Nushagak Bay into Kvichak Bay, Naknek and Egegik rivers. In turn, the former Sugpiaq residents were pressured to move to the area of Old Savonoski, at the east end of Naknek Lake, and west to Ugashik on the lower Alaska Peninsula.[194]

McKay was a skilled collector, and he established a level of trust and mutual respect with Bristol Bay Natives, which enabled him to do his job well. That would be born out by the fact that he traveled widely in the Bristol Bay drainage collecting artifacts and specimens with Native guides and paddlers. Some of the locations he visited were Lake Aleknagik, Cape Constantine, Igushik, Ugashik, Kvichak Bay, Kvichak River, Iliamna Lake, Old Iliamna village, Lake Clark, and the Chulitna Portage, including the Swan, Koktuli and the Mulchatna rivers and Nushagak River villages of Kokwok and Koliganek.

U.S. Biological Survey biologist, Wilfred Osgood, is the best source of the extent of McKay's travels around the Bristol Bay region. In 1902, for part of his own wide-ranging trip around the bay, Osgood hired the same Dena'ina guide as McKay, Zackar Evanoff.[195] Evanoff had guided

---

191 Graburn, Lee and Rousselot, *Catalogue,* 1.

192 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives. Accession no. 11460; Charlie Pleasant, Joseph H. Romig, K. T. Khlebnikov, and P. Korsakovskiy, "The War of the Eye," *Our Story, Readings From Southwest Alaska,* edited by John Branson and Tim Troll, second edition, Anchorage: Alaska Natural History Association, 2006, 35–38.

193 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 11460; Don E. Dumond, *A Naknek Chronicle: Ten Thousand Years in a Land of Lakes and Rivers and Mountains of Fire,* Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Katmai National Park and Preserve, Government Printing Office, 2005, 62; VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 120.

194 Don E. Dumond, *A Naknek Chronicle, Ten Thousand Years in a Land of Lakes and Rivers and Mountains of Fire,* King Salmon, Alaska: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2005, 48–49; Don E. Dumond and James W. VanStone, *Paugvik: A Nineteenth-Century Native Village on Bristol Bay, Alaska,* Fieldiana No. 24. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1995, 2–5.

195 Breece, *A Schoolteacher,* 276.

McKay twenty years before, on the same portage from Lake Clark to the Swan Lakes, in the Nushagak drainage. In addition, Osgood had access to McKay's field notebooks when writing his book.[196]

McKay wrote his friends in Indiana telling them of some of his adventures, and it is clear that he traveled by dog sled from Nushagak during the winters of 1881–1882 and 1882–1883. David Starr Jordan references the last letter McKay wrote to Spencer Baird on January 26. Jordan does not give a year, but if it was, in fact, McKay's last letter to Baird, it had to be written in 1883, since he (McKay) died on April 19, 1883. Yet McKay could only have written about a prospective trip to the Chigmit Mountains before he went to the Iliamna-Lake Clark country in 1882. Osgood has established that McKay went upriver during the spring-summer of 1882. It seems inexplicable that McKay did not write a letter to Baird detailing his collecting trip to the Chigmits after the fact in the fall of 1882. Yet no such letter is extant in the Smithsonian Institution Archives. It seems likely that McKay wrote to Baird on January 26, 1882, describing his intention of going to the Chigmit Mountains.

> There is one section of this district, up at the head of this river [Nushagak River], among the Chigmit Mountains and inland, that is entirely unexplored and unknown. No white man has ever been there. It is very probable that many species of birds that are not found here will be found there…The mountain sheep and little 'chief hare' are very abundant there, but it is impossible to get the Natives that live around here to kill the latter as they have some superstition about it. The Natives also say that there is a goat that lives in these mountains. …I have no doubt that if I could spend one summer in that region, I could do good work there. Looking towards that end, I have a proposition to make…Mr. Swain, who has been at work in Professor Jordan's laboratory remarked incidentally in one of his letters that he 'wouldn't mind spending a year with me.' If he would come, I could leave my station in his

196 Osgood, *A Biological,* 53.

> charge. The expense to the Smithsonian would only include his transportation to San Francisco and return.…In that case, I would, of course, be without salary, but I would be perfectly satisfied with having my traveling expenses paid.…Mr. Swain would be a very valuable aid in developing the resources of this large region. There is yet a good deal of work to do and I do not care to return under four years.[197]

Osgood was certain that McKay reached Lake Clark, and there are several specimens in the Smithsonian's American Museum of Natural History collections attributed to McKay from the Chulitna River, the second largest tributary of Lake Clark. Moreover, Osgood states that his guide in 1902 up the Chulitna River was Zackar Evanoff, the same resident of Kijik village who had guided McKay twenty years before in 1882. "He [McKay] also made a trip over a considerable part of the route traveled by our party," Osgood wrote.

> He visited Lake Iliamna and Iliamna Village, and according to an account received from a native, [Evanoff] crossed the Chulitna Portage. By strange coincidence, the same native who, as a young man accompanied McKay on his trip, went with us from Lake Clark to Swan Lake, and related to us various incidents of the trip made twenty years before, [with McKay]…our guide, Zackar, a very intelligent Native from Kijik village…[198]

The Chulitna Portage formerly had been used extensively by Bristol Bay Natives to travel from the Lake Clark-Iliamna country to Nushagak Bay, both winter and summer. The portage ran west about 50 miles from the mouth of the Chulitna River to the divide near the Swan Lakes, in the Nushagak drainage, and had long been used as a travel route by Natives between the Kvichak and Nushagak River drainages.

197 David Starr Jordan, "Charles Leslie McKay," *The Indiana Student,* Volume X, No. 1, November 1883, 4. The "little chief" is the pika, *Ochotona collaris.*

198 Osgood, *A Biological,* 67, 14, 26.

McKay wrote another intriguing letter from Nushagak on April 14, 1882, to an unnamed friend at his alma mater, Indiana University.

> In Nushagak here, they [Natives] have adopted the European dress to a greater extent than anywhere else in the Bristol Bay region, but they still retain the parka and the moccasins or skin boots. As you go inland, however, the people dress entirely in skins. Their dishes and weapons of the chase are made just as their forefathers made them…The Indians of the interior are the regular Indians of the plains…There is a tribe of them, living up on the Molchatria River, a branch of the Nushagak River that are good Indians…They were far more sociable than these people, as far as my observation went—different in features and language. In Callogamuck [Koliganak] I saw one huge squaw with a face as big and round and expressive as the full moon.

McKay went on to describe a dance he witnessed, perhaps at one of the Dena'ina Mulchatna villages, with drumming and as he characterized, "…a give-away feast."[199] McKay might be describing an Athabascan potlatch ceremony where the personal effects of a deceased person are given away. But local Nushagak River informants and other experts state there are similar gatherings with the deceased's personal belongings given away in Yup'ik villages along the river.[200] Therefore, it is impossible to state with certitude that McKay witnessed a potlatch at one of the Mulchatna Dena'ina villages during one of his winter sledding trips up the Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers.[201]

McKay's Bristol Bay travel was described by the editor of *The Indiana Student*.

> If space permitted, we should be glad to add many other interesting extracts from Mr. McKay's long

199 McKay, letter to anonymous, April 14, 1882, *The Indiana Student,* Volume IX, No. 1, November 1882, 18.

200 Fitzhugh and Crowell, *Crossroads,* 67.

201 Fred Nelson and Jerry Liboff, telephone conversations, April 28, 2011; Aron Crowell, e-mail message, May 12, 2011; Hjalmer Olson, telephone conversation, May 12, 2011.

> and interesting letter. His experiences in that strange far-away land, with fish, fowl, men and ferocious mammals, among mountains and fleas, and in the wilderness with spruce boughs for a bed, the sky for a coverlet, and a thermometer marking 29 below zero for a bed-fellow, are altogether as interesting reading as can be found in any books of travel.[202]

The spring-summer of 1882 saw McKay travel with Yup'ik guides and paddlers by baidarka from Nushagak around Etolin Point into Kvichak Bay, the Kvichak River and eastward across Iliamna Lake to Old Iliamna village, where he likely secured two Dall's sheep horn spoons from the Dena'ina. The sheep specimens came from the Chigmit Mountains. Osgood believed McKay obtained them at the Dena'ina village of Old Iliamna on the lower Iliamna River. But Osgood felt the Iliamna Dena'ina probably obtained the sheep parts from their kinfolk on Lake Clark at Kijik village, because, based on his 1902 visit, Dall's sheep were not known to commonly inhabit the mountains around Iliamna Lake.[203]

McKay's accession records from 1883 list "Clothing of Kenai Indians," that he could have collected himself at Old Iliamna during his 1882 visit or from one of the Dena'ina Mulchatna villages he perhaps visited during the winter of 1882 or 1883.[204] He also collected snowshoes, a fish spear, birch bark dishes, a squirrel skin parka, a summer cap, a winter cap and a kamleika.[205] It is also possible that McKay traded for the Kenai (Dena'ina) artifacts from one of Clark's agents from Old Iliamna, for instance one of the Riktorov family, such as Mikhail, who worked for Clark as a trader at Old Iliamna trading station.[206]

McKay also collected a pika in the Chigmit Mountains and noted, "The Indians in the area have a superstitious dread about killing the chief hare (pika), and cannot be hired to do so."[207] Osgood states that McKay collected a specimen of a little brown bat the spring of 1882 on Lake Iliamna. Osgood said "McKay was unquestionably a careful and enthusiastic collector, and his accidental death at an early age was a dis-

202 Anonymous, *The Indiana Student,* Vol. IX, No.1, November 1882, 19.
203 Osgood, *A Biological,* 30.
204 Osgood, *ibid.,* 70, 71.
205 McKay, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 13527, 15.
206 Znamenski, *Through Orthodox Eyes,* 2003, 284.
207 David Starr Jordan, *The Indiana Student,* 4.

tinct loss to science."[208] On May 19, 1883, about a month after McKay died in Nushagak Bay, Baird not knowing of his death, wrote him saying the collections he sent back to the Smithsonian had "extreme value" and "great importance."[209]

Since McKay apparently left no written account of his trip to Iliamna, we must refer to Johan Adrian Jacobsen's May 1883 trip to obtain a first-hand account of the arduous task of paddling a skin boat from Nushagak village to Old Iliamna village, a distance of approximately 175 miles. Jacobsen rented an open skin boat from Clark's future father-in-law, Deacon Vasili Orlov, and made the journey (starting on May 19) in the company of three Yup'ik paddlers and one Creole and his wife and child. Jacobsen wrote,

> It took several days…to reach the northeast end of Bristol Bay, for the shallow water left us high and dry at low tide….I saw caribou on the shores…because they find fertile meadows with plenty of reindeer moss. This area would be a perfect paradise for the Reindeer Laps [*sic*] of my homeland. On April 24 we reached the mouth of the [Kvichak River], into which we passed…We pulled our boat upriver against the current, and along the way we gathered the eggs of seabirds because our food supply was dwindling…My crew pulled bravely on the line and when the shore was impassible waded chest deep in icy water… On 29 May we reached Lake Iliamna, which was ocean-like extent and was whipped into great waves in the wake of a storm…We set sail and headed for the northeast end of the lake,…We sailed past a large island…and arrived at the…mouth of the [Iliamna River]. A short ride of about five…miles brought us…to the village of Iliamna, [about June 5] a trading post of the Alaska Commercial Company…The station at Iliamna consists of five

208 Osgood, *A Biological* 38, 50, 25.

209 Baird, letter to McKay, May 19, 1883, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 33, Volume 142, 113–117.

> huts and is the boundary between the Eskimo and Ingalik [Dena'ina] people.[210]

McKay's journey along the same route would have been very similar to what Jacobsen experienced, only he would also certainly have accomplished it in a baidarka with experienced paddlers.

As late as 1882, the Iliamna-Lake Clark region had rarely seen a Euroamerican traveler. Perhaps Alphonse Pinart, the French ethnographer-linguist, was the first non-Russian white man to see Iliamna Lake when, in 1871, he and Yup'ik guides paddled baidarkas up the Kvichak River to the lake's outlet and then returned to the Bristol Bay.[211] It is very likely that McKay was the first documented American to see the lake north of Iliamna Lake, which the Dena'ina called Qizhjeh Vena, before it was named Lake Clark in February 1891 by New York City writer-explorer Albert B. Schanz. But it is safe to assume a few other intrepid Euroamericans visited Lake Clark before 1891, and perhaps even before McKay did, though they are undocumented. The Russians had first documented the large lake north of Iliamna Lake by the early 1790s when the promyshlenniki Aleksey (Vasili) Ivanov traveled in the winter on skis north of Iliamna across Lake Clark and on to the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers seeking trading opportunities with interior Native Alaskans. The first known Russian written record of Klichikh Lake (Lake Clark) was made by the Russian explorer Peter Korsakovskii in 1818 when he likely followed part of the same route Ivanov had used.[212] According to the late archeologist James VanStone, Korsakovskii's route from Lake Clark toward the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers may have gone up the Chulitna River to a tributary, the Koksetna, followed by a short portage to Tutna Lake which ultimately drains into the Mulchatna River near a Dena'ina village. From the village, the route would have been north to the Kuskokwim River.[213]

Henry W. Elliott, like John Clark, a veteran of the Western Union Telegraph Company Expedition, described the Iliamna country in his book, *Our Arctic Province, Alaska and the Seal Islands*.

---

210 Johan Adrian Jacobsen, translated by Erna Gunther, *Alaskan Voyage 1881–1883: An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America,* Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 189–191.

211 Sven Haakanson Jr. and Amy Steffian, editors, *Giinaquq, Like a Face,* Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2009, 207–208.

212 Unrau, *Dictionary,* draft, 59; Alice J. Lynch, *Qizhjeh: The Historic Tanaina Village of Kijik and the Kijik Archeological District,* Fairbanks: Anthropology and Historic Preservation Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 1982, 8.

213 VanStone, *Russian Exploration In Southwest Alaska: The Travel Journals of Petr Korsakovskii (1818) And Ivan Ya. Vasilev (1829),* endnote 111, 73.

> At the head of the Bay of Bristol a small but deep and rapid river empties a flood of pure, clear water into an intricate series of sand and mud channels.…The Kvichak is the name of this stream, and it rises less than forty miles away in the largest fresh-water lake known to Alaska–that inland sea of Ilymna, over ninety miles in its greatest length, varying in width from surf which beats sonorously upon its pebbly shore and under its cliffs, while the loud wailing cry of a great northern loon echoes from one lonely shore to the other when disturbed by the unwanted passage of a native's canoe. Against the eastern horizon there springs from its bosom an abrupt and mighty wall of alpine peaks [Chigmit Mountains], which stand as an eternal barrier between its pure sweet waters and the salt surges of the Pacific.[214]

Elliott also described Old Iliamna village, but it is obvious that he never visited the site, as he locates it on the lake itself, instead of 6 miles up the Iliamna River, where it actually sat. Some of Elliot's description was accurate, but it was somewhat hyperbolic.

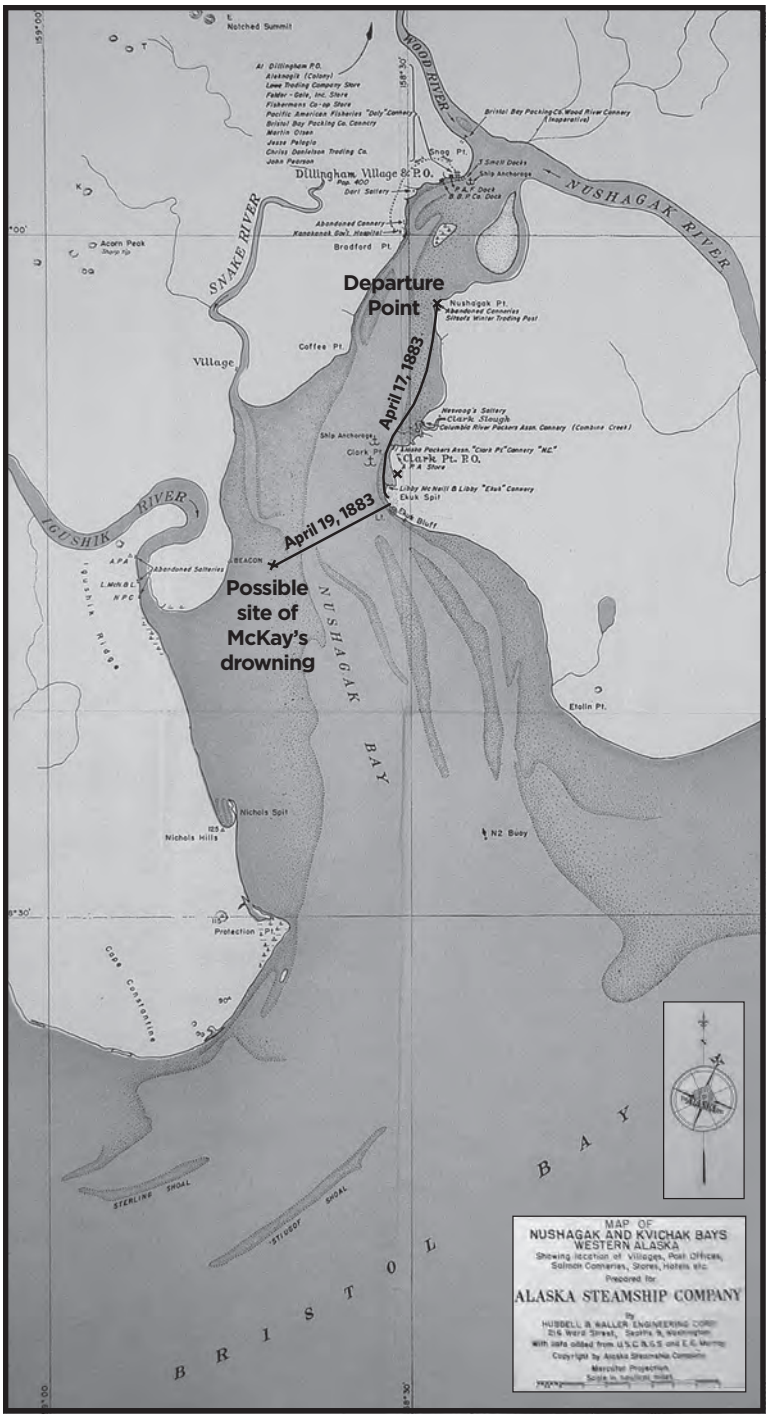
> The ruins of an old Russian trading-post stand in the midst of a small native village…on the slope of, a lovely grassy upland…Its people are all living in log houses like those noticed on Cook's Inlet; but nevertheless they are all true Innuits.[215] The two other small hamlets on these Ilymna shores are all that exist…Two trails over the divide are traveled by these natives, who trade with the Cook's Inlet people, and range over the mountains sides in pursuit of reindeer and of bears. A most noteworthy family of Russian Creoles [the Riktorovs] lived here on the first portage. The father was a man of gigantic stature, and he reared

214 Henry W. Elliott, *Our Arctic,* 395.

215 The population of Old Iliamna village was primarily Dena'ina Athabascan, however, the powerful Riktorov family were Creoles.

four Anak-like sons, who are, as he was, mighty hunters, and of great physical power. This family lives all to itself in that beautiful wilderness of Ilymna, a little way back from the lake on a hillside, where they command passes over to Cook's Inlet. They control the trade of this entire region and rule without a shadow of disputation.[216]

216 Elliott, *Our Arctic,* 396; Anak, a Biblical giant.



A map of Nushagak Bay showing the possible kayak routes taken by McKay on April 17 and 19, 1883 that led to his death by drowning. "Map of Nushagak and Kvichak Bays, Western Alaska." Prepared for the Alaska Steamship Company by Hubbel W. Waller Engineering Corporation, Seattle, 1946. Alaska State Museum, Juneau 2011-21.

CHAPTER 7

The Demise of Charles McKay and His Legacy of Scientific Inquiry

"It is my sad duty to inform you that your son left this place on the 17th of April, to make a short trip for the purpose of making collections, and that he never returned. He left in company with a Native, each of them in a single canoe and passed the night in an Indian village, sixteen miles from the station. The following day was very stormy and they lay over in the village. On the morning of the third day (19) it being calm weather, they left the village to cross over the bay, a distance of 12 miles. They were accompanied from the village by three other Native canoes. When about two thirds of the way across a strong adverse wind sprang up. In some manner, he was left behind and that was the last that was seen of him. On the 22 the report reached me and the same day we began to search for him. We found broken pieces of his canoe, a gun, his rubber boots, hat and various little articles on the beach about a mile on this side of the village they left that morning. We continued the search for over three weeks, but could not find the body. Such is a brief account of all that is at present known of the manner in which he was lost. I can readily understand with what feelings you will receive this letter, and believe me that if the sympathy of a stranger can serve to mitigate your grief in the slightest degree, you have mine. Being my sole companion for two years, I had learned to appreciate him and to esteem his manly, upright character. Your very obedient servant, John W. Clark."
June 17, 1883[217]

217 John W. Clark, letter to Hector McKay, June 17, 1883, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 30, Office of the Secretary Correspondence, 1882–1890, Box 8, Folder 8.

THE letter on the previous page is the only substantial example of John Clark's writing known to exist. It is likely that without the April 18, 1906, earthquake and subsequent fire in San Francisco, much of his company-related correspondence would be available for writers and researchers to peruse. But the quake and fire destroyed the Alaska Commercial Company offices at 310 Sansome Street, and with it, most of the company files, a tremendous loss to the history of Alaska.

McKay seemed to foretell the cause of his own demise when he wrote Baird about the dangers of kayak travel on the waters of the Bristol Bay. He seemed to be a bit cavalier about these perils. In one letter, he intimated that the local Nushagak Yup'iks were overly cautious in their approach to getting out on the bay's waters in their skin boats.

In a September 1881 letter to Professor Baird, McKay wrote:

> It has to be pretty quiet down on the coast or there is no getting the Indians [Yup'iks] to venture out. On the last trip I wanted to go out fishing, but the Indians would not stir as it happened to be a little rough…I believe that I will get a bidarka for my own use this coming season.[218]

A close reading of Clark's letter of June 17, 1883, states McKay left Nushagak on April 17 with one other Yup'ik, on a collecting trip, each paddling a kayak. They apparently spent the night at Ekuk village, about ten miles from Nushagak on the east side of Nushagak Bay. The next day was "very stormy," and they remained in the village. On April 19 the storm had subsided, and McKay with four other kayakers headed west across Nushagak Bay, a distance of twelve miles. Two thirds of the way across Nushagak Bay, a strong west wind suddenly came up. McKay had difficulty keeping up with his more experienced companions and was "left behind," according to Clark.

Clark was not notified of McKay's death until April 22. He began a search for McKay that day, presumably, in a three-hatch baidarka or a small sloop with some of his employees from Nushagak village. The searchers located "broken pieces of McKay's kayak, a gun, his rubber boots, hat and various little articles on the beach about a mile on this side of the village they left, probably on the beach near Clark's Point. We continued

218 McKay, letter to Baird, September 25, 1881, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession number 11460.

the search for over three weeks, but could not find the body. Such is a brief account of all that is at present known of the manner in which he was lost."[219] Clark ended his letter to Hector McKay lauding his late son's character. He promised to write more details about his son's death, but if Clark ever wrote a more detailed account of McKay's death, no such document is known to exist.

Another letter, written by Nelson Groom of the Signal Service in San Francisco to General W. B. Hazen, Chief Signal Officer of the U.S. Army, on July 19, 1883, tells of a letter from an unnamed Alaska Commercial Company agent at Unalaska. Groom wrote:

> I regret to inform you of the drowning April 19 of Charles L. McKay…who had left Nushagak on the breaking up of the river to go with a party to Cape Constantine on a collection tour and on his return the accident occurred; his party was ahead and a very strong gale blowing at the time, and did not see him capsize, but from the finding of his gun and a portion of the wreck of his bidarka, concluded it must have happened by his trying to make a landing on the ice. His body was not recovered.[220]

McKay's mother Sarah wrote to Professor Baird on September 14, 1883, enclosing a copy of Clark's letter. She wrote that Clark's letter:

> …differed in some respects from the one sent by you [Baird] to us from the department. You will notice that it was three days after the accident occurred before they got word to Mr. Clark. In a letter written the first of April Charles told of making the same trip and back in the same day.

In a post script, Mrs. McKay reflected both her maternal grief and a widespread, nineteenth-century Euroamerican bias against Native Americans.

219 Clark, letter, to Hector McKay, June 17, 1883.

220 Nelson Groom, letter to W. B. Hazen, July 19, 1883, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 30, Box 15, Folder 10.

> It seems to me that the Natives must know more of the matter than they choose to tell. Perhaps an investigation of the other side of the Bay might reveal something. No one can tell a Savages motive for what he may do. I have just read of Alaska Indians killing white men.[221]

After their son's death, Hector and Sarah McKay and their two surviving sons, seemed to have disappeared from written history. Rumors persisted into the twentieth century of foul play in McKay's death.[222] Sarah McKay's sentiments indicated she felt her son's death might have been the responsibility of his Yup'ik companions. The implication of Mrs. McKay's letter was that perhaps some Nushagak people resented McKay collecting artifacts and natural history specimens, and somehow caused his death. In 1904, Wilfred Osgood wrote, "rumor at Nushagak still persists to the effect that the drowning of McKay was brought about by foul means." However, later Osgood wrote McKay's "…accidental death at an early age was a distinct loss to science."[223] Yet there is no evidence to suggest that McKay's death was anything but a tragic accident, albeit one exacerbated by extenuating circumstances.

Perhaps the genesis of the rumors was documented by the next visitor to Nushagak to leave a written record of his visit. On April 30, 1883, Danish ethnographer Johan Adrian Jacobsen, arrived near the scene of the accident 12 days after McKay had drowned. He made no reference to criminal behavior in reference to McKay's death, but he did excoriate the behavior of McKay's Yup'ik traveling companions. Jacobsen and his four Togiak guides in three small craft, probably two baidarkas and one kayak, paddled around Cape Constantine and crossed Nushagak Bay to Ekuk village, about nine miles south of Clark's trading station. Jacobsen described his visit and mentioned McKay.

> …we…reached the village of Iwalut [Ekuk] where I [met] young Kasernikoff (whose father was murdered by the Indians in Nulato 2 years

221 Sarah A. McKay, letter to Spencer Baird, September 14, 1883, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 30, Office of Secretary Correspondence 1882–1890, Box 8, Folder 8.

222 David Stan Jordan, letter to Leda B. Clark, March 31, 1924, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University, e-mail message Corey R. Earle, February 26, 2008.

223 Osgood, *A Biological*, 25, 26.

> ago)—he was busy searching for the body of the young signal service officer Mr. McKy, who capsized in a snowstorm about [fourteen] days ago on a hunting and collecting expedition, and drowned. There were several Eskimos with him and he was abandoned by these cowards when the storm came—they have found his gun and almost all things but not his body.[224]

The next morning Jacobsen and his crew paddled a few hours up the bay and arrived at Fort Alexander.

> When I landed here [May 1, 1883] I was heartily welcomed by the station manager, Mr. Clarks. Phyically I was really 'done in,' since my snow blindness had still not been cured and my feet pained me…from sitting for days in the kayak. I could hardly have found a better place in Alaska to recover for a few days than this post. Mr. Clarke took the best care of me, giving me a place to stay in the building of the meteorological station that belongs to Fort Alexander. This station was unfortunately without an occupant because Mr. Mackay, who had been there, was drowned during a hunting expedition.…My necessary business was quickly transacted. The guides were paid; my dogs, which had been left in Togiak, were made over to Mr. Clarks to pick up later; and my ethnological collections were arranged and packed. It was not possible for me to find anything for the Ethnologisches Museum of Berlin at this place because Mr. Mackay had

224 Johan Adrian Jacobsen, "Journal," unpublished excerpt from April 30, 1883, translated by Sonya Luhrman, Ethnologisches Museum of Berlin, in the possession of Ann Fienup-Riordan; Jacobsen's Kasernikoff is probably Paul Kashevaroff, a long time employee of Clark's. Vasili P. Kashevarov was the priest at Nushagak in 1896 and in 1900 he was replaced by his brother Nicholas. There was one Alexandra Kashevaroff teaching English at the Russian Orthodox Church school at Nushagak in 1903. All these Kashevaroffs or Kashevarovs were probably related to one another. Lydia T. Black, *Russians in Alaska 1732–1867,* Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 217; VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 48; Raymond L. Hudson, *Family After All, Alaska's Jesse Lee Home,* Vol 1, 1889–1925, Walnut Creek, California: Hardscratch Press, 2007, 82.

> bought everything the Natives possessed for the Smithsonian Institution.[225]

In a letter to Adolph Bastion of the Ethnologisches Museum of Berlin dated May 1883, Jacobsen provided more information about McKay's collecting activities in Bristol Bay and his death. It is well to keep in mind that Jacobsen was a competitor of McKay for the same ethnographic specimens. Jacobsen wrote,

> Here is a signal station…and the present observer [McKay] has plundered the entire area… and has in his collection a few nice things. The Eskimo are now annoyed that they have sold all of their stone axes and knifes etc. to him because I promised them higher…But it is too late because everything has been sold…Unfortunately the signal officer here lost his life a few days before I arrived because he went to hunt with some Natives and was shamefully left behind by the Eskimo in a snow storm when his kayak was cut in two by the ice and he drowned.[226]

Jacobsen also wrote about the beginnings of the Bristol Bay canned salmon industry.

> A few days after my arrival…a fishing schooner that had left San Francisco on 7 April 1883, came in [May 8, 1883] after thirty-two days at sea.… On board the schooner were all the facilities for catching and salting fish. The vessel was actually a few days too early, since the Nushagak River had not yet broken up and the first king salmon would not arrive in the river until 17 May.[227]

225 Johan Adrian Jacobsen, *Alaskan Voyage,* 188.

226 Jacobsen, letter to Adolf Bastian, May 1883, translated by Sonya Luhrman, Ethnologishes Museum Berlin, in the possession of Ann Fienup-Riordan.

227 Jacobsen, *Alaskan Voyage,* 189–191. The schooner was likely the *Neptune*, of the Arctic Packing Company on a reconnaissance to salt salmon and locate and build a salmon cannery with Carl C. Rohlffs and Henry Fortmann on board. VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 67.

How might have McKay drown while his companions made it across Nushagak Bay? Based on the three written accounts of the accident, and conversations with elders from Dillingham and Naknek, it seems likely that McKay and party left Ekuk village and headed slightly west toward the Igushik or Snake Rivers, where Igushik village was located. The lower portion of Nushagak Bay traversed by McKay on April 17 and 19, 1883, would have had ice floes moving up and down the bay with the rising and ebbing of the very large tides, typical of that bay. On April 19, when they set out, they probably left Ekuk after high tide, to take advantage of the outgoing current to carry them west or northwest toward Igushik village. In addition to the sudden westerly headwinds and snowstorm which they had to contend with, the paddlers also were confronted with ice floes and perhaps even huge ten- to fifteen-foot-thick icebergs anchored on shallow tidal flats. The more experienced Yup'ik paddlers were able to manage the winds, tides and ice floes, and they made the western shore of Nushagak Bay. McKay could not keep up, and in what seems to have been an "every man for himself" situation, he perished. In the event he attempted to climb on a piece of anchor ice or even large ice floes, as Groom writes, he could very well have slipped off or become hypothermic and fallen into the icy bay.[228]

Neither John Clark, nor the other two informants, mention foul play as a possibility in McKay's death. There does not seem to have been any official government investigation of McKay's death, nor does any documented contemporary account of his demise offer any credible evidence of foul play. Surely, if Clark had any suspicions of foul play in the death of his young friend, he would have informed the U.S. Signal Service. McKay's successor, James W. Johnson, who arrived at Nushagak the summer of 1884, apparently never asked his superiors in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., to open an investigation into McKay's death.

What seems apparent is that McKay's own lack of kayaking experience and his subsequent actions in the face of extreme weather conditions all contributed to his death. In addition, not only was McKay insufficiently experienced in a single hatch kayak, but his equipment might not have been seaworthy. Perhaps, McKay's kayak was old and not as resilient as his companion's kayaks. Perhaps, he had a leaky seal-gut parka that did

228 Hjalmer Olson and Melvin Monsen, Sr., personal conversations, November 1st, 2009.

not seal tightly around the coaming, and water was able to seep inside the kayak. Perhaps McKay did not have good fish-skin gloves and water got inside his parka. If his equipment was in good order and used correctly, and if he was as experienced as his Yup'ik companions, waves would have rolled over the kayak, not entered the skin boat. It would appear that McKay's four Yup'ik companions did him no harm, but given the weather conditions and the small size of their kayaks, they could not have picked him up and carried him to the western shore of Nushagak Bay without jeopardizing their own lives. Writing in 1778, David Samwell, the surgeon on board the *Discovery*, part of Captain James Cook's voyage to Alaska, wrote about the Chugach kayaks he saw in Prince William Sound.

> These Canoes will not admit conveniently of any more than one person, but we have sometimes seen two…to thrust themselves into one Hatchway for a short Passage & have known them to stow one Person between Decks, but this is uncommon and very inconvenient.[229]

If Jacobsen was correct that McKay's kayak was cut in half by ice, once in the water, he was doomed. Had his Yup'ik companions attempted to pick him up, they might have perished as well. The Russian Gavriil I. Davydov, perhaps writing about his observations around Kodiak Island in 1804, wrote, "When they are traveling in many baidarkas and one of them capsizes, then the others will pass by unless the person in the water is from their own village."[230]

McKay's struggles were compounded by gale force winds, snow squalls, razor sharp ice flows and huge icebergs propelled by a swift tidal current. His frail skin boat was cut in half, according to Jacobsen, or perhaps crushed.[231] As McKay wrote himself, he thought the Yup'iks were overly cautious in going to sea in their kayaks and baidarkas. But that caution was part of Yup'ik culture, based on thousands of years of living on the Bering Sea coast. Patience and deference to the forces of nature were part of the Yup'ik culture, coupled with broad experience on the water.

229 George Dyson, *Baidarka: the Kayak,* Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1986, 18.
230 *Ibid.,* 26.
231 Hjalmer Olson, personal conversation, October 22, 2009.

When the weather turned bad, Yup'ik men, who had life-long experience in skin boats on the Bering Sea, were far better prepared to deal with adverse weather than a young farm boy who had only been in Alaska two years. McKay had little experience on Nushagak Bay, with its fearsome, twenty-five-foot tides, spring ice floes and sudden snowstorms with accompanying gale force winds. When the going turned very bad, perhaps it was every man for himself; McKay's kayak was disabled, and he could not keep up with his Yup'ik companions.[232]

As tragic as McKay's death was, his legacy of work in the Bristol Bay region as the first resident scientist is considerable. Captain J. N. Mills of the U.S. Signal Service sums up McKay's contributions:

> the…Service has lost a faithful, intelligent and efficient member and that his service in connection with meteorological work of this office in Alaska has been highly appreciated,…I am informed by Professor Baird that he had rendered extremely important service to the Smithsonian Institution and National Museum.[233]

The tangible results of McKay's few years of collecting at Nushagak include about 363 mammal and bird specimens and 123 plant species. He also collected mineral and important ethnographic specimens. His collection of Dena'ina skin clothing is important to better understand the material culture of the Dena'ina people.[234] In recognition of his excellent service, McKay's Bunting, *Plectrophenax hyperboreus*, a rare passerine bird, was named after him.[235]

Why are McKay's three short years in Alaska and his legacy to science relevant to the life of John W. Clark? Quite simply, because Clark was McKay's authority on all things to do with Bristol Bay, and he enabled the latter to perform his collecting work by obtaining the

232 Ann Fienup-Riordan, *The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival,* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007, 87–115.

233 David Starr Jordan, quoting letter of J. N. Mills in *The Indiana Student,* Volume X, No.1, November 1883, 5.

234 Aron Crowell, e-mail messages, April 5 and 26, 2011. Mr. Crowell wrote: "The McKay accession at National Museum of Natural History, some 235 ethnographic objects and a handful of archeological specimens, includes skin and gut clothing, hunting and fishing implements, household tools and containers, masks, jewelry, and beaded headdresses, all accessioned in October 1882. Cultural origins appear to be Yupik, Dena'ina and Sugpiaq, probably from various locations around Bristol Bay…starting in 1881. Museum records list only the general provenance of 'Bristol Bay.' "

235 Barbara and Richard Mearns, *McKay's Bunting,* 139. The Snow Bunting *Plectrophenox nivalis* and McKay's Bunting *Plectrophenox hyperboreus* are very similar and apparently interbred.

help of the Native people and their concurrence. Clark was McKay's sole English-speaking companion while McKay lived at Nushagak. Clark would have been McKay's translator in his conversations with Yup'ik people at Nushagak. Clark might have written a letter of introduction for McKay to present to the powerful Riktorov family at Old Iliamna to facilitate his collecting and travel around Iliamna Lake, and his subsequent travel north over the Newhalen Portage into Qizhjeh Vena, now Lake Clark, and back to Nushagak via the Chulitna Portage. But it is also possible McKay had already encountered Mikhail Riktorov from Old Iliamna at the Nushagak trading post, since they worked for Clark's Alaska Commercial Company. McKay's Dena'ina guide over the Chulitna Portage was Zackar Riktorov Evanoff, who was part of of the large Riktorov family who lived at Old Iliamna.[236] Members of the Riktorov family worked as traders for the Russian America Company, and, after 1868, they continued to travel all over the Bristol Bay region trading for the Alaska Commercial Company. As a result of their travels, they had kith and kin in many bay area villages. The family patriarch, Savva Riktorov (1808–1884), traveled widely in the 1840s between Kenai and Nushagak.[237]

What is pertinent here is that long before John Clark began living at Nushagak in 1879, there had been trade and Russian Orthodox Church connections between the Iliamna-Lake Clark area and Nushagak. Clark would have known about the existence of a large tributary lake north of Iliamna Lake from conversations with Father Shishkin and Native traders, such as the Riktorov family. Russian Orthodox priests apparently first visited Kijik village, located on the lake, in 1847. Father Shishkin visited Kijik in the 1870s and 1880s and brought more or less regular contact with the Lake Clark Dena'ina during that time. In addition, by the early 1830s, Lake Clark Dena'ina were involved in fur trade with the Russians, and they were traveling to Nushagak Bay, Cook Inlet and even to the Kuskokwim River to trade. Wilfred Osgood also wrote that the Chulitna Portage had been used frequently by Bristol Bay Natives traveling between Nushagak country

236 Alaskan Russian Church Archives, Kijik Confessional Records 1854–1935, translated by Anne Sudkamp and John Stinson, May and September 1987 with assistance of Ellanna and Balluta from microfilm, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, Elmer Rasmuson Library, Alaska Polar Regions, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Accession LACL-00092.

237 Znamenski, *Through Orthodox Eyes,* 29.

and the Lake Clark-Iliamna country before the arrival of the first Russians in the late 1780s or early 1790s.[238]

This is relevent to Clark, because, subsequently, he was part of the *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* expedition which mapped a large lake north of Iliamna. The reporter Albert B. Schanz named Lake Clark, after Clark in 1891. In his account, Schanz seemed to exaggerate Clark's lack of knowledge about the unmapped lake to hype his story of "discovery" of the sublime place. Although Clark had never been to the lake until February 1891, there can be no doubt he spoke to several people who had seen it, including Shishkin, Orlov, the Riktorovs, McKay and very probably prospectors whom he outfitted in the 1880s and 1890s at his Nushagak trading station for prospecting forays north of Iliamna Lake.

After McKay died, Spencer Baird selected James W. Johnson of Cleveland, Ohio, to be the new Signal Officer at Nushagak. Baird wrote a letter of introduction to John Clark for Johnson on April 22, 1884, in which he thanked Clark for writing him about McKay's affects remaining at Nushagak. Baird also thanked Clark for pledging to:

> …assist the Institution in its continued exploration.…I hope you will extend to him the same kindness that you have manifested towards Mr. McKay, and for which his friends and family are so grateful.…I have told Mr. J. that any reasonable amount of goods that he may require from your stores, you will probably be willing to furnish him on the credit of the Institution.…not to exceed $100–$150 for each year. [239]

In 1885, Johnson wrote Baird and told him Clark donated a carving of an "Eskimo Dance," to his collections. Johnson said a "trader," probably Clark, promised to have a captured sea otter for him next spring, "… also a Ground Bear [brown bear?], and…Whistling Marmot and Little-Chief Hare [the pika]." It is not clear if the trader promised Johnson live animals or merely skins.

238 Linda J. Ellanna and Andrew Balluta, *The People of Nondalton,* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992, 61–62, 66; Znamenski, *Orthodox Eyes,* 22, 280–282; Osgood, *A Biological,* 21.

239 Spencer Baird, letter to J. W. Clark, April 22, 1884, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 33, Volume 166, 487–490.

Johnson went on to report he was able to ship his collection "this fall" because the new salmon cannery at Nushagak had its ship wrecked [Arctic Packing Company's bark *Montana*], and they had to send word to San Francisco to send a steamer to rescue the cannery crew, or there "certainly would have been a famine before Spring," in Nushagak Bay.[240] On June 11 of 1885, the *Montana* was grounded ashore, perhaps while at the cannery dock, and was a complete loss. The cargo was saved.[241] Johnson documented the wreckage saying the cannery had to get word to San Francisco to send a relief vessel to take the fishermen and cannery crew back to San Francisco. Henry Weinland, Moravian missionary, said that Clark purchased the wrecked *Montana* for salvage.[242]

Johnson alluded to the fact that even with its awesome salmon resources, the Bristol Bay region, like most of Alaska, is lean country, especially in the winter. The stranded cannery workers from the *Montana* would not been able to find enough food around Nushagak Bay to prevent widespread famine from occurring for all the residents, permanent and transient alike.

In another letter, Johnson tells Baird that he traveled to the west of Cape Constantine, where he saw several brown bears and collected harlequin ducks and other water fowl near the "high cliffs," which suggests he was near Kulukak Bay.[243] Surely Clark would have enlisted local Yup'ik guides to shepherd Johnson on such an ardous journey, as he remained involved and supportive of the joint Signal Service-Smithsonian mission at Nushagak. In a letter written from Port Huron, Michigan on November 7, 1886, after his transfer from Nushagak, Johnson told Baird that he had skins of a wolf, marmot, Arctic hare and an Eskimo dog which were all ruined during the winter.

"I do not know whether it was on account of their freezing or not, the preparation was made by Mr. Clark and myself according to directions." Johnson also stated that he went on a collecting trip a few hundred miles down the peninsula (Alaska Peninsula) where he collected a snow bunting and rock ptarmigan 3,000 feet up a mountainside. The weather was stormy and the distance far, so many of his specimens decayed while returning to Nushagak. "I saw some four or five Aleutian Terns," Johnson

240 James W. Johnson, letter to Spencer Baird, October 20, 1885, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 16879.

241 *California Alta,* September 16, 1885.

242 Johnson to Baird, letter, October 20, 1885, Smithsonian Institution Archives; William H. Weinland, Alaska Diaries and Journals Collection, Box 14 L Folder 15, The Huntington Library, January 31, 1886.

243 Johnson, letter to Baird, June 5, 1885, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 16878.

wrote, "while at sea but the sea was running so high I thought it imprudent to untie the fastenings of my skin coat, so of course did not procure any of them."[244]

Johnson also wrote before leaving Nushagak he allowed Clark to keep the book *Key to North American Birds* sent him last fall. "Mr. Clark was very anxious to have the book remain on the station, and said he would gladly send to the Smithsonian any birds that looked strange to him and as he sends natives to hunt very often, that they would bring him anything that they saw, that was new or strange; the other book I left there…Mr. Clark will ship them to you at any time."[245]

On August 18, 1887, Clark sent Baird a bill for merchandise purchased on credit by Johnson during 1885–1886 for $327. The list included groceries, such as pilot bread, Graham flour, tea, sugar, crackers, butter and tobacco, probably partly used for trading stock when Johnson went on collecting trips. There is an interesting transaction from April 30, 1886, where Johnson purchased a wolf skin from Mr. Rickteroff [Riktorov] for $10.00, attesting to contacts between the Iliamna-Lake Clark country and Nushagak. Because there is no record of Johnson traveling to Iliamna, it is likely the wolf hide was purchased at the Clark's trading post.[246]

Baird wrote to the Alaska Commercial Company on November 6, 1882, lauding the company for their assistance to the Smithsonian Institution and in furthering scientific knowledge:

> …through such assistance as that rendered by your company to this Institution, Science is encouraged to hope for a speedier attainment than otherwise of her ultimate aim, the discovery of truth; and, second in the consciousness that your Company is indirectly, though materially, helping to elevate mankind to a higher plane of civilization.[247]

Certainly Baird was writing about company traders, such as John Clark, who had been very committed to helping McKay and Johnson. The company collected a great many Central Alaska Yup'ik artifacts for

244 Johnson, letter to Spencer Baird, November 7, 1886, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 16878.
245 Johnson, letter to Baird, November 7, 1886, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 18416.
246 John Clark, letter to Baird, August 18, 1887, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession no. 18416.
247 Samuel P. Johnston, editor, *Alaska Commercial Company 1868–1940*, privately printed, 22–23.

their own museum. Clark was mentioned by anthropologist Ann Fienup-Riordan in her catalogue book, *The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival*, noting him as a collector of Yup'ik pieces from the Nushagak country in the 1880s.[248]

248 Ann Fienup-Riordan, *op. cit.*, 14.

CHAPTER 8

The Moravian Missionaries Arrive in Nushagak Bay in 1884, and the Dawn of the Bristol Bay Canned Salmon Industry

"A word about Mr. Clark…He is said to be well off and we found him to be friendly and obliging. But at the same time he acted as though the pleasure of a real enjoyment were taken out of his life. He is living out of wedlock with a daughter of the deacon [Natalia Vasilieva Orlov], a girl of only 15 or 16 years of age. They have one child. But they do not live very happily together and when we were in the house, Mr. Clark took no notice of her whatsoever and did not introduce her or say a word about her."[249]
William H. Weinland, June 3, 1884.

THE Moravian Church originated in central Europe, in Moravia and Bohemia—the present day Czech Republic—in 1457. John Hus, a Czech reformer of the Holy Roman Empire and Roman Catholic Church was burned at the stake in 1415. Some of the followers of Hus established the Moravian Church as a counter to the Catholic Church's monopoly.

Early Moravians were persecuted by Catholic and government officials alike.[250] The Moravian Church was Protestant, and its early

249 William H. Weinland Collection, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," Box 14 L Folder 15, June 3, 1884, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

250 James W. Henkelman and Kurt H. Vitt, *The History of the Alaska Moravian Church 1885–1985, Harmonious To Dwell,* Bethel, Alaska: The Moravian Seminary & Archives, 1985, 4.

A photograph taken by Weinland and Hartmann in 1884 of Nushagak village. Written on the picture, likely in Clark's hand: "Nushagak_ lower part- my store [and] my house." Perhaps Clark is the man on the left in the black suit. H-1240 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

members continued to be oppressed well into the early eighteenth century. In 1722, Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, a German aristocrat in eastern Germany, provided a safe haven for Moravians on his estate, and during the balance of the century they became established in Germany.

In the early 1730s a number of Moravians emigrated to North Carolina and Pennsylvania, where church headquarters became established at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Instead of trying to convert people from other Christian sects, the Moravians began missions with North American Indians, African slaves in the Americas, Inuits in Greenland and people in Southeast Asia and Africa.[251] By the 1880s, the Moravian Church was well established and prosperous in the United States, and its missionaries had been working with Inuits in Greenland and Labrador, since 1733 and 1763 respectively.

As early as 1883, Presbyterian minister Sheldon Jackson had been in contact with Moravian Church leaders urging them to "Christianize the

251 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 5, 6.

Eskimo people of Alaska." Writing a letter to the Church on August 18, 1883, he mentioned Ivan Petroff's work on the census of 1880 and that the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay of western Alaska would be good regions to direct missionary efforts. Jackson was secretary of the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church. He approached a number of American churches with requests to send missionaries to convert Alaska Natives to Christianity.[252] The Moravians interest in Alaska was inspired by Reverend Jackson, who gave a speech in Bethlehem to the Moravian Church elders on the evening of February 10, 1884, again urging them to send missionaries to the Kuskokwim and Nushagak River valleys to proselytize the Yup'ik people. In a follow-up letter on February 26, 1884, Jackson wrote Bishop Edmond de Schweinitz that the best place for a Moravian mission in western Alaska was Nushagak, because it could be reached relatively easily from Kodiak and Unalaska, and because there was an Alaska Commercial Company trading post there. Jackson felt the growing salmon industry at Nushagak was a potential source of new members for the development for a new mission. Industrial development would bring more people who presented targets for proselytizing and for populating the growing mission. Jackson thought that the government Revenue Service might transport the missionaries to Nushagak. Jackson wrote, "General Hazen had a Signal Station there [Nushagak] but the operator was drowned last summer," and suggested a Moravian missionary might be appointed to replace McKay and, in the process, help gain a toe-hold on the Nushagak River.[253]

It seems likely that even before the publication of Ivan Petroff's *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, in 1884 some Americans were fast becoming better informed about "Seward's Folly" or "Walrussia" as it was frequently derided in the press. No one had a greater interest than Sheldon Jackson who envisioned using western education and Protestantism to transform Alaska Natives into English-speaking Christians. In 1885, Jackson was to become federal Commissioner of Education in Alaska, a post he would retain until 1908.[254]

After Jackson's speech to the Moravians at Bethlehem, the Moravians decided to send two ministers on a fact-finding voyage to the Nushagak and the Kuskokwim country to determine the feasibility of

252 *Ibid.*, 32, 70.

253 Sheldon Jackson, letter to Edmond de Schweinitz, February 26, 1884, John H. Kilbuck Papers Box 10-Folder II, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

254 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious*, 39.

establishing missions in southwestern Alaska. Reverend Adolphus H. Hartmann and Reverend William H. Weinland were picked to travel to Alaska and spend the summer of 1884 exploring for suitable sites to build Moravian missions.[255]

With the arrival of Weinland and Hartmann to Nushagak Bay, the life of John Clark was to be much more completely documented than it might otherwise have been. The Moravians, particularly Weinland, wrote about Clark's life and personality—as did John Schoechert later—thereby enriching the historical record about the first permanent Euroamerican resident of Bristol Bay.

Weinland's comments about Clark's seeming indifference to his young consort, Natalia Orlov, who was 16 years younger than Clark, reflected the realities of life on the Alaska frontier in the early American period. First, Natalia could not speak English, and it is likely that neither Weinland nor Hartmann could speak her language, which was Russian. It was often the case that powerful Euroamericans had younger Creole or Native female companions in nineteenth century Alaska. Some of the consorts became legal wives to the Euroamericans, as in the case of John Clark and Natalia Orlov who married at Nushagak in 1887. In some cases, these marriages were arranged by the bride's parents as a way to better secure their economic and social status.[256] Clark's union would have enhanced his social status at Nushagak and given him immediate credibility with the Native people of Nushagak Bay by joining him to the Orlov-Shishkin clan, transforming the clan into what Russian historian Andrei Znamenski calls the Clark-Shishkin-Orlov clan. Apparently, Clark did not previously marry any of the Yup'ik women on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers with whom he had children in the 1860s and 1870s. However, his martial status of that period awaits the translation of Russian Orthodox Church records from Russian to English before we will know for sure the names of the women and whether Clark was married to any of them.

In the spring of 1884, Weinland and Hartmann traveled from Pennsylvania to San Francisco by train. In San Francisco, they met Captain Michael A. Healy, master of the U.S. Revenue Service cutter *Corwin*, who was to take them as far as Unalaska. Captain Healy introduced the Moravian explorers to the managers of the Alaska Commercial Company,

255 *Ibid.,* 35.

256 Walter O'Meara, *Daughters of the Country: The Women of the Fur Traders and Mountain Men,* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968, 182, 190, 240–247.

who were to prove very helpful in providing logistical support services to the missionaries in the coming years.[257]

Weinland and Hartmann sailed from San Francisco on May 3, 1884, and arrived at Unalaska on May 16, a voyage of some 2,100 miles. While at Unalaska, the Moravians met the local Russian Orthodox priest, and the Alaska Commercial Company trader, Rudolph Neumann, a friend and business associate of Clark. The Russian Orthodox Church had been established in Alaska since 1794, and most Alaska Natives in western Alaska from the Aleutian Islands to St. Michael were members of the church. Weinland and Hartmann had a favorable first impression of the priest, but said the Russian Orthodox service was too heavy on ceremony.[258]

On May 30, Weinland and Hartmann sailed on the brigantine *Dora,* a rugged little ship with auxillary steam engines that was owned by the Alaska Commercial Company, and they arrived at Nushagak June 2, 1884.

The *Dora* was 112 feet, with a 27-foot beam, weighing 320 tons, capable of carrying 200 tons and accomodating 100 passengers in steerage. It had been constructed at Matthew Turner's ship yard in San Francisco in 1880.[259]

Henry W. Elliott made the same journey a few years before.

> Nooshagak…is a cruise of 380 miles to the northeast of Oonalashka in a trim little trading-schooner, which alone can make the landing,… but the mariner who pilots that vessel must be well acquainted with those perilous shoals and rip-tides of Bristol Bay, or you will never disembark at the foot of that staircase which leads up to the doors of Alexandrovsk [Nushagak]. The river here is a broad arm of the sea full of shifting sand-bars and mud flats which try the temper of the most patient and skillful navigator.[260]

Clark employed a skilled, middle-aged, Yup'ik navigator, Andrei, as ship pilot to guide ships up the tricky waters of Nushagak Bay to the

257 *Ibid.*, 73, 74.
258 *Ibid.*, 25, 27, 28, 74.
259 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 29, 2011.
260 Elliott, *Our Arctic,* 374–375.

anchorage off the Alaska Commercial Company trading post. Clark was on occasion the ship pilot, but often he directed his employee Andrei to pilot the incoming ships. Andrei would board arriving ships from his baidarka off Ekuk village and guide them up the bay to Nushagak some eighteen miles.[261]

Weinland's sketch of Andrei, the ship's pilot:

> June 2, 1884,…When we arose we found the ship steaming carefully along in sight of Cape Constantine.…About 8 A.M. two Natives approached in their kayaks. They came on board, the kayaks being hauled up also. One was the pilot [Andrei] on the look-out for the *Dora*, as there are some difficult channels to get through before reaching her anchorage at Fort Alexander [Nushagak]. Here we arrived at half-past two, when the anchor was dropped in deep water a mile and a half distant from the shore.…About 3 P.M. Mr. Clark, the company's agent, and two natives arrived in a three-holed bidarka [*sic*][262].… when the company's vessel usually arrives, and about that time he [Andrei] goes down the river [from Nushagak village] and waits until he sees her at a distance, when he comes on board and directs the Captain into the proper channels. He was the first native Eskimo whom I could scrutinize carefully, and hence I will endeavor to describe his appearance. Sitting in his kayak, he wore a skin kamilika made of the intestines of the sea lion. This is made in the shape of a coat with sleeves, slipped over the head, and the lower part tied around the rim of the bidarka thus keeping him perfectly dry. On his head he wore a wooden hat, open on the crown, but with a considerable shield to keep the sun out of his eyes. Beneath

261 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 110–111.

262 J. A. H. Hartmann, "Exploration of Western Alaska," Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Moravian Church Archives, 1884, published in *Report on Education in Alaska 1886,* Appendix 1, edited by Sheldon Jackson, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 57

Andrei, the Nushagak Yup'ik ships pilot, photographed by Weinland and Hartmann in front of Clark's windbreak in 1884. P4110393 courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

> his kamilika, he wore a parkey made of squirrel skins, and reaching almost to his ankles. On his feet he wore nothing. His hair is gray, and his face wrinkled, with only a slight sprinkling of whiskers. His eyes seem only to see what it is his business to see, and altogether he seems to be a quiet, self possessed person.…Mounting to the top of the cabin where the Capt. was standing, he gave a few directions, and then fell to work at his breakfast which the Capt. had ordered for him, but not until he had devoutly crossed himself, after the Greek custom.[263]

263 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals, 1884," unpublished, The Huntington Library, 110–111.

Weinland described his first meeting with John Clark on June 3.

> …about 2:40 P.M. Nushagak or Fort Alexander… becomes visible. At 3:10 Mr. Clark, the Company's agent, came out in a 3 hatch bidarki, and at 3:20 the vessel was anchored in the river directly opposite headquarters…Mr. Clark is quite a pleasant gentleman, 37 years old, and he first came into the country with the Telegraph Expedition. He has been trading under various companies ever since. Was stationed for several years at St. Michael… [and] the Kuskokwim and later, 6 years ago, came to Nushagak. [264]

On June 4, Weinland and Hartmann:

> …arrived at Mr. Clark's house, we were taken to his office (also serving as parlor and bedroom) where we spent time in friendly conversation also enjoying a glass of very excellent tea.

Upon arrival at the trading post, Weinland learned the station was entirely out of provisions.[265] Food was often scarce before the salmon returned and a ship arrived with provisions from outside Alaska.

Later Clark and the Moravians climbed the Nushagak hillside on wooden stairs to meet Father Vasili Shishkin at his two-story, hewn-log home. Hartmann wrote Shishkin was very talkative and friendly and answered many questions. Clark translated Shishkin's Russian to English for Hartmann and Weinland. Shishkin stated his parish included the Alaska Peninsula and the Nushagak, Togiak and Iliamna districts and totaled some 2,476 Russian Orthodox Church members. The priest urged Weinland and Hartmann to explore the Kuskokwim district to build their new mission, as there was no resident Russian Orthodox priest on that river. Apparently the priest from the St. Michael traveled to Kolmakovsky,

264 Weinland, Alaska "Alaska Diaries and Journals," April 17, 1884, to September 15, 1884, Box 14 L Folder 15, 112–113, The Huntington Library.

265 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 116, 184.

An 1884 Weinland and Hartmann photograph captioned "Nushagak-upper part," probably by Clark. H-1228 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

a former Russian Redoubt on the Kushkokwim River, to perform services only in the winter.[266]

On June 5, 1884, Weinland witnessed Yup'ik men from Nushagak catching two king salmon, one weighing 41 pounds and the other 35 pounds, in a net made from walrus skin strips. The Nushagak fishermen also caught king salmon from their baidarkas, indicating that the salmon were showing up in numbers.[267]

Before making arrangements for the explorers to leave for the Kuskokwim River, Clark was in day-to-day contact with them, and Weinland frequently wrote about his impressions of Clark. At one point, Weinland sat in the Alaska Commercial Company's store observing Natives as they watched Clark unpacking newly arrived merchandise. Weinland also met James W. Johnson the new Signal Service officer and Smithsonian collector.[268]

266 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 74, 75, 79.
267 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 125–126.
268 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 127.

Weinland said he sailed on the *Dora* about seven miles upriver "at the fishing station started by Mr. Clark," and they anchored close to shore. He observed some small timber a short distance above the fishing station, by which he meant a salting station or a saltery owned by Alaska Commercial Company. A carpenter from the *Dora* had off-loaded lumber and enlarged the saltery on the upper reaches of Rohlffs Slough.

In addition, Hartmann documented Clark's efforts to establish a salting station at Egegik, a small Yup'ik village on the Bristol Bay side of the Alaska Peninsula about seventy-five miles southeast of Nushagak. On June 9, the *Dora* left Nushagak for Egegik with Hartmann and Weinland onboard, carrying some of Clark's employees and supplies, including a large open skin boat known as a baidara. The group was to begin salting salmon at the mouth of the Egegik River, which drains Alaska's second largest lake, Becharof Lake. To this day, the Egegik River-Becharof Lake system is one of the most productive salmon ecosystems in the world. Also on board was the Creole Paul Kashevaroff, whom Hartmann said was the only Native at Nushagak who could speak English, Kashevaroff's wife and three laborers. Kashevaroff was a trusted Clark employee who would manage the salting station.

Clark's reach in establishing the shore-based salting stations in a number of locations is established by Hartmann's terse reference. It is believed that this saltery was eventually taken over by the Alaska Packers Association by the mid-1890s and became the Egegik Packing Company cannery by 1899–1900.[269] These contemporary observations further enhance the growing recognition of Clark's important early role in the growth of the Bristol Bay commercial salmon industry. It has long been known that Clark founded a salting station at the village of Stugarok, later known as Clarks Point, and the site, in 1887, of "Clark's cannery," to use the words of Reverend John Kilbuck.[270] However, based on Weinland's diary, Clark was also instrumental in starting a saltery seven miles east of Nushagak, on the upper part of Rohlffs Slough, which would put it about four miles above Arctic Packing Company's cannery at Kanulik. The site location could have been later occupied by the C. E. Whitney and Company saltery. One Dillingham informant believes the

269 Sheldon Jackson, *Report on Education,* "Diary of J. A. H. Hartmann," 57–60; Lewis MacDonald, "Chronological History of Salmon Canneries in Western Alaska," 1950 Annual Report No. 2, Juneau: Alaska Fisheries Board and the Alaska Department of Fisheries, 57.

270 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 68.

site was called Ekwok, not to be confused with the Nushagak River village of the same name, 40 miles up river.[271]

On June 6, 1884, Clark had Weinland and Hartmann to dinner.

> Being invited to take supper with Mr. Clark, we did so and talked over our plans with him. I found him very pleasant. This evening we had our first bidarki ride. There being no boat handy, Mr. Clark took this means to help us back to the vessel. He gave us a bearskin to lie on while on our journey [to the Kuskokwim]. I began to shiver like a leaf in the cool air and Mr. Clark at once brought me his seal-skin coat and made me wear it out to his vessel.[272]

Throughout his ongoing conversations with the Moravians during their first several days at Nushagak, Clark also shared with them his knowledge and experiences in Alaska, and he was clearly helpful and solicitous of the visitors. The Alaska Commercial Company expected Clark to treat Weinland and Hartmann well, and it seemed to be part of Clark's nature to be nice to people passing through Nushagak.

On June 9, Weinland, Hartmann and Alexie, Clark's cook and interpreter, departed Nushagak on the *Dora* for Togiak via Egegik. Clark provided two, three-hatch baidarkas to the missionaries to use on their reconnaissance of the Kuskokwim River. Clark directed Alexie to enlist four Togaik men to act as guides and paddlers for Weinland and Hartmann.

Hartmann described the events in a letter to Bishop de Schweinitz on June 8, 1884.

> …Mr. Clark who is very kind and attentive to us, has shipped on the *Dora*…bidarkas, in which we shall have to make our way back to Nushagak, where Mr. Clark says, we must be at the very latest, on the first of September, to catch the last returning vessel to Unalaska…[at Togiak]…our equipment for the Kuskokwim was completed.

271 Hjalmer Olson, telephone conversation, November 1, 2009.
272 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 126.

> Alexy,…from Nushagak exchanged one of the bidarkas shipped by Mr. Clark, for a larger one and engaged four Natives to go with us to the Kuskokwim and also bring us back. They are a set of fine men making a good crew. One is an old man well acquainted with the Kuskokwim and the others young men…Our main object is to find a suitable locality somewhere on the banks of [the Kuskokwim]. May the Lord help us to find the desireable place to establish a missionary station.[273]

Hartmann also shed light on the location of Clark's trading station near Togiak. He said the station was about ten miles from the village and situated on a "high rocky bank," where one of Clark's Native traders had two small log buildings. One building held trade goods and the other one was a storage facility for walrus ivory and raw furs that the Togiak people had brought to trade.

The four Togiak guides were provided their food and paid 25 cents per day. Their names were Old Washili, Washili the younger, Chimeyune and Nicholaiou. On June 10–11, the exploring party left the *Dora* anchored in Kuskokwim Bay, and were soon met by Alaska Commercial Company agents Reinhold Sipary and Edward Lind with a party in four, large sail-equipped baidaras. Hartmann and Weinland presented a letter of recommendation written by Clark to Sipary and Lind to encourage the traders to aid the visitors any way they could.[274]

Weinland and Hartmann also met Nicolai Demientieff, a Russian, and Nicolai Komolkoshen [Kolmakov?], a Yup'ik, who also worked for the Alaska Commercial Company at Mumtrekhlagamute, which is now the site of the city of Bethel. All but Sipary, who was on his way to San Francisco, would prove to be as helpful as Clark had been to the missionaries. Lind urged the Moravians to travel up the Kuskokwim to Kolmakovsky, about 160 river miles upstream of present-day Bethel, where he lived with his Yup'ik wife and two children and ran a trading station for the Alaska Commercial Company. Lind wanted the Moravians to build their mission

273 Hartmann, letter to Edmond de Schweinitz, June 8, 1884, John Kilbuck Papers, Box 10-Folder II, Moravian Church Archives.

274 Jackson, *Report on Education,* "Diary of J. A. H. Hartmann," 57–58. Reinhold Sipary, unlike Clark, had been an employee of the Russian-America Company. He had remained in the territory after the purchase of Alaska and, like the Riktorovs, moved into the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company. Raymond Hudson, e-mail message, June 2, 2011.

The Four Togiak men hired by Clark's cook Alexie to guide and paddle the Moravian missionaries up the Kuskokwim River looking for a mission site in 1884. This is how the city of Bethel, Alaska, was founded. Their names were Old Washili (second from right), but the others—Washili the younger, Chimeyune and Nicholaiou—are not specifically identified. Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

at Kolmakovsky but they had decided on another, more important location. On June 20, the travelers came to Mumtrekhlagamute, just upriver from Napaskiak where the Alaska Commercial Company had its largest trading station in the Kuskokwim country. Weinland and Hartmann were impressed with the location's higher ground and that it was also near the trading post and with many Yup'ik villages nearby.[275]

On June 27, as they made their way upriver toward Kolmakovsky, Weinland and Hartmann met George C. Langstray, a well-educated prospector who had lived several years at Sitka and was only the second Euroamerican they had encountered on the river. He had found no gold and was on his way back to Nushagak. At Kolmakovsky, the explorers were treated very well, and then they paddled upriver as far as Napammiut No. 1 before heading back downriver on July 9. They reached Mumtrekhlagamute on July 11, where Nicolai Komolkoshen encouraged them to establish their mission near the trading post. Improbable as it seems, the explorers had a gift awaiting them at the trading post.

275 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 75–76.

> …at Mr. Demientieff's, the trader, he had a box for [me] and Bro. A. Hartmann…upon opening our box we found it was from Mr. Clark at Nushagak, containing also a letter from him and one from Mr. J.W. Johnson. In Mr. Clark's letter he stated that he hopes we would appreciate the contents of the box, after our long journey. It contained: 3 cans of corned beef, 1 can of peaches, 1 can of peas, 2 cans of oysters, 4 long pieces of smoking tobacco, 2 short pieces of smoking tobacco, [and] 30 good cigars.[276]

When Weinland and Hartmann left for Nushagak on July 14, they were convinced Mumtrekhlagamute was the best location to build the first Moravian Mission on the Kuskokwim River. The mission was built during the summer of 1885 and would be called Bethel, presently the largest community in western Alaska.[277]

Before the return trip to Nushagak, one of the baidarkas was recovered by Old Washili while the others went to Kolmakovsky. Once the party left Kuskokwim Bay on their return voyage they paddled south along the coast into Goodnews Bay. They then went up a river guided by a Native from Goodnews Bay, perhaps the Middle Fork of the Kukaktlik River, and they waded and portaged to the Togiak River and on downstream to Togiak village. From Togiak, the explorers paddled along the coast to Kulukak Bay, and then made a second portage upstream on the Kanik River to Ualik Lake, and through Amanka Lake into the Igushik River, then downriver to the west side of Nushagak Bay, about eighteen miles away from the succor of John Clark's trading post. The party arrived back at Nushagak on August 8.

> Mr. Clark met us with a kind greeting…Took a good wash and took supper with Mr. Clark. His garden looks very well, especially the potatoes and cabbages and radishes…The catch of salmon not so large this year [?] barrels here

276 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 152, 189.
277 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 77–79.

> and 400 [at the] upper station [the upper station operated by Alaska Commercial Company seven miles up stream].[278]

The first night back in Nushagak, Weinland slept on the floor and Hartmann on the lounge in Clark's home. Breakfast the next morning at Clark's "fish house," was, of course, fish, bread and butter and coffee. The remainder of their time at Nushagak, Father Shishkin provided a room in which Weinland and Hartmann slept. The Moravians offered praise of their four Togiak guides who demonstrated wide-ranging geographical knowledge and possessed great strength, stamina, stoicism and generally good cheer all along their long baidarka voyage from the Kuskokwim River. The Moravians paid their boatmen. The Togiak men then made purchases at Clark's trading post of [rein]deer skins, powder, shot, a gun, tea kettles (chia-niks), frying pans, knives and clothes. Weinland bathed in Clark's steambath, and Hartmann bathed in Shishkin's steambath. They also washed their clothes in a fresh water spring that flows from the base of Nushagak Point.[279]

On August 12, Clark went on an "…excusion for berries" with his women folk, namely Natalia Vasilieva Orlov and her mother Aleksandra Larionova Orlov, his future mother-in-law. The next day he returned "with quite an amount of salmon berries." A few days later, as Weinland and Hartmann made ready for their departure, Clark helped them prepare for the voyage. "He [Clark] is anxious to help us get ready for his vessel." On August 19, they settled accounts with Clark, "…he charged nothing for board and was in our debt to the amount of $42.40. We have sold goods to the amount of $146.11.[280]

Clark and his man Alexie helped Weinland and Hartmann understand Yup'ik words they picked up on their Kuskokwim journey, such as words for the days and months. Weinland paid Alexie $2 for his translating services.

With considerable effort, Clark, Father Shishkin and Alexie worked with the Moravians to write a Yup'ik version of the Lord's Prayer.

278 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 79–80; Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 180.
279 *Ibid.,* 182, 183, 192.
280 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 192, 195, 202.

> Mr. Clark and Alexie came to our assistance after supper helping us to correct our words.... Found it very difficult....About nine o'clock Mr. Shishkin came with the Lord's prayer which Alexie read to us, we wrote it....After supper had another siege at the Eskimo words with Alexie & Mr. Clark. After that we had quite an interesting conversation with Mr. Clark about the Greek Church. He is C [atholic?] [281]

Weinland said Clark told him he wished to see the Moravians set up a prospering mission next year on the Kuskokwim River, not the Nushagak River where he felt the Russian Orthodox Church was doing an adequate job. Moravian Church historians James W. Henekelmann and Kurt H. Vitt summed up Clark's initial contact with the Moravians. "Mr. Clark's assistance with understanding the people, the area and with facilitating the explorer's journey was invaluable and they expressed profound appreciation to Mr. Clark." Hartmann wrote that evening: "Once more ascending the 70 steps leading to the priest's house, we retired to rest for the last time in Alaska. We had met with a great kindness from all with whom we had come in contact."[282]

Weinland mentioned a very "...interesting discussion with Mr. Clark [on August 11] on the subject of the Moravians and also concerning books. He recommended us to read Mosley's *History of the United Netherlands and the Dutch Republic*." They received his frank assessment of their plans, and Clark recommended a spot near the company trading post at Mumtrekhlagamute as the optimal place on the Kuskokwim River to build the first Moravian mission. Clark told Weinland and Hartmann that the area was advantageous because of its central location to a large population and its abundant white fish and water fowl."...[Clark] says one year being out of food, he fed 16 people for several weeks on geese, besides salting 2 barrels. His highest number shot in one day was 85."[283] It would not be an exaggeration to conclude that Clark had a signicant role in the Moravians' decision to locate their mission at the place that would become Bethel, Alaska.

281 *Ibid.,* 189, 194, 201–202; Henekelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 80.

282 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 203; Weinland, "Beginning of the Alaska Mission," 1; Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 81.

283 Weinland, *Alaska Diaries and Journals,* 203; Henekelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 81.

Father Vasili Shishkin, center, and Deacon Vasili E. Orlov, right, with an unidentified deacon on the left, photographed by Weinland and Hartmann in 1884 at the Nushagak church. Courtesy of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, William H. Weinland Papers, photo 039.064.

When back from the Kuskokwim survey, Weinland and Hartmann rested and read at Clark's house. Weinland read *The Song of Hiawatha* while Hartmann read *The Hoosier Schoolteacher*. Perhaps the books were from Clark's considerable library.[284] They met Carl C. Rohlffs, the cannery superintendent and president of the new Arctic Packing Company cannery three miles east of Nushagak at Kanulik. This was the first cannery, albeit a very small one, built in Bristol Bay in 1883, and it had just finished its first canning season, putting up about four hundred cases, a rather inauspicious beginning for the world's greatest canned salmon region. On August 17, Weinland toured the cannery and mentioned seeing fish in a fish trap near the plant. Weinland and Hartmann made arrangements with Rohlffs for passage on the cannery ship, *Sadie F. Caller*, a three-masted 131-foot schooner which was 32 feet wide and carried a crew of 8 men, to San Francisco for $50 apiece.[285]

284 No books from Clark's library or any of his other personal possessions seem to have survived to the present day.
285 Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 182–183, 193, 195–196.

The Arctic Packing Company of San Francisco built this cannery in 1883 and began canning in 1884. The caption on the photograph reads: "Kanulik Salmon cannery with the wreck of the bark 'Montana' in 1885." H-1242 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

Rohlffs was a German-born immigrant living in San Francisco who ran a saloon-resturant and grocery in the Embacadero at One Mission Street and purveyed ships' provisions.[286] By the early 1880s, he heard from various ship captains who sailed in and out of San Francisco Bay about the prodigious salmon runs in Bristol Bay. In 1883, Rohlffs and Henry F. Fortman, who was part of the Pacific Brewing Company of San Francisco,[287] sailed the schooner *Neptune* to Nushagak Bay to salt salmon and to build the first cannery in western Alaska. It was three miles east of Clark's Nushagak trading post. Clark probably had a role in directing Rohllfs and Fortmann to site their cannery where they did, but there is no proof, just reasonable speculation. Undoubtedly, Rohlffs became

286 San Francisco city directory 1884–1885, Carl C. Rohlffs.

287 William B. Bradford Folder, Alaska Packers Association Collection, Box 78, Series 8, "Company History Files," University Archives & Records Center, Western Washington University.

acquainted with Clark when he and Fortmann first came to Nushagak Bay to salt fish and build their cannery. The Arctic Packing Company canned 400 cases of salmon in 1884, and Weinland wrote they salted between 250 to 300 barrels of salmon. In 1885, Rohlffs and Fortmann hired Joseph P. Haller to enlarge their cannery at Kanulik. In 1886, Haller also built the Bristol Bay Canning Company's plant at Kanakanak for William Bradford, a San Francisco-based businessman.[288] Typically, Chinese workers supplied a large part of the labor for building Nushagak Bay salmon canneries. An 1890 appraisal of commercial fishing at Alaska canneries appeared in a San Francisco newspaper.

> All the work inside the canneries is done by Chinamen, who make cans, split and clean the fish, cap the cans and tend to the steam boxes and retorts. The men who catch the fish are paid so much a month and so much per thousand fish they catch, and are boarded free.[289]

Weinland and Hartmann's homeward voyage was on the schooner *Sadie F. Caller,* Captain L. P. Larsen master, which departed Nushagak piloted by Andrei, Clark's river pilot, on August 20. While sailing to San Francisco, Weinland and Hartmann established a friendly relationship with Rohlffs and this would be most beneficial as the Moravians developed their mission in Nushagak Bay. After a short stay in Unalaska, the ship sailed on to San Francisco, arriving September 12, 1884.[290]

The spring of 1885 saw Weinland and a few other Moravians, including the Reverend John Kilbuck, back in San Francisco making ready to voyage to the lower Kuskokwim River to construct their mission station that they would call Bethel. Before leaving for Alaska, Weinland wrote a letter to Bishop de Schweinitz and the Provincial Board in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, saying that in the next few years they should also build a school three miles east of Nushagak near the Arctic Packing Company cannery and the Yup'ik village of Kanulik.

---

288 Bob King, "Joseph Peter Haller," unpublished manuscript; Frank B. Millard, *History of the San Francisco Bay Region,* "Carl C. Rohlffs," 333–334; VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 67; Weinland, "Alaska Diaries and Journals," 180.

289 *California Call,* "News From Alaska, Latest News From the Land of the Midnight Sun," June 27, 1890.

290 Weinland, *Alaska Diaries and Journals,* 203; Henekelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 81.

In the same letter, Weinland wrote:

> Mr. Clark advised us not to begin here [Nushagak], as in doing so we would come into collision with the Greek Church. The priest whom we visited, accompanied by Mr. Clark as interpreter, looks upon the district…as his parish and showed us from his books that he had 2,476 communicant members…We came to the conclusion to abandon for present, this district, and turn our attention to the Kuskokwim.[291]

291 Weinland to de Schweinitz, May 4, 1885, Kilbuck Papers, Box 1—Folder II; Henekelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 86–87.

CHAPTER 9

Clark Marries, and Rival Churches Spar, 1887

EVEN though Clark urged Weinland and Hartmann not to open a mission in Nushagak Bay because they would conflict with the Russian Orthodox Church, the Moravians only heeded his advice briefly. During the spring of 1885, Moravian Church officials decided to open a school near Nushagak in 1886.[292] Clark's opinion and the opposition of the Russian Orthodox priest notwithstanding, Weinland wrote that there were several positive aspects of locating a mission school on Nushagak Bay near Kanulik, as village children would attend the school, and it would be an important communication and transportation point in support of the Bethel Mission on the Kuskokwim River. Also, Nushagak Bay was a promising place for a new mission because of the developing canned salmon industry along its shores. Two years before, while Weinland and Hartmann were on their survey of the Kuskokwim River, a momentous event had occurred 3 miles east of Clark's trading station. The Arctic Packing Company had packed its first 400 cases of salmon, thus launching the Bristol Bay canned salmon industry.

The Bureau of Education in Washington, D.C., authorized $1,500 to build and run the new Moravian school near Nushagak.[293] The school was a quasi-public church school with Moravian missionary teachers and some level of public funding until 1894. The Moravians named their new mission school Carmel, after Mount Carmel in present-day Israel. The Carmel mission was built on a 50-foot-high terrace overlooking Rohlffs Slough and the Nushagak River. The subjects taught at the school were English, arithmetic, writing, spelling, drawing and sewing. It appears that Nushagak Bay's student's first exposure to American education was positive, but also highly divisive and controversial, frequently pitting the Russian church and Clark against the Moravians. The Moravian teachers were sisters Mary Huber, who arrived at Carmel in 1887, and

292 Henklemann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 112–113.
293 *Ibid.*, 112–113; VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 91.

Emma Huber, who arrived at Carmel in 1889 or 1890.[294] Clark's advice to Weinland and Hartmann was ignored, but it was prescient. The Carmel school's ultimate legacy would likely have been greater, if it had not fallen victim to the turf struggle between Father Shishkin and Moravian missionaries.

Reverend Frank Wolff of Green Bay, Wisconsin was selected by the Moravians to go to Nushagak to build and staff the first school in the Bristol Bay region. In the late winter of 1886, the church decided to send Wolff to Nushagak the following summer to select a site for the school and mission house and to begin construction before returning to San Francisco before freeze-up. Arctic Packing Company superintendent Carl Rohlffs wrote the Moravians he would support their efforts to build a school near his cannery and would transport building materials and furnish a carpenter to assist in the construction. Rohlffs also urged that the mission house and school be two buildings, to keep the school separate from the church so as not to inflame Father Shishkin. Weinland wrote that Rohlffs urged him not to get in the way of the established Russian Orthodox Church. Weinland was sure the cannery would be much more helpful to the Moravians than the Alaska Commercial Company would be, but the Moravians established a $1,500 line of credit with the company to cover additional supplies, freight, and travel costs.[295]

Rohlffs had a San Francisco carpenter help draw up a materials list and suggested some of the design for the Moravian's house and school. Wolff sailed for Nushagak with the building materials on the cannery schooner *Sadie F. Caller* on July 17, 1886, and arrived at Nushagak on August 21. While building the house and school, Wolff stayed in a cannery bunkhouse known as the "Hungry Men's House." Wolff's first impression of the Yup'ik people of Kanulik was positive. "The Natives are an innocent looking people, and seem very friendly…greeting one with the word *schamai*."[296]

While cognizant of Rohlffs' warning to keep the church and school separate, church officials sought a teacher who was "devoted" to the faith. Apparently both John Clark and Father Vasili Shishkin let it be known that a public school should be established at Nushagak, because the development of the canned salmon industry in Nushagak Bay was attracting

294 *Ibid.,* 40, 42, 91–94.
295 Henklemann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 112.
296 *The Moravian,* January 12, 1887, 19, the Yup'ik word is *camai* or hello.

more Yup'ik people to the bay. But they did not want a Moravian Church school. They wanted a public, secular school.[297]

With the aid and advice of Arctic Packing cannery superintendent H. C. Jensen and Captain L. P. Larsen, Wolff selected a 50-acre tract for the mission station about 300 yards west of the cannery and 200 yards west of Kanulik, the largest village on Nushagak Bay. Working through the cannery "China boss," Mr. Lyng, Wolff hired ten Chinese cannery workers and six Kanulik men to pack the lumber from the cannery to the building site. The agreed price for the labor was $23.00 to pack 31,000 board feet of lumber, 20,000 redwood shingles, tongue and groove pine flooring, 1-inch redwood shiplap siding and pre-built doors and windows. Before the packing was complete, Lyng needed $10.00 more dollars to complete the job. Wolff apparently balked, and hired six more men from Kanulik at $.50 per day to finish the job. The Arctic Packing Company very helpfully furnished a carpenter and two helpers to finish the building. One of the helpers was a fisherman from the cannery named Chris, probably Chris Peterson, Sr., who helped Wolff hire the Yup'ik men from Kanulik and assisted in looking for a suitable location for a well.[298] Peterson had a 2-year-old son, also named Chris, with a young woman from Kanulik by the name of Delilah. Chris Peterson, Jr., would grow up to be probably the most accomplished student to attend the Carmel school.

Chris Peterson (1886–1943), right, and fellow boarding student Nicholi, left, at the Carmel Mission school in the early 1890s. Peterson was orphaned after his Yup'ik mother, Delilah, died of tuberculosis at Carmel in 1888 and his Norwegian born father, a Bristol Bay fisherman, abandoned the boy. Called Chrissy, he was raised by Mary and Emma Huber, Moravian missionary teachers at Carmel.
Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Rietz Collection, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

In about two week's time, they had closed in the 24 foot by 38 foot, 2-story building. Wolff hired nine Kanulik men and four boys to finish building. Wolff left all his tools in the newly framed building, locked it up, and left it in the charge of the Arctic Packing cannery winter watchman, Louis Guenther, and the unidentified chief of Kanulik. A few days before leaving for San Francisco, Wolff went

297 Henklemann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 112.
298 *The Moravian,* January 12, 1887, 19; February 2, 1887, 68.

to bid farewell to John Clark. Clark welcomed Wolff and fed him a breakfast of game meat.

> …[Clark] is indeed glad to have some one come live near him, so it will not seem so lonely to him. He took me to the store of the ACC, showing me some of the valuable furs of Alaska. He then took me to the Greek Church, the priest being away, the deacon showed us all that was to be seen.[299]

On September 9, the *Sadie F. Caller* sailed from Nushagak bound for San Francisco with Wolff, 25 Euroamerican fishermen, 90 Chinese laborers, and 11,000 cases of salmon onboard. The voyage was a speedy 17 days; the schooner sailed 200 miles in one day. Looking forward to when the Moravian school would operate in 1887, Rohlffs promised Wolff that he would help obtain sufficient coal to heat the facility, of major importance, since getting enough fire wood around Nushagak was a very difficult task.[300]

On June 14, 1887, Wolff and his wife Mary, their two young children and Mary Huber from Lititz, Pennsylvania, sailed on the *Dora* from San Francisco, and for the mission station, which they had named Carmel. Before leaving Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Sheldon Jackson gave the farewell address bidding the Wolffs good-bye and good luck in Alaska.

Wolff wrote as soon as the *Dora* anchored in front of Nushagak village on June 11. Clark and Shishkin paddled out in their baidarkas to meet them. Wolff wrote the priest had very little culture. He also said there were a large number of Native people ill with pneumonia at Kanulik and many had died recently. Wolff had 12 men pack all of his party's baggage from the Arctic Packing Company cannery to the mission station. Wolff began visiting the ill at Kanulik each morning, except Sunday. The sick were mostly men, and they had chest pains. Wolff was not a doctor, but he apparently had some medical skills and used them to ease the suffering of local people around the bay, Native and cannery workers alike. One day Mr. Lyng, Arctic Packing Company's "China Boss," came by with

299 *The Moravian,* February 2, 1887, 68. Clark might have craved other English speakers at Nushagak, because most everyone else there spoke primarily Yup'ik and Russian. Clark could converse in both Yup'ik and Russian, but his first language was English. I believe Clark was likely the first permanent resident of Bristol Bay whose primary language was English.

300 Henekelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 113–114.

Two Yup'ik girls near storage caches at Kanulik village circa 1890s. The snowshoes and kayak are stowed out of reach of ravenous sled dogs. The caches were used to store dry goods and smoked fish for human consumption and air-dried dog fish for dog feed.
Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

a bruised thumb for Wolff to treat. He asked Wolff to make a house call at the Chinese bunkhouse to treat a very sick laborer, which Wolff did.[301]

Teacher Mary Huber liked the Kanulik people whom she called curious, poor, pleasant and good-natured. "I gathered some [wild flowers], and some little Native girls came, saluted me with '*Shami*,' picked flowers and gave them to me. When I took them they were very much pleased and ran for more. I pinned some of them on my dress and then on one of the little girls; she looked pleased, and when I walked away the others crowded around her."[302]

On July 4, 1887, Mary Wolff wrote that the Kanulik chief visited Carmel. He had a small piece of an American flag attached to a pole, and she concluded the Natives "must know something of American patriotism.…This evening four Natives came to see us. One of them, a blind man, speaks a few words of English. He remarked: 'Merikan July-day!'" [303]

301 *The Moravian,* September 28, 1887, 616.
302 *The Moravian,* July 3, 1887, 583.
303 *The Moravian,* September 28, 1887, 616.

Arctic Packing Company continued to provide material aid to the Moravians by giving them food their first few days at Carmel and canning a small number of cans of salmon for them. A case of salmon, used as the measurement for the total amount of the salmon pack for a season, consisted of 48 one-pound tall cans. One day the cannery packed 800 cases and the next day 1000. The cannery hoped to put up 30,000 cases for the season and they already had 20,000 filled.

Cannery managers told Wolff to take as much soft coal as he needed, although it smoked more and was dirtier than dry wood. At the end of the fishing season, they had no coal left to give to the missionaries, but Wolff obtained 144 fifty-pound bags of coal, probably from the Alaska Packing Company's Scandinavian cannery located near the present-day Dillingham boat harbor and built in 1885.[304] Captain Larsen of Arctic Packing and J. P. Haller of Bristol Bay Canning Company's Bradford cannery, came calling on the Moravians. The Bradford cannery was named for William B. Bradford, one of the organizers of the Alaska Packers Association in 1891.[305] It seems obvious that the three Nushagak canneries were very generous to the Moravians, but at times circumstances beyond their control prevented them from keeping all their promises.

Clark and his assistant trader Charles Beckwith told Wolff they would deliver 15 cords of firewood on the beach in front of Carmel for $3.00 per cord. Clark also sent his right-hand man Andrei from Nushagak to assist Wolff in building the schoolhouse and woodshed for a wage of 30 cents per day. Ultimately Beckwith could only supply 6-1/2 cords, so Wolff also cut strips of local peat moss to burn, supplementing the wood and coal.[306]

Wolff wrote about conditions he encountered his second summer at Carmel and some of his hopes for the future.

> …mad dogs troubled us…the [Natives] stone them and drive them off. I killed two myself. We should…have a fence around our house to keep away the dogs and the Chinese, who like to loaf about when they have nothing to do. The Natives

304 *The Moravian,* August 15, 1888.

305 Anonymous, "A Former Mayor of San Rafael Dead," *San Rafael Independent,* May 1916. Alaska Packers Association Collection, Box 78, Series 8, "Company History Files," University Archives and Records Center, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

306 *The Moravian*, October 26, 1887.

> also, when they play with their bows and arrows and spears, often come nearer than we care to have them, so that we have to call in our children from their play. I think a barbed wire fence would do very well, although a picket fence would be better. If the Mission Board sees fit to send us about 5 rolls of barbed wire and staples, we should be very glad.[307]

Wolff continued to finish the interior of the buildings and hired some local villagers to assist him. In keeping with Rohlffs' recommendation, the mission house and school were separate, a 12-foot long woodshed was placed between them.[308] Arctic Packing cannery's winter watchman, Louis Guenther, helped around the mission in various ways, and he became a regular church attendee.

The school was completed in January 1888. Most of the students were from Kanulik, Nushagak, and a few were from Togiak. The Moravians also took in two young boys as boarding students.[309]

During the winter of 1886–1887, Wolff doctored several local people. On the school front, some students dropped out and attendance was low, with only three or four students going to school regularly. Father Shishkin began a school at Nushagak village, and pressure was brought to bear on Kanulik parents not to send their children to the Moravian school. Reverend John Kilbuck of the Bethel mission, wrote on November 28, 1887, that the Greek priests at Nushagak and on the Yukon were constantly warning local people against enrolling their children in the Moravian schools at Bethel and Carmel. Wolff, writing from Carmel, was less diplomatic. "About the priest I will refrain from saying more than he is a great drunkard, gambler, and a blind leader of the blind."[310] Relations between Shishkin and Wolff continued to deteriorate.

* * *

In spite of the bad-blood between the Clark-Shiskin-Orlov clan and Moravian missionaries, life went on at Nushagak. On June 27, 1887, John W. Clark, age 40, married Natalia Vasilieva Orlov, age 18 at

307 *The Moravian,* October 26, 1887.
308 *The Moravian,* March 23, 1887, 183.
309 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 115–116.
310 *The Moravian,* August 15, 1888.

Nushagak. They had three daughters: Natalia, born September 27, 1884; Parascovia, or "Parsha," born February 14, 1886; and Feodora, "Dora," born October 10, 1889.

After their father's death in 1896 Natalia and Parsha attended school in San Francisco in 1900 and boarded with a 66-year old Irish immigrant by the name of John Hiller, who was a laborer.[311] What connection Hiller had with the late John W. Clark is not known. In another twist to the Clark story, there was a Nathalia Clark born in 1884 residing at the village of Korserefsky near the Holy Cross Mission on the Yukon River in 1900; it is possible she was also a daughter of Clark.[312]

Natalia Orlov Clark, photographed in San Francisco circa 1887–1888, is fashionably attired. H-2305 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

According to the last grandchild of John and Natalia, the late Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich, her aunt Natalia moved to Illinois and subsequently had little contact with her Alaska family.

Parsha married two times. The first marriage was brief, but her second marriage, to Ellwell Robert Squires, was of more than 40 years duration. The couple owned a Chevrolet dealership in Oxnard, California, from the 1920s until the 1960s, where Parsha was a bookkeeper. She lived in the Imperial Valley and Ventura, California, for about 80 years. Parsha died at the age of 100 on March 16, 1986.[313]

In 1903 Dora was enrolled in the Sacred Heart Convent in Los Angeles before returning to Nushagak.[314] Dora married Hans Peter Nicholson on October 16, 1904, and they had 10 children. Dora lived her early years in Nushagak and San Francisco, and, after she married, at Kanulik, Ekuk, Clarks Point, Kanakanak and, in the late 1930s, at Koggiung with her daughter Elizabeth.[315]

311 John Weise, e-mail message, March 9, 2011. The message was based on the Twelfth Census of the United States, for San Francisco, California, District 146, Sheet 4, 274.

312 Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Alaska, Index A-Z, Heritage Quest, Bountiful, Utah, 2000, page 40 Nathalia Clark, born 1884, Koserefsky, Series Roll 1829, T 623 page 52.

313 *Ventura County Star Free Press,* March 18, 1986, B6.

314 Final account of Union Trust Company of San Francisco in the matter of the Estate of Feodora Clark, September 4, 1908, 4. Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911; Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collection of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

315 H. P. Nicholson Family Bible, in the estate of the late of Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich, March 15, 2009; Katherine Arndt, e-mail about John W. Clark, March 5, 2009, Alaska Russian Church Archives, Vital statistics records, Nushagak, Kwikhpak and St. Michael parishes. Microfilm, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress,

John W. Clark photographed in San Francisco circa 1887–1888 looking every bit the prosperous merchant he was. H-2306 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

The family of John W. Clark had a long association with the city of San Francisco beginning by at least 1866, when Clark shipped out with the Western Union Telegraph Expedition to Russian America.

Clark was closely tied to both the Shishkin and Orlov families. In an October 1885 letter, Alaska Commercial Company Unalaska trader Rudolph Neumann wrote Clark telling him Deacon Orlov was granted a $300 credit line at the Nushagak store by the company. In late August

1887, Charles Beckwith, acting agent left in charge of the Nushagak trading post by Clark while the latter went to San Francisco, wrote Neumann saying that Orlov was in debt nearly his entire annual salary, which was about $40 per month. Beckwith also reported that Father Shishkin was "heavy in debt," and that he (Beckwith) felt duty-bound to put the priest on an allowance of $30 or $40 per month.[316]

Clark must have had a difficult time saying no to Father Shishkin and Deacon Orlov at his store. If they were hungry, Clark had to extend them credit, otherwise he would be put in an untenable position with his wife, her father and Shishkin. Ultimately, Clark realized he could always charge the Russian Orthodox Church for debts that Shishkin and Orlov incurred at his store, and he would probably be repaid. For example, in December 1895, the Russian Orthodox Church Consistory deposited funds credited to Clark with the trading post at Unalaska on behalf of the Nushagak Church for the amount of $195. Clark had a claim against Church officials for $195 in salary he had advanced Orlov. However, in 1898, when the transactions were sorted out, the $195 was meant to cover Shishkin's debt incurred when he borrowed from the Nushagak church.[317]

316 Letter, August 29, 1887, from Charles Beckwith to Rudolph Neumann, Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, Unalaska, 1885–1889. Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

317 Letter, May 2, 1898, Alaska Commercial Company station at Unalaska to Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America. Diocese of Alaska. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1984, microfilm roll 137, frames 379 and 380.

CHAPTER 10

Clark and the Bristol Bay Commercial Salmon Industry

IN early May 1888, the Moravian school at Carmel was closed for the year, and cannery ships began arriving with fishermen and crews to prepare for the upcoming commercial fishing season.[318] On June 30, 1888, Alaska Governor A. P. Swineford arrived onboard the *Thetus* on a summer tour of the territory. The governor appointed Clark as Justice of the Peace and Louis Guenther as Constable, and hoped the newly empowered men would enforce better school attendance in the coming year.[319] While at Nushagak, the Governor stayed at the priest's home, and some of the officers from the *Thetis* stayed with Clark. While he was at Nushagak, Governor Swineford noted that several rafts of firewood arrived at the village, an indication of the lack of trees close to Nushagak.

Firewood, an essential commodity, had to be rafted in from upriver locations along the Wood and Nushagak rivers, since the area around Nushagak village was tundra with few patches of alders. The Yup'ik name for the Wood River was Aleknagik, after its Lake Aleknagik source. The name Wood River was first documented in 1890 as the local name. Certainly Clark sent many wood-cutting parties up the Wood River to cut and raft birch and white spruce logs back to Nushagak for firewood and construction. Even the canneries cut timber upstream, which they used to build fish traps, for fuel, and as pilings for the construction and repair of docks.

But the wood Swineford saw might not have been consumed in Nushagak. Clark's assistant, Charles Beckwith, mentioned in an 1887 letter to Unalaska trader Rudolph Neumann that the *Dora* was to haul between 30 or 40 cords of firewood to him.[320] Since there were no trees

318 *The Moravian,* August 15, 1888.

319 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 117–118.

320 Orth, *Dictionary,* 1059; letter, August 29, 1887, from Charles Beckwith to Rudolph Neumann, "Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, Unalaska, 1885–1889." Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

A circa 1950 aerial view of the Clarks Point Diamond NC cannery with scows and fish boats at anchor in Nushagak Bay. The cannery was originally built by John Clark for his company, the Nushagak Canning Company, and was taken over by the Alaska Packers Association in 1893. Clark operated a salmon salting station in the early 1880s before the cannery was built at the site. Courtesy of Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, Archives & Records Center, Alaska Packers Association Collection.

growing at Unalaska it is assumed that the Nushagak River firewood was destined to be burned there or perhaps the Pribilof Islands.

Governor Swineford also wrote Nushagak was the center of the fur trade between Cook Inlet and the Yukon River. He wrote that mail was brought to Nushagak from St. Michael, and then sent on to Sitka via the Katmai Trail and Katmai Bay. The governor also reported Nushagak was the communication and trading center for a very large area of the Alaska interior, which produced:

> …an abundance of the most valuable furs… which are derived from:…the establishment of trading stations in close proximity to many of the native settlements from whence came the bulk of its share of importance as a trade center, but another industry…is now likely to more than counterbalance its loss of the fur trade___ in fact, has already done so, I allude to its fisheries.[321]

321 A. P. Swineford, "The Cruise of the *Thetis*," *The Detroit Free Press*, undated, 1888 , Folder 3, Governor A. P.

Louis Sloss & Company were pioneers of the canned salmon industry in Alaska. Louis Sloss, Sr., was one of the most influential California businessmen of his era and was a major owner of the Alaska Commercial Company. ACC's Karluk Packing Company produced the Horseshoe brand early in the 1880s, and it was considered to be the leading brand of canned Alaska salmon.[322] Clark probably encouraged his employers at the Alaska Commercial Company to build a salmon cannery on Nushagak Bay at his saltery at Clarks Point. In a letter from Rudolph Neumann to Reinhold Sipary of August 9, 1886, the former states that "the Alaska Commercial Company, should soon succeed in establishing a cannery in Nushagak, capitalized by 1000 shares at $100.00 each."[323]

Clark traveled to San Francisco with his wife Natalia and family before the end of August 1887 to confer with the top officials of the Alaska Commercial Company about the growing canned salmon industry in Nushagak Bay.[324] The company had long known of the huge Nushagak salmon runs and had likely sent Clark to Nushagak in the late 1870s to start a shore-based salmon salting station. By the fall of 1886, they had already seen three competitors establish canneries on Nushagak Bay, and it was time for them to follow suit and take advantage of the growing worldwide popularity of canned salmon. On January 31, 1887, Clark and four others in San Francisco and Alaska incorporated the Nushagak Canning Company in the state of California. Its capital stock was valued at $100,000 in 2,000 shares. The purpose of the company was to catch and:

> pack salmon at Nushagak, Bristol Bay, Alaska, and other points. The buying and selling of real estate and personal property. The manufacture of all kinds of goods, and the borrowing and loaning of money for the purpose of furthering its business interests.[325]

Swineford Papers, Alaska State Archives, Juneau, Alaska.

322 Daniel O'Connor, *The Inner Man; Good Things to Eat and Where to Get Them,* San Francisco, H. H. Bancroft, 1891, 34.

323 Rudolph Neumann, letter to Reinhold Sipary, August 9, 1886. Alaska Commercial Company Papers, Box 152, folder 1573 [Unalaska (Ounalaska)] Letters, Outgoing: Copy Book, 1885–1889, Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

324 Charles Beckwith, letter to Rudolph Neumann, August 29, 1887. Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, Unalaska, 1885–1889. Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911, Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

325 Nushagak Canning Company, 17039, Articles of Incorporation, California State Archives, Sacramento, California; *San Francisco Call,* "New Incorporations," January 6, 1888.

The five directors of Nushagak Canning Company were Clark, Rudolph Neumann, Charles Hirsch, Louis Sloss, Jr., and Ernest R. Lilienthal. All listed their residences as San Francisco. Each director owned 100 shares of stock valued at $5,000. The articles of incorporation state that all five of the directors personally appeared before the San Francisco county clerk to sign the document on January 31, 1887. Clark's signature is on this document, and it is the only example of his handwriting known to exist.[326]

The new salmon packing company was a subsidiary of the Alaska Commercial Company, and it promised to produce large profits for the company. Louis Sloss, Jr., the son of Louis Sloss, Sr., had traveled to Alaska in 1880 to help build some trading posts for the Alaska company. In addition, Ernest R. Lilienthal was the younger Sloss' brother-in-law. Lilienthal owned Lilienthal and Company, the largest wholesale company in the West, Central America and Mexico. They dealt with liquor, hops, malt, salmon, wheat, oats and wool. In the 1890s, Lilienthal and Company separated its liquor business from the other commodities and incorporated it as Crown Distilleries. The fact that John W. Clark was accorded equal status with some of the leading businessmen in the western United States during the Guilded Age speaks volumes about his honesty and business acumen.[327] The company needed a knowledgable and reliable man on the ground at Nushagak and Clark fit the bill.

Clark was also in partnership with Sloss and Gerstle family members in mineral prospects. On August 14, 1888, Clark, H. Sloss, W. Gerstle and Henry Neumann located a 640-acre coal claim, the "Marmot" and "St. Lawrence Sections," located at the head of Herendeen Bay, which they claimed under the Coal Land Act of 1873. Herendeen Bay was on the Bering Sea side of the lower Alaska Peninsula, 12 miles southwest of Port Moller village, the farthest point south in the Bristol Bay region.[328] Neumann worked for the Alaska Commercial Company at St. Michael and was the brother of Rudolph Neumann, the chief trader at the company's Unalaska station and an investor in the Nushagak Canning Company.

326 Sarah McKay copied Clark's letter and mailed it to Baird. Letter, September 14, 1883, Sarah A. McKay to Spencer Baird, Record Unit 30, Office of Secretary Correspondence 1882–1890, Box 8, Folder 8, Smithsonian Institutes Archives, Washington, D.C.

327 Gerstle Mack, *Lewis and Hannah Gerstle,* San Franciso: published by the author, 1953, 57; O'Neill, *E. R. Lilienthal,* 54.

328 Orth, *Dictionary*, 417; "Territory of Alaska, Head of Herendeen Bay, No. 5, August 14, 1888," "Alaska Commercial Company Records," Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

During the spring and early summer of 1888, Alaska Commercial Company built the fourth cannery in Bristol Bay, at Stugarok, or Clarks Point, where Clark had previously established a salmon salting station on the spit. Clark was the superintendent of the new Nushagak Canning Company. However, the cannery did not operate from about 1892 until 1901, and it became part of the Alaska Packers Association in 1893. In 1901, a double cannery was built, and it operated until the 1950s.[329] Some sources say the cannery did not operate in 1891, yet it was reported in the San Francisco press that the schooner *Ralph L. Anderson* departed for the Nushagak Canning Company cannery on March 31, 1891, and the bark *Electra* sailed for the Nushagak Canning Company plant on April 14, 1891, bound for Nushagak Bay.[330] The *Electra* returned to San Francisco from Nushagak on September 11, 1891, after a voyage of 21 days, with a cargo of 30,250 cases of salmon.[331]

A 1891 San Francisco newspaper article documented a large run of salmon into Nushagak Bay. An interview with Arctic Packing Company's superintendent H. C. Jensen illuminated the amount of the pack and issues of labor unrest.

> The run of salmon on the Nushagak River has been unprecedented in the annals of the canning business in Alaska, and the pack of salmon is consequently very large from the Arctic, Alaska, Nushagak and Bristol Bay Packing companies on the river, four separate canning establishments. In round numbers there have been put up this season on this river over 133,200 cases of canned salmon and 1,600 barrels of salted salmon. The fish commenced to run on July 10, when 5,000 fish were caught, and the canneries had all the fish they could possibly pack with their facilities up to the time of our leaving on August 14. The fish were the finest I have ever seen, king salmon predominating over silver salmon in the ratio of 10 to 1. [Also an account of the trouble

329 MacDonald, *Chronological History,* 57.

330 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, April 22, 2011; *The San Francisco Chronicle,* May 10, 1891.

331 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, April 22, 2011.

> with Chinese 'highbinders,' who made demands which were met by starvation and white foremen with pistols ready on the plant floor.] When the Chinese found every indication of trouble readily met, and discovered after a few trials that they were to be ruled by an iron hand, they gave up all warlike demonstrations and settled down to peaceful work. The shutting off of the supply of food had a most beneficial effect.[332]

From its earliest days, participants in the Bristol Bay salmon fishery came from a very diverse ethnic mix, reflecting the heterogenius population of San Francisco and the maritime industry in general. Northern European immigrants to the United States made up a large portion of the fishermen, but there was also reference to Italian fishermen fishing for Arctic Packing Company's cannery at Karluk in 1891.[333] Of course, the Chinese crews also were essential for the actual canning of the salmon. Yup'ik people on Nushagak Bay also sold fish to the early canneries, and a few women butchered fish for canneries. This was the first exposure to working for wages and working on the clock for the people of Nushagak Bay. It took several decades, but Native fishermen fishing Bristol Bay in double-enders, a fishing boat unique to the bay, became more common by the early 1930s. By the end of World War II, Native Alaskans were performing nearly every cannery job there was at Libby's Ekuk and Graveyard canneries.

In 1890, Clark's cannery marketed the Moose Head Brand of salmon. The cannery was described by U.S. Fish Commission personnel:

> The cannery of Nushagak Canning Company, is also located on the east bank of the river, nine miles below Fort Alexander. It was built in 1887, and is under management of J.W. Clark and J.L. Wetherbee. The working force comprise 40 fishermen, 100 Chinamen, 1 engineer, 2 firemen, 1 carpenter, 1 box maker, 1 cook, and 2 waiters;

332 *The San Francisco Chronicle,* "Alaska Canneries. A Big Run of Salmon and a Large Pack," August 30, 1891, a highbinder was a member of a secret Chinese-American society of assassins and blackmailers.

333 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 22, 2011.

Box end from a wooden case of 48, one-pound, tall cans of Moose Head Brand red salmon from Clark's Nushagak Canning Company at Clarks Point circa late 1880s 1890s. Courtesy of the Alaska State Museum, accession 2007-26-1.

> 25 boats, 8 scows, of which 1 is sloop rigged, 1 steam launch 36 ft. long, and 1 steamer of 40 tons burden.[334]

While Clark and his family were in San Francisco during the winter of 1887–1888, they probably enjoyed the ease of living comfortably in a big, bustling city because it made for a welcome respite to life at Nushagak which was much more physically demanding than that in a Mediterranean kind of climate. Of course, Clark was no stranger to San Francisco, and the two photographic portraits of the Clarks that came down through descendents of the John Nicholson family were taken there. According to the Moravians, Natalia Clark probably enhanced her ability to speak English while she was in San Francisco, as her first languages were most likely Russian and Central Yup'ik. In addition to a winter of business activities, Clark and Natalia were on their honeymoon.

334 Anonymous, *U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, Part XVII, Report of the Commission for 1889 to 1891*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Service, 1893, 285.

Besides providing a stimulating social life, being in San Francisco during the winter months offered Clark a chance to go to the Alaska Commercial Company headquarters in the Embarcadaro, on the waterfront at 310 Sansome Street, to discuss business with his bosses, fellow traders and vendors. He could also tell stories of adventure and of the fascinating characters he met in the far reaches of Alaska. One can imagine Clark spinning yarns with the best of them.

> The home office of the Alaska Commercial Company was for years in its own building, a squat, small structure in San Francisco. Upstairs, the odor of curing fur and raw hides mingled with the scent of tea, which the Russians had taught the [Natives] to drink.…[In a] room to the rear…Here a large sandbox for cigar butts and tobacco juice and a good number of plain chairs furnished the barren meeting place of sea captains, traders, and other men full of tall tales and willing to swap yarn for yarn.[335]

* * *

During the summer of 1888 Wolff began to build two sod huts to house Native boarding students. When school began on August 27, there were 17 students, but only 2 from Kanulik. Clark's mother-in-law, Deaconess Aleksandra Larionova Orlov, made a few visits to Kanulik and apparently discouraged the villagers from sending their children to school.[336] The two Moravian women, Mrs. Wolff and Mary Huber, encouraged the people of Kanulik to visit the mission, but rarely visited Kanulik village.

One of the Carmel school boarders was 12-year-old Vasili Tridikoff, whose father was a Native trader working for Clark in an unnamed Iliamna Lake village, possibly Kakhonak. He stayed at Carmel one year and learned to read and write, but his mother wanted to see him, so he went home to Iliamna Lake.[337]

Conflicts of various sorts began to heat up between Wolff and

335 O'Neill, *E. R. Lilienthal,* 45–46.

336 *The Moravian,* October 17, 1888.

337 Frank E. Wolff, "The Report of the Mission at Carmel, For the Year 1888 to 1889," Extracts From The Journal of the Moravians at Carmel, 1887–1888, 1887 to 1894," Moravian Church Archives, 79, 84.

Father Shishkin over Russian Orthodox Church members attending the nominally public school run by the Moravians. In September 1888, bad colds and mumps hit the Nushagak Bay villages, and many people died. Frank and Mary Wolff made a number of house calls at Kanulik to comfort the sick, and this won them some measure of goodwill and more patients. On the morning of October 11, Clark sent Wolff a note asking him to come to Nushagak to treat the chief, who had accidentally shot himself in the hand. Wolff went to Nushagak and spent the day attending to the chief. Later the chief came to Kanulik by boat so he could be close to Wolff's care.

On October 13, 1888, Clark and his assistant George Edge attended church services at Carmel.[338] Perhaps to show his appreciation of the Moravian's medical care of the ill people around Nushagak, Clark donated 10 pounds of tea, 25 pounds of sugar and 200 dried salmon to the school.[339]

It was about this time that Delilah and Chris Peterson, a Norwegian fisherman, came to live at Carmel, because she suffered from a terminal case of tuberculosis. About six weeks later, Delilah finally succumbed. Most Kanulik villagers did not attend her funeral at Carmel because Father Shishkin forbade it. Peterson apparently abandoned his son, and Chris Peterson, Jr., was raised by the Moravians. He became fluent in English, and it was said he was taken back east for more education by one of the Moravians.[340]

In another example of Father Shishkin's insecurity, a promising young man from Kanulik who had been employed by Arctic Packing Company for several seasons had an opportunity to go to San Francisco to learn English and be exposed to "Outside" life, and receive $20.00 per month salary from the cannery. The priest denied permission when the young man sought his blessing.[341] The relationship between Wolff and Shishkin was competitive, and a complicated turf war for peoples' allegiance and loyality waxed and waned from 1886 to 1893, between the long-established institution, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the American newcomers, the Moravians. Perhaps if Wolff's personality had been more nuanced, and if Shishkin had been more secure in his own skin, they might have come to some kind of mutual understanding. Even though Shishkin had

338 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 21, 2011, based on article in the *California Alta,* August 19, 1877, mentioning one George Edge arriving in San Fracisco with John W. Clark on the steamship *St. Paul,* master Gustave Niebaum, with a load of furs from Unalaska.

339 *The Moravian,* April 24 1889; Frank E. Wolff, "The Report," Moravian Church Archives.

340 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious*, 138.

341 *The Moravian,* August 15, 1888.

been head of the Nushagak Church for almost 50 years, it bought him no deference from Wolff, perhaps because of Shishkin's perceived weakness for alcohol. Interestingly, Orlov, the Nushagak Russian Orthodox church deacon and Clark's father-in-law, seemed more amenable to peaceful coexistence with the Moravians.

On December 15, 1888, Lord Lonsdale, whose name was Hugh Lowther, the Fifth Lord of Lonsdale, a British nobleman and adventurer, arrived at Nushagak with a small party on his way to Katmai village, where he hoped to catch a ship to Kodiak and eventually back to England. Lonsdale arrived at a time of rising tension between Wolff and Father Shishkin over the local people's allegiance and student's attendance at their respective schools. Lonsdale spent several weeks at Nushagak resting his dog teams and his party before leaving for the Naknek River drainage and the Katmai Trail. He promised to send one of his dog teams back to the Moravians, who lacked sled dogs and desperately needed them to travel around the Bristol Bay region during the winter.[342]

The Moravians had planned a large program for Christmas Eve with students singing songs and making recitations. They invited Clark and Lonsdale, but it rained all day, and travel would have been very difficult, if not impossible. Only 15 people attended, including 8 Yup'ik men and 3 Euroamerican fishermen, including Louis Guenther.[343] Again Shishkin told his parishioners not to attend and most stayed away. It was a major disappointment for the Moravians, but a few days later Reverend John Kilbuck arrived by dog team from Bethel. Kilbuck, a Delaware Indian and convert to the Moravian Church, had won the hearts and minds of the Yup'ik people around the lower Kuskokwim, partly because he was able to speak Yup'ik and was far more understanding of Native cultures than Wolff.[344]

Lonsdale stayed with Clark between mid-December 1888 and late January 1889. On January 17, he wrote:

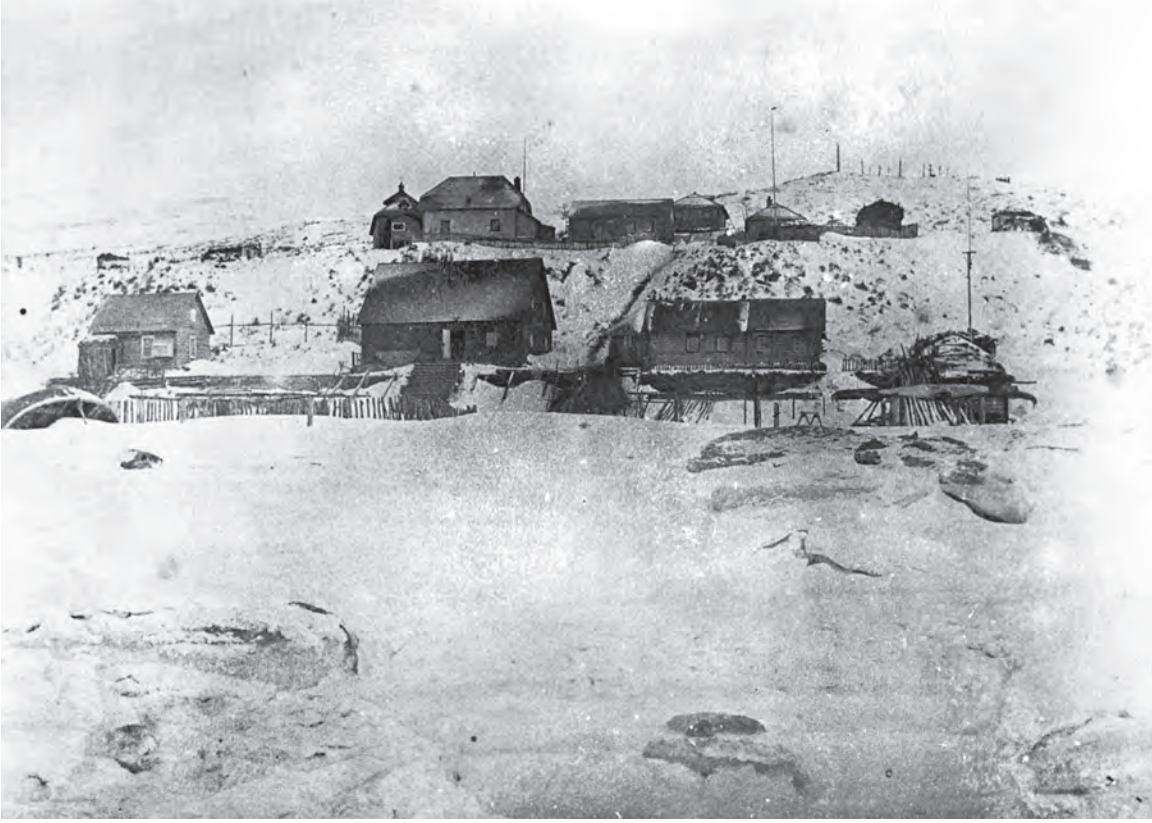
> we left Nushagak where we had been so kindly & hospitably treated by Mr. Clark who is a gentleman & exceedingly nice fellow. But who is much the worse in health for exposure & climate.[345]

342 Shepard Kretch III, *A Victorian Earl In The Arctic: The Travels and Collections of the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale 1888–1889,* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989, 79–88.

343 Wolff, "The Report," 78.

344 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 119.

345 Lonsdale, *A Victorian,* 82.



"Nushagak winter scene," circa 1880s–1890s. Graveyard on top of the hill right. The tall pole is reported to mark the grave of either Fedor L. Kolmakov, founder of Nushagak in 1818, or his son Petr Kolmakov. H-1239 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

Lonsdale said that Clark was "a most charming man" who provided his party with nice rooms and sought to make the visitors comfortable after their arduous dog sledding trip from the Kuskokwim country. He mentioned that a Henry Osborn, a "celebrated hunter" from Wyoming, returned to Nushagak from a hunt and was employed by Clark hunting walrus and bear in the summer. But Lonsdale said the Nushagak country did not have much game and had not had game for at least 10 or 12 years.[346] Lonsdale did not report seeing any caribou or moose in his travels around the Bristol Bay country.

An old prospector by the name of Peter Le-Duke who had earlier attached himself to Lonsdale's party thought he lacked sufficient vigor to make the physically demanding sledding trip from Nushagak to Katmai village to catch a ship headed south for the winter. Therefore, on Christmas Eve 1888, Clark hired Le-Duke as his watchman at the Alaska Commercial Company trading post, his compensation being room

346 *Ibid.*, 79.

and board. Le-Duke was only employed until the first steamer arrived at Nushagak in the spring, when he headed south onboard the vessel.[347]

Lonsdale said that at one time while he was at Clark's trading post, there were 127 sled dogs, owned by a number of people including Clark and the Lonsdale party. Finding enough dog feed to feed the dogs was a big challenge.[348] Many of the dogs were owned by some of Clark's Native traders, perhaps the Riktorovs from the Old Iliamna. Clark's employees ran small trading stations in several Bristol Bay villages. They also traded for furs with local Native trappers and then brought the furs to Clark at Nushagak. The furs were then sold or traded to the Alaska Commercial Company in San Francisco.

Lonsdale wrote about drinking and fighting that frequently occurred at Nushagak. He said Father Shishkin and Deacon Orlov drank to excess and fought each other, and were only "separated with difficulty." Lonsdale also reported on a rather unusual local custom inflicted on an individual who became drunk and told lies, "he was subjected to corporal punishment." Perhaps Clark, who was Justice of the Peace, administrated the corporal punishment? He also wrote about a "violent cold accompanied by blood" raging in some of the upriver Nushagak villages which caused the death of many people.[349]

This would be an appropriate place in the story of John Clark to discuss the history of alcohol in southwestern Alaska. Though many of the people who met Clark at Nushagak wrote about alcohol abuse by others, no one ever mentioned Clark drinking anything stronger than tea. Alcohol was introduced into Alaska by the Russians in the early to mid-eighteenth century. Historian John A. Hussey wrote about this development.

> The earliest Russians to visit the Aleutians are said to have brought with them a home-brewed beer known as '*kvass*,' which was reputed to have had antiscorbutic properties. The art of making this beverage from rye meal was soon transmitted to the Aleuts and gradually spread far and wide in Alaska, despite the frowns of the company upon anything that would keep the Natives from work.

347 *Ibid.*
348 Wolff, "The Report," 78.
349 Lonsdale, *A Victorian*, 81–82. Perhaps Lonsdale was referring to tuberculosis.

> It is probable that the Koniag of Shelikof Strait coast brewed *kvass* as enthusiastically as did their brothers on Kodiak Island, but the practice did not penetrate to the Aglegmiut of the northern peninsula during Russian times.[350]

In 1868, an American, Charles Bryant, a U.S. Treasury agent, visited Nushagak and commented that most of the Yup'ik people near Nushagak village were "in blissful ignorance of the taste of whisky."[351] In the following years, however, with the gradual development of the shore-based commercial salmon industry in Nushagak Bay, alcoholic beverages or the means to make them were brought in by traders, fishermen and cannery workers and gradually became available to local people, including Father Shishkin.

Clark discouraged the manufacture of *piivaq,* which is a kind of homebrew, by restricting his customers to limited amounts of sugar and flour, its raw ingredients. Alfred B. Schanz wrote how Clark tried to limit the production of alcohol by his customers.

> The trader at Nushagak discountenances such proceedings, and has tried to put a stop to them giving orders that not more than 20 cents worth of sugar or flour should be sold at one time to a customer. The Natives, however, have repeatedly been discovered saving up this flour and sugar.[352]

In August 1887, while acting agent at the Nushagak Beckwith had a physical altercation with Shishkin's son, perhaps Innokenty Shishkin, after Shishkin insulted him. Beckwith wrote Father Shishkin and his son had been drunk every day since the *Dora* had anchored off Nushagak village, and the priest had been purchasing hard liquor from Chinese cannery workers.[353]

---

350 John A. Hussey, *Embattled Katmai: A History of Katmai National Monument,* San Francisco: Office of History and Historic Architecture, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1971, 155.

351 *Ibid.*

352 Robert P. Porter, *Report on the Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census: 1890.* Chapter 6, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883, Albert B. Schanz, Chapter 6, "The Fourth or Nushagak District," 93.

353 Letter, August 29, 1887, from Charles Beckwith to Rudolph Neumann, "Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, Unalaska, 1885–1889." Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

At least two other visitors to Nushagak in the late 1880s and 1890s remarked about Shishkin's intemperance. Lonsdale mentioned that Shishkin, Deacon Orlov and Paul, Clark's long time employee, were all intoxicated on January 6, 1889. Paul, in particular, had slandered innocent people while drunk and Lonsdale wrote that the remedy for such behavior was corporal punishment.

> When they all sobered up I was called to hear the complaints against Paul whom I must say had gone out of his way to damage other men. They decided as is the custom here that he should be tied up & have a licking tomorrow but I think all will end peacefully & Mr. Clark will put the difference right but it will give the young man a good lesson. The Indians [Yup'iks] have likewise got drunk on 'Choochenocuk' (spirit distilled from sugar & flour) & have been fighting…[354]

E.H. Wells and Albert B. Schanz were the reporters-explorers with the Frank Leslie's Expedition who visited Nushagak in 1890–1891. Schanz generally had good things to say about Father Shishkin, while Wells, like Lonsdale, was highly critical of the priest's weakness for whisky and the attendant "riotous conduct" that followed drinking bouts at Nushagak, which he witnessed first hand.[355]

Clark appears to have been a teetotaler or moderate social drinker. In 1884, Weinland mentioned being served tea at Clark's, and in 1890, Schanz also mentioned being served tea while a guest at "Clark's fish house" as he called it. There does not seem to be any written evidence of Clark drinking or ever selling alcohol to his customers. It appears from the historical record that sobriety and self-discipline were hallmarks of Clark's character, and those traits, along with other positive qualities, enabled him to have a successful and productive life on the Alaska frontier.

In early January 1889, Moravian minister John H. Kilbuck arrived at Carmel after mushing from Bethel to visit the mission and perhaps help with outreach to the Yup'ik people at Kanulik. He visited Clark and called him a "very pleasant man." He said Clark gave him a box of cigars and some

354 Lonsdale, *A Victorian,* 81.

355 E.H. Wells, "Our Alaska Expedition," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* LXXII, September 19, 1891.

mounted photographs of Carmel and of himself. Clark had Kilbuck take a good steambath before he was to hit the trail.

Kilbuck saw Lonsdale, but he did not see Shishkin and wrote that the priest was making life difficult for the Moravians.[356] Had Kilbuck been assigned to the Carmel mission in the mid-1880s, the force of his personality, combined with his understanding and empathy for Native Americans, born by the fact that he was a Delaware Indian who learned to speak Yup'ik, might have garnered the Moravians more friends at Nushagak. Kilbuck might very well have been able to assuage Shishkin's basic insecurity. There can be no doubt he would have been a more palatable Moravian representative than Wolff, who was ultimately recalled by the church from Carmel in the early winter of 1894, and finally dismissed outright from the Moravian celergy in October 1894. The Moravian Church hierarchy finally realized that, in spite of Wolff's good qualities and hard work in building Carmel, his approach to the Native people around Nushagak was not winning friends or favorably influencing the very people the church was trying to convert.[357]

On January 16, Lonsdale mushed his dog team down to the new Nushagak Canning Company cannery, also known as Clark's Cannery, at Clarks Point, seven miles down the coast from the trading post. "I started at 1 P.M. & arrived 2:18. The dogs went fast & well & the road was good. The cannery is by far the nicest & best on the river & everything most clean & tidy." The next day Lonsdale settled his bill with Clark and, following the latter's directions, headed north-northeast up the Nushagak River on the way to the portage to the Kvichak River and Paugvik village at the mouth of the Naknek River, enroute to Katmai village. Once Lonsdale reached Katmai, he planned to send his dog team back to Clark as a present. He remarked that Clark was very good to his dogs and they "do very little work so they will be happy & cared for." However, according to the Moravians, most of Lonsdale's dogs died in Katmai Pass when a blizzard stalled him and the mushers ran out of dried salmon for the dogs.[358]

On June 5, 1889, the Reverend John Schoechert from Watertown, Wisconsin, and Miss Emma Huber, sister of Mary Huber, arrived at Nushagak on board the *Dora*.[359] Clark came out to the *Dora* in his three-

356 John H. Kilbuck Papers, Boxes 5 and 3, January 1–9, 1889, Moravian Church Archives.

357 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 132–133.

358 Lonsdale, *A Victorian,* 82, 88; *The Moravian,* August 21, 1889.

359 In 1897 Emma Huber married the Reverend Samuel Rock who replaced Reverend Wolff in 1896. VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak*, 42.

The Reverend Schoechert, left, at Aleknagik Lake recruiting students for the Carmel School in the late 1880s or early 1890s. The party sailed from Nushagak up the Wood River in a Columbia River salmon boat, the type of boat used by Bristol Bay commercial fishermen at the time. Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

hole baidarka, and, soon after, Shishkin came out to the ship. Clark invited Schoechert and Huber to have supper with him, and afterward the Moravians went upriver to Carmel. During the succeeding decade Schoechert was to prove an energetic traveler around the Bristol Bay uplands with trips to Aleknagik in a Columbia River salmon boat and by dog sled to Old Iliamna and Kijik villages conducting the 1900 census. In addition, he was an observant chronicler of life in Nushagak Bay.

Schoechert and Huber arrived at Carmel a few weeks before the bulk of the Bristol Bay salmon returned to the Nushagak River. On June 26, the Moravians caught 87 king salmon and salted them in 6 wooden barrels weighing about 1,200 pounds. On June 27, Wolff and Schoechert sailed their Columbia River salmon boat to two canneries to obtain hanging twine and wooden floats for their salmon nets. While they were gone, Clark, his assistant George Edge, and a newly arrived ship captain visited Carmel. On July 5, the Moravians salted down 3 more barrels of

salmon and put other salmon in their smoke house, an indication that the Moravians were becoming thoroughly acculturated to the Bristol Bay lifestyle. When they got wind that Arctic Packing Company was throwing away 300 dog salmon, they arranged to get them and dry them for their 10 sled dogs, as each working sled dog needed 1,500 dried salmon to sustain them for a year. [360]

Time showed that Schoechert did seem to have a better manner of interacting with the local people than Wolff. He traveled around the region a good deal, trying to recruit more students to the Moravian school, particularly up the Wood River to Lake Aleknagik and up the Nushagak River. In September 1889, Wolff and Schoechert apparently sailed their Columbia River salmon boat to Aleknagik in an effort to recruit more boarding students for Carmel. Most of the people had gone to the mountains hunting, but they did bring back four new students for their school. Their oldest student, Jacob, went along to translate for them at Aleknagik.[361]

On July 13, 1889, Schoechert mentioned that cannery superintendent Mr. Jensen brought a sick 21-year-old fisherman, who might have been suffering from tuberculosis, to be examined by Wolff. The church conflict was momentarily put aside when Schoechert and other Moravians attended services at the Russian Orthodox Church, and Shishkin even invited them to visit him after the services. While at Nushagak, the Moravians called at Clark's store and, looking over his merchandise, including some walrus tusks. Clark promptly gave them a pair. Yet Schoechert wrote on July 26, 1889, that "Mr. Clark, also who has influence and possesses the confidence of almost every one of the Natives, seems opposed to us."[362]

The trip up the Wood River must have been successful, because, by October 17, the Moravian school had 30 scholars in attendance, of whom 19 were boarding students. Students received room and board at the school, and a blind couple also lived there. Jacob's father also lived at the Carmel school as he recovered from a broken leg. He was able to cut much of the stove wood for the mission, in spite of his broken leg.[363] Later, Shishkin ordered some of the boarding students to leave Carmel, and school attendance plummeted in late October.

360 *The Moravian,* September 11, 1889.

361 *Ibid.,* November 13, 1889.

362 *Ibid.,* December 4, 1889; John Schoechert, letters from Carmel, Alaska, July 26, 1889, Moravian Church Archives.

363 *The Moravian,* November 27, 1889.

During the fall of 1890, Mr. Schoechert wrote: "Mr. Paul, [Kashevaroff or Kashevarov ?] the Russian who has been working for Mr. Clark a number of years, started with me on a journey up the Wood River to the lake for fish.…We have one of the boats belonging to the Arctic Packing Company that can carry about 4 tons."[364]

In 1888, Wolff had purchased a Columbia River salmon boat from the Arctic Packing Company, the kind used in the Bristol Bay fishery for fishing and traveling around the bay, including trips up the Wood River to Lake Alegnagik. Haller had promised to bring up more lumber in 1890, so the Moravians could build a bigger schoolhouse and another house for Schoechert. However, those plans were dashed on August 10, 1889, when the Bristol Bay Canning Company schooner *Wildwood* wrecked within view of Carmel. The company sent word to San Francisco for two Alaska Commercial Company steamers to sail to Nushagak Bay to rescue the crew and passengers and to ship the 30,000 cases of canned salmon back to San Francisco before freeze-up.[365] Once again, as in 1885, there was concern that if the entire crew and passengers from the *Wildwood* remained in Nushagak all winter, starvation would likely result. It was vital that rescue steamers arrive at Nushagak to pick up the stranded passengers, before freeze-up precluded navigation to the outside world.

In an August 17, 1889, letter to church leaders in Bethlehem, Schoechert documented how the Moravian cemetery at Carmel became established. A fisherman was drowned during the fishing season in 1888, and his brother came to Nushagak Bay in 1889 to retrieve the body for return to San Francisco on the *Wildwood* for burial. After the *Wildwood* wrecked, the brother, removed the body from the wreckage and had it buried at Carmel. That is how the little Moravian cemetery, now nearly forgotten and surrounded by willow brush, began at Carmel.[366] Although nearly every cannery had their own cemetery, some cannery workers were not buried in Alaska. Instead, they were salted down, folded in two, and sealed in wooden barrels for transport back to San Francisco. For example, on September 11, 1889, the bark *Harry Morse* returned to San Francisco from a Kodiak Island cannery with "the salt pickled bodies of Chinese Go Wing and Wong Gung, who committed suicide on Kodiak just prior to the sailing of the vessel."[367]

364 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 119; *The Moravian,* November 12, 1890, and December 17, 1890.
365 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 120, 130.
366 *The Moravian,* October 8th, 1889, 648.
367 Marvin Collins, e-mail message, March 22, 2011.

The steamship *Dora* was a regular visitor to the Nushagak trading station while John W. Clark ran the site. The *Dora* was owned by the Alaska Commercial Company. It was a wooden ship 112 feet long. This photograph originally belonged to Clark. Photo H-1241 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

The wreck of the *Wildwood* was described by Schoechert soon after it occurred.

> The vessel…is a very pitiful sight. They left on the 10 of August, and drifted down with the tide. After having gone about one mile, they drifted ashore and could not get off. The ship sprung a leak…On board they had about 70 white men, 92 Chinamen, and 30,000 cases of salmon. I was over there a few days ago. Everything on board was in great confusion. Men were unloading the salmon. The ship lies quite on one side. The captain hardly goes out of his cabin. On the 15 of this month he sold it for $1,175 at auction, Mr. Clark being the buyer.[368]

368 John Schoechert Letters Carmel, Alaska, Nushagak River, Alaska August 17, 1889, Moravian Church Archives, 97–98.

Two steamers, the *Farallon* and the *Signal*, apparently arrived at Nushagak in early October to pick up the stranded cannery crew and 30,000 cases of salmon. The superintendent of Bristol Bay Canning Company brought the Moravians six bushels of potatoes, fresh fruit and vegetables. Shishkin traveled to San Francisco, probably onboard one of the steamers. The *Farallon* returned to San Francisco on October 25, 1889, after a voyage of nearly 14 days, with 11,100 cases of salmon from the *Wildwood*. The *Signal* arrived in San Francisco on November 5, 1889, after a voyage of 17 days, with 18,500 cases of salmon from the wreck of the *Wildwood*.[369]

Clark apparently traveled to San Francisco via the Katmai Trail and Kodiak Island.[370] Orlov, Clark's father-in-law, was left in charge of the Russian Orthodox Church at Nushagak in Shishkin's absence. Clark's assistant, George Edge, was left in charge of the Alaska Commercial Company store. By early September, Clark had been very busy salvaging the wreck of the *Wildwood* and securing the cargo of canned salmon for the anticipated arrival of the two steamships from San Francisco. Schoechert wrote that Clark was going to travel to San Francisco via the Katmai Trail very soon, because he had given up any expectation that the rescue steamers would arrive in Nushagak Bay before freeze-up.[371]

The route from Nushagak Bay to the Katmai Trail in the fall of 1889 led to Kvichak Bay probably by sloop, or perhaps baidarka, and on to Paugvik at the mouth of the Naknek River. The next leg was upriver to Naknek Lake, a paddle to the eastern end of the lake, and then to the Sugpiaq village of Savonoski. The Katmai Trail went overland up the Ukak River valley through the future site of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and Katmai Pass, then downslope to the Katmai village on the Pacific Coast. This would have been a very arduous, 200-mile boat and foot journey from Nushagak, with Clark was traveling during a stormy and increasingly dark time of the year. The voyage from Katmai village, Clark could have caught a sloop to Kodiak or even crossed Shelikof Strait by baidarka and found passage to San Francisco, perhaps on an Alaska Commercial Company vessel via Sitka. All in all, Clark's trip from Nushagak to Kodiak may very well have taken a month of great physical exertion. The Katmai

369 Marvin Collins, undated San Francisco newspaper, in e-mail message, March 22, 2011.

370 Hussey, *Embattled,* 281.

371 *The Moravian,* November 27, 1889; R. Porter, *Report on Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census: 1890,* Chapter VI, "The Fourth or Nushagak District," by Albert B. Schanz, 1893, 72–73, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Trail was an ancient trail from the Pacific coast across the Alaska Peninsula to the Bering Sea via Naknek Lake and Naknek River, and had long been used by Natives, Russians and increasingly by Euroamericans in the late-nineteenth century. A number of Clark's acquaintances occasionally traveled over the Katmai Trail—Petroff in 1880, Father Shishkin in 1883, Lord Lonsdale in 1889, Wells and Schanz in 1891—to name but a few of the most prominent men Clark knew.[372]

By way of an example of what Clark might have experienced traveling to the Katmai Trail in the fall of 1889, it is necessary to recount a glimpse of the October 1898 Josiah E. Spurr United States Geological Survey party's trip toward the Katmai Trail from Nushagak. Spurr wrote an excellent account of a baidarka trip from Nushagak to Old Savonoski village with local Yup'ik paddlers and guides. Spurr left Nushagak on October 4 and arrived at the Naknek Packing Company cannery on October 10.[373] He described the baidarka trip from the west side of Kvichak Bay to Naknek village.

> The next day, however, we woke and found it dead calm, and so we launched out early in the morning. There was a long ocean swell, but we made rapid progress with our five bidarkies…We traveled some twenty miles along the north coast of Bristol Bay till we came opposite Naknek on the south shore. Here we had to cross. Now our Natives said they wanted to wait for the flood tide before starting across, but the weather was ideal and we saw that this delay would mean the loss of a day at least, and, if the wind should start up, perhaps days more. So we took the situation in hand and granted them only fifteen minutes for 'dhai' (tea), and then pushed out across. This crossing was fifteen or twenty miles of open sea. When we were out a few miles, the low shore seemed very far away, and for a long time thereafter we were practically out of sight of land. As

372 Hussey, *Embattled,* 259–289.

373 The Naknek Packing Company cannery was built on the north side of the Naknek River in 1894, at the present day location of Naknek Trading Company.

> we paddled industriously along in our low skin boats, sitting almost level with the water, with the wash of the little wavelets slapping over the tops of our craft and around our kamelinkas, we could not—at least, I could not—help thinking what it would be like if a strong wind should spring up in the long hours which we took to make the crossing. …It was after dark when we reached the west shore at Naknek. There was a salmon cannery here. Out of the summer crew there remained three white men, who took us in and housed us for the night.[374]

The Spurr party traveled up the Naknek River, east the length of Naknek Lake and upstream to Old Savonoski village where they left their baidarkas and hiked over the Katmai Trail, arriving at Katmai village on October 17, 1898. Clark's experiences on the Katmai Trail are not known, but likely he would have been very fortunate, indeed, to have had as smooth a trip as Spurr.

While Clark was away in San Francisco, life would have moved along slowly at Nushagak. Sometime during the winter of 1889, Natalia Clark, her infant daughter Feodora and a servant made their first social call on the Moravians at Carmel. The writer reported she spoke a little English, which she had likely learned the previous winter in California. (Mrs. Clark spent the winter of 1887–1888 in San Francisco with her husband.[375]) Although Natalia's mother, Aleksandra Orlov, was no fan of the Moravians, Natalia's father, Deacon Vasili Orlov, sought to have more cordial relations with the Moravians in Shiskin's absence. On April 24, 1890, Orlov invited the Moravians to visit the Russian Orthodox church after they concluded a visit with Natalia at her Nushagak home.

The boarding students at Carmel were anxious to attend a big dance festival at Ekuk in December 1889, but Wolff was hesitant to allow them to do so. Louis Guenther, the winterman at Arctic Packing, convinced Wolff it would enhance community relations and add to the

374 Josiah E. Spurr, "The Log of the Kuskowim, An Exploration of Alaska," The Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska F 912 KS S62, 151–152.

375 Articles of Incorporation, Nushagak Canning Company, January 4, 1888, 17039, California State Archives; *The Moravian,* April 17, 1889.

spiritual well being of the Carmel students to attend the dance. He encouraged Wolff to allow the students to attend the festivities.[376] Wolff seems to have not understood the need for the Yup'ik students to participate in dance festivals, which were a major part of the winter culture in the Nushagak Bay area villages. Villages took turns hosting the large dance festivals, which might run as long as 10 days, according to reporter Albert B. Schanz who visited the region in late 1890 and early 1891.[377] Fortunately, Wolff took the advice of the more perceptive winterman, and the students attended the dance at Ekuk.

Schoechert described the situation on December 8, 1889.

> After some considering, [Guenther] talking in favor, we concluded to let some of the larger boys go too. What joy it created, one of them could hardly keep his tears back. We arrived at Ekuk at 2 o'clock P.M., at 5 o'clock the dance began. Before the dance a great feast was partaken of. It consisted of tea and pilot bread, then salt-fish, smelts, dry deer-meat, ribs, baluka, seal oil, and two large kettles of, I think, Graham flour mush, several bushels of ice cream which is made of deer-tallow and seal-oil cooked then cooled, and stiffened with snow and ice and mixed with cranberries which give it a reddish color.…There were from 200 and 250 Natives present.[378]

Schanz described the dance and said:

> Each night ends with a sumptuous feast, the delicacies of the menu being provided by the guests on the plan of the American surprise party, and participants in the frolic also make the…occasion for exchanging presents. I attended a number of such dances…and always went to my quarters with a number of interesting presents which

376 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 123.
377 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 94.
378 *The Moravian,* December 17, 1890.

A group of Nushagak River people who came to trade at Clark's store, left rear. Clark's house is center background. Note the set of moose antlers on the left end of Clark's roof. Photographed by Weinland and Hartmann in 1884.
Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives.

> these kindly people, from whom many civilized persons could learn hospitality, had bestowed upon me.[379]

While Shishkin and Clark were in San Francisco during the winter of 1889–1890, the Moravian School had an average attendance of 21 students, but the year before, the average attendance was only 9 students. Wolff wrote in 1891:

> …Mr. J.W. Clark and the Greek priest [Shishkin] are in thorough unison with each other in opposing our work and last summer they openly boasted of their power to keep the children from school.…Another great power…lies in the trading post, as this is the only trader [Clark] for

379 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 94.

> the entire fourth census district. An example of this was given us by a captain and several ladies and others who were here to see us a few weeks ago. One of the superintendents of the canneries bought a skin from a Native. The trader upon hearing of it said to the superintendent, "I'll make that Native suffer. He will be hungry before the winter is over."[380]

Wolff's story does not comport with Clark's history of living and working with Native Alaskans for 30 years. In early June 1890, Clark and Shishkin had returned from a winter in San Francisco, and Schoechert claimed he could notice the renewed opposition to the Moravians coming from Nushagak village. Schoechert wrote that during Thankgiving and Christmas holidays of 1889, "80 or 90 Natives," including the school children and a few fishermen attended Moravian church services. But he added that, although the cannery winter watchmen were glad to have the Moravians visit, it was difficult to "induce them [the watchmen] to quit their vicious habits, and even Mr. Louis (Guenther)…is not innocent."[381] At the time Schoechert was writing, Guenther was at "Paugvik (the Naknek River) some 80 miles from here where he has charge of a salting station started by the cannery company which employs him."[382] This is a reference to a saltery on the south side of the Naknek River, which was begun by Arctic Packing Company and would, in the early twentieth century, develop into the largest Alaska Packers Association cannery in Bristol Bay—Diamond NN cannery.[383] The cannery first operated in 1894.

There can be no doubt that Shishkin was generally hostile to the Moravians' competition for the loyalty of the people of Nushagak Bay. If Clark's opposition to the Moravian School was as strident as Wolff makes it out to be, it might have been based on a number of factors. Clark was married to Orlov's daughter, and he was a friend of Shishkin. He spoke Russian and translated for Orlov and Shishkin when they spoke to Americans. Clark was the only person in the entire Bristol Bay region who donated money directly to the Russian Orthodox Church.[384] It is quite

380 *The Moravian,* "The Report of Carmel for 1890–1891,"August 26, 1891.
381 *The Moravian,* August 27, 1890.
382 *Ibid.*
383 *The Moravian,* July 23, 1890, 466.
384 Znamenski, telephone conversation and e-mail message, August 8, 2009.

possible Clark disapproved of some of Wolff's actions toward the Yup'ik people at Kanulik, for example stringing barbed wire around the Carmel mission. Wolff criticized Clark for being hostile to the Moravians. But because Clark had urged the Moravians not to build their mission in the Nushagak Bay in the first place, because he felt the Russian Orthodox Church was doing an adequate job of serving the religious needs of the Yup'ik people, Clark's actions were understandable. Clark had probably seen enough of Wolff in action to be displeased with him. In addition, Clark likely did not relish enforcing school attendance laws, now that he was Justice of the Peace, because of his friendship with Shishkin and Orlov. During the fall of 1889, the school at Carmel had an enrollment of 30 students, of whom 20 were boarders from upriver villages or Togiak, showing that Wolff was losing local support at the school.[385]

Writing on June 11, 1890, Wolff commented about the difficulties in obtaining and "holding" students for the Moravian school. He said that the only way to retain students was to board and clothe them, and that during the just completed school year, they boarded 14 boys and 6 girls all winter. Wolff said that in the spring, a number of students were taken away from school by their parents at the urging of Shishkin. He wrote.

> The parents used every means to induce their children or compel them to leave stealing them, or getting them to run away. I think if we once have a proper place to keep the boys we will not have so much trouble. As it is now, they live in the hut, where no one can stay to look after them.[386]

According to Shishkin, on August 4, 1890, a Yup'ik man, Andrei Ankaiak, brought his 11-year-old son Jacob to stay and learn at the priest's house, because he was afraid the Moravians would kidnap him and force him to stay at the Moravian School. After Shishkin left his house, Wolff and an assistant broke into the priest's house and took Jacob. The father and priest went to Carmel to retrieve Jacob. Clark and his assistant, Edge, accompanied the priest to translate and perhaps to guard him from Wolff. Shishkin wrote:

385 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 123.
386 *The Moravian,* August 27, 1890, 551.

> I asked Mr. Clark…to protect the child. Since Natives became furious of Wolff's act and since the Moravian missionary earlier beat with a stick three local people, I told him to give back the boy to his father. I also added that through such acts, he will actually ward off all children from going to his school. During this conversation, Mr. Wolff was so angry that he even raised his stick ready to beat me. All this took place in the presence of Mr. Clark, Mr. Edge, Deacon Orlov and a teon [chief] of Kuskokwim Natives…[387]

In October 1890, the Moravians completed another building with lumber brought to Nushagak Bay by one of their cannery supporters, but their school had only had 8 students, and none were from Kanulik or Nushagak villages. Wolff thought the new building and "other progress" the Moravian mission had accomplished bothered Shishkin and "others" at Nushagak. By others, Wolff was probably referring to Clark and Orlov. Wolff also said Shishkin had "strictly forbid the Natives to send their children to school." Writing in January 1891, Wolff said all their efforts seemed "fruitless," but they would persevere and try to take young children, because they were more easily controlled and learned English more easily than older students. He concluded: "At present we have eleven scholars, all boarders. We have no day scholars."[388]

In the summer of 1891, Moravian Bishop Henry T. Backman from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, visited both Bethel and Carmel. He described the Carmel compound as being enclosed by a wire fence, and two female boarding students Sophie [Kokarine] and Olga Waldron were sleeping in an attic room. Backman also wrote that the Carmel barabaras were located towards the river. The layout of the Moravian Bethel mission station was welcoming and open, but Carmel seemed to be more apart and isolated from the local people. Surely, the people at Kanulik were able to pick up Wolff's apparent latent hostility, and it was not conducive to winning the hearts and minds of the local folk of Nushagak Bay. Bishop

387 Vasili Shishkin to the Alaska Ecclesiastical Consistory, September 18, 1890, The Alaskan Russian Church: Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, 1984, microfilm roll 149, D216, 1–21; Znamenski, telephone conversation and e-mail message, August 8, 2009.

388 Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 123, 130; *The Moravian,* May 13, 1891.

Backman sailed back to San Francisco onboard the Scandinavian cannery bark *J.D. Peters*, leaving Nushagak on August 11 and arriving in California on August 31, 1891, a distance of about 2,440 miles. P. H. Johnson, superintendent of the Scandinavian cannery and a business associate of Clark in a salmon trap on the Wood River, also returned onboard the ship. There were 148 people onboard the *J.D. Peters*, including 39 Chinese cannery laborers and a cargo of 31,000 cases of canned salmon and 635 barrels of salt salmon.[389]

Reporter Albert B. Schanz visited Nushagak from the fall of 1890 to late January 1891 and had some very interesting comments on the legacy of the Russian colonial area, Shishkin, language and culture in the Bristol Bay region circa 1890.

> Father Shishkin, in spite of his advanced age, undergoes the hardship of Alaska travel and makes a trip over the entire district, his travels each time occupying nearly 2 months and covering a distance of from 300 to 800 miles. It is this conscientious devotion to his work which aids the Russian priest to retain so thorough an influence over the natives. On his trips he baptizes the children, marries young couples or ratifies marriages already informally entered into, and gives the last blessing to those who have died since his last visit. The sale of blessed candles and saints' pictures reimburses him for the expenses of such a trip.
>
> The natives of the north peninsula villages divide mankind into 2 classes, Russians and non-Russians, and to all of the latter class they apply the generic term Americansk, no matter whether the individual specimen be a German, a Scandinavian, a Finlander, or a Kanaka. One unable to speak any Russian whatever is looked upon as pitifully ignorant and is treated with contempt. Whatever may be said of the Russian church, it is hardly just to charge it with exercising a demoralizing influence upon the Natives,

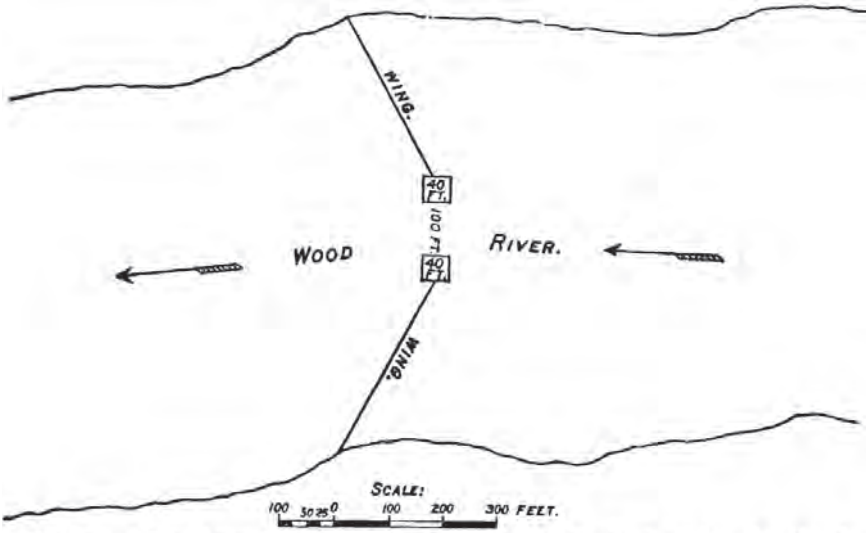
389 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 128; *The Moravian,* December 23, 1891.

> as has repeatedly been done. I found the Russian Catholic [Orthodox] Natives as honest, faithful, and reliable as any others …[390]

When the Moravians first arrived at Nushagak in 1884 Clark had urged them not to start a mission there because the Russian Orthodox Church was firmly established. But the Moravians did not heed Clark's advice, and they had a great deal of trouble during the next eighteen years winning acceptance by local people. Finally in 1902 the Moravians left Nushagak Bay, six years after Clark's death.

390 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 96.

William Weinland, center foreground, with the Togiak guides after their return from the Kuskokwim country the summer of 1884. Old Wasili is in the stern behind Weinland, the other Yup'ik men are not specifically identified. The photograph was taken by Adolphus H. Hartmann at Nushagak in front of John W. Clark's trading station. A fish trap is seen in the background. Photo courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



NOTE.—The river is at this point about 750 feet wide; depth at mean low water, 10 feet; rise, 3 to 4 feet.

A sketch map of the Wood River fish trap in use in 1890. Salmon swim upstream along the banks of the river rather then in the middle of the river. Therefore this trap was designed to maximize the catch and minimize the escapement of the salmon to their spawning grounds. Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, Alaska Office, Anchorage, Alaska, Alaska File of the Revenue Service, Letters Received by Revenue Cutter Service June 7, 1888 to December 29, 1890, Microfilm m 641, roll 1.

CHAPTER 11

Clark and the Wood River Fish Trap

IN 1880, Ivan Petroff reported that some of the earliest, shore-based, commercial fishing in Nushagak Bay relied on salmon traps—devices that stopped the fish at a given point in the river, preventing them from swimming upriver to their spawning grounds. In 1890, according to Lieutenant Commander Z. L. Tanner, U.S. Navy, master of the U.S. Fish Commission Steamer *Albatross*, three Nushagak Bay canneries operated small fish traps near their plants, and a fourth cannery formerly had a trap but discontinued using it because it was not profitable.[391] Subsequently, increasing Federal regulation to conserve the continued viability of the huge Bristol Bay salmon runs played an important role in finally outlawing fish traps altogether. Initially, Columbia River salmon boats augmented the fish traps' catch, but by the early twentieth century, boats were probably responsible for catching the majority of salmon in Nushagak Bay. In the early twentieth century, salmon traps were increasingly regulated and restricted as wasting resources, endangering the health and welfare of Alaska Natives and reducing fishing jobs.

In order to assure the continued survival of Bristol Bay salmon, which was the primary food supply of Bristol Bay Natives, Congress passed a law on March 2, 1889, forbidding traps from blocking salmon passing upriver to the spawning grounds, and placing authority to regulate fish traps with the Secretary of the Treasury.[392]

Moravian Bishop Backman reported in 1891 that cannery fish traps threatened future salmon runs and consequently undermined the health and welfare of the Nushagak River drainage and its people, including those at Lake Aleknagik. Moreover, in 1887, Father Shishkin had even urged Dena'ina villagers living on the remote Mulchatna River to move to Lake Clark to avoid starvation, because of the decline in salmon returning

391 Z. L. Tanner, letter to Marshall McDonald, June 15, 1890, National Archives and Records Administration, Alaska Office, Alaska File of the Revenue Service, Letters Received by Revenue Cutter Service, June 7, 1888–December 29, 1890, M 641, Roll 1.

392 Unrau, *Lake Clark*, draft, 261.

to the upper river since the advent of Nushagak Bay salmon canneries.[393] On June 27, 1890, Schoechert wrote that a number of Natives had complained about the fish trap on the Wood River, which was owned by the four canneries operating from Nushagak Bay. He said it nearly blocked the entire river and mentioned that Tanner of the *Albatross* ordered the operators to provide for a fish passage 100 feet wide in the middle of the river. Schoechert said, "We feel proud of our government in its protecting the interests of the people in many ways. Tanner, is a very fine man and strict in the discharge of his duties." But it appears Schoechert's laudatory comments about Tanner and the government were premature.[394]

It is very likely that Shishkin or the Moravians, probably Schoechert, Wolff or Bishop Backman, wrote a letter to the Treasury Department or the U.S. Fish Commission on behalf of the Wood River Natives, complaining about the adverse impacts on the welfare of the Natives wrought by the fish trap. At any rate, by early April 1890, the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries learned of the imminent construction of the Wood River fish trap.[395] The Wood River fish trap was investigated by Tanner on June 3, 1890. It was a joint effort by the four Nushagak Bay canners—Arctic Packing at Kanulik, Clark's Nushagak Canning, Bristol Bay Packing Company's Bradford cannery and the Scandinavian cannery operated by P. H. Johnson whom Tanner called "the prime mover in the affair." Tanner took Johnson and Clark onboard one of the *Albatross*'s launches and steamed twenty miles upriver from present-day Dillingham to the site of the fish trap construction on the Wood River. Tanner stated that Clark told him:

> The plans contemplated two forty foot square traps with wings extending to the shore, on either side, an open channel of one hundred feet being left in mid-stream for the passage of the salmon; that he had joined the enterprise with the stipulation that this passage should be left unobstructed at all times.…In reply to a question, he [Clark] said he had lived in the country many years as a fur dealer, and the thickly populated region on Wood

393 Ellanna and Balluta, *The People of Nondalton,* 64–65.
394 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 130; *The Moravian,* March 11, 1891.
395 *Bulletin of U.S. Fish Commission, Vol. XII for 1892,* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1884, 4.

> River contained many of his best customers: hence, he would have no hand in anything that would injure them. An obstruction in the river preventing the run of salmon would result in actual starvation to the majority of the Natives.… Mr. P. H. Johnson…described the plans precisely as Mr. Clark had done. He considered the traps as an experiment involving too much money to be extended by either of the canneries singly: hence, he had endeavored to interest all four, and finally succeeded, Mr. Clark having joined them with the provision that a free passage of at least one hundred feet should be left in the middle of the river. He said this stipulation was agreed to willingly, as they never had an idea of barricading the stream.[396]

Tanner did not feel competent to determine if the Wood River fish trap he investigated created a barricade to salmon passage and thus was a violation of the 1889 law. Therefore, he sought further instructions on how to interpret the law from the Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. Tanner wrote that without the presence of a government inspector it was not known if the canners would follow the law and allow the one 100-foot opening to remain unobstructed, or if would they stretch a 100-foot net across the opening and catch all the salmon. Tanner steamed the *Albattross* out of Nushagak Bay with the status quo in place; the canners' fish trap on the Wood River remained in place. The Captain did not receive his directions from the Treasury Secretary until early September, when he steamed into Port Townsend, Washington, and by then the Nushagak canners had operated their Wood River fish trap all season unhindered by the Federal law.

However, when the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries, an agency of the Department of Commerce, got wind of the Wood River fish trap and lack of strict enforcement of the 1889 law by Tanner, they vigorously objected. The Fish Commission cited Dr. T. H. Bean as one of the foremost fish biologists on Alaska salmon, stating that the fish trap described by Tanner on the Wood River was a clear violation of the 1889 federal law. Dr. Bean stated:

396 Z. L. Tanner, letter to Marshall McDonald, June 15, 1890, M 641, Roll 1.

> The trap men on Wood River are building upon the well known habit of the…(king salmon) of following along the shores in shallow water, to escape from enemies.…few salmon will swim in mid-channel and reach the upper waters and lake sources of the river [to spawn].…If the government should…allow the use of traps, in spite of the unfortunate outcome of such appliances in neighboring countries, it should prescribe regulations for the conduct of the fishery and appoint agents to see that the laws are enforced. If these matters are left solely to the discretion of the individuals having a financial interest in the fishery, there will soon be no salmon to protect.[397]

On August 13, 1890, the Acting Secretary of the Treasury, Oliver L. Spaulding, issued a statement in support of the Fish Commission. He said:

> It is the decision of this Department that the erection of traps as described by Capt. Tanner, or any other permanent fences, dams, or barricades in any of the rivers of Alaska, whether they extend wholly or only in part across said stream, is an impediment to the ascent of salmon or other anadromous species to their spawning grounds, and is clearly a violation of the act of March 2, 1889.[398]

By this time, Tanner had long since left the Bristol Bay region. It was not until September 7, 1890, when he responded from Port Townsend to Marshall McDonald of the Fish Commission that he realized he could have acted more forcefully on the Wood River. Tanner said the Nushagak Bay canners were of the opinion that it was lawful to use fish traps so long as there was also clear fish passage for the salmon to pass upstream. He said, had he been directed earlier by Acting Treasury Secretary Spaulding while he was at Nushagak Bay with the *Albatross*, it probably would have

397 Dr. Tarlton H. Bean, letter to Marshall McDonald, July 2, 1890, National Archives and Records Administration, Alaska Office, Alaska File of the Revenue Service, Letters Received by Revenue Cutter Service, June 7, 1888–December 29, 1890, M 641, Roll 1.

398 Unrau, *Lake Clark,* draft, 262.

prevented Johnson and Clark and the two other Nushagak cannery superintendents from constructing their Wood River fish trap.

In 1891, the four Nushagak River canneries either continued to operate their Wood River trap, or they used other means of trapping the salmon, such as haul seines near creek and river mouths. In the summer of 1896, the Revenue Cutter *Wolcott* cruised into Nushagak Bay to check on fish traps. In 1897, about seven months after John Clark died, Captain Jefferson F. Moser, U.S. Navy, skippered the *Albatross* into Cook Inlet, where he found fish traps in use by Kenai Peninsula canners. Moser did not reach Bristol Bay in 1897, but he did make reports of the commercial production from the bay and noted that there were four salmon traps with three 100-foot leaders on the Wood River above its confluence with the Nushagak River. In addition, Moser reported that the first cannery on the Kvichak River at Koggiung, owned by Alaska Packers Association, had packed some 55,382 cases of salmon and had used a mix of gill nets and four salmon traps with inside leaders 300 feet long and outside leaders 259 feet long.

For instance, Moser also described a fish trap in use in front of the Naknek Packing Company cannery on the north side of the river, near the location of the present-day Naknek Trading Company store. He described "1 double trap leading out one hundred fathoms from the beach in front of cannery, with two wings from the pot 25 feet wide, 50 fathoms each in length, one up and the other down stream."[399]

It seems fish traps continued to be in use for at least two decades after Clark died, in spite of the 1889 law forbidding them. In 1900, Captain Charles P. Elliott arrived at Nushagak and wrote:

> The Alaska Packers Association had…an immense trap well inside the mouth of the river. It was reported to me that 700,000 fish had been killed and wantonly destroyed, it being impossible to can or ship them off before they would spoil.…At every station I visited there was more or less illegal fishing on the part of all the large companies, the degree of wrongdoing being in

399 Jefferson K. Moser, "The Salmon and Salmon Fisheries of Alaska: Report of the Operations of the United States Fish Commission Steamer *Albatross* for the Year Ending June 30, 1898," in *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission,* Volume XVIII, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899, 173–178.

> proportion to the size of the company and its opportunity.[400]

Clark had built and used some of the first fish traps in Nushagak Bay in the late 1870s. Salmon traps on the Nushagak River system had caused great suffering and disruption to the Native way of life on the upper Mulchatna River and also on the Wood River Lakes. The traps were finally outlawed on June 6, 1924, when President Calvin Coolidge signed the White Act into law. In order to implement the White Act, the Secretary of Commerce issued new regulations, one of which was that all Bristol Bay waters were only open to drift gill nets. Salmon traps, beach seines and purse seines were forbidden.[401]

It appears that, by and large, Clark was an honorable man and an honest business man, but when it came to his defense of the 1890 construction of the Wood River fish trap he seems to have dissembled. His true motivation seems to have been self-interest. His statement to Tanner that he would not do anything to hurt the welfare of his Native customers in the Wood River drainage does not comport with the way the fish trap was constructed. The idea that sufficient salmon would pass the fish trap by swimming up the middle of the river defies Clark's many years of experience in Nushagak Bay and his considerable knowledge of the habits of salmon. After only a few years in Bristol Bay, most people came to understand the biggest part of salmon schools generally swim along the riverbanks, and that is why Clark and Johnson constructed their trap with long wings beginning at the river banks to funnel the migrating salmon into the pot.

400 Charles P. Elliott, "Salmon Fishing Grounds and Canneries, by Charles P. Elliott," *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska,* Senate Report No. 1023, c. 1900, 738–739.

401 Unrau, *Lake Clark,* 311.

CHAPTER 12

The Alaska Commercial Company and Trader Clark

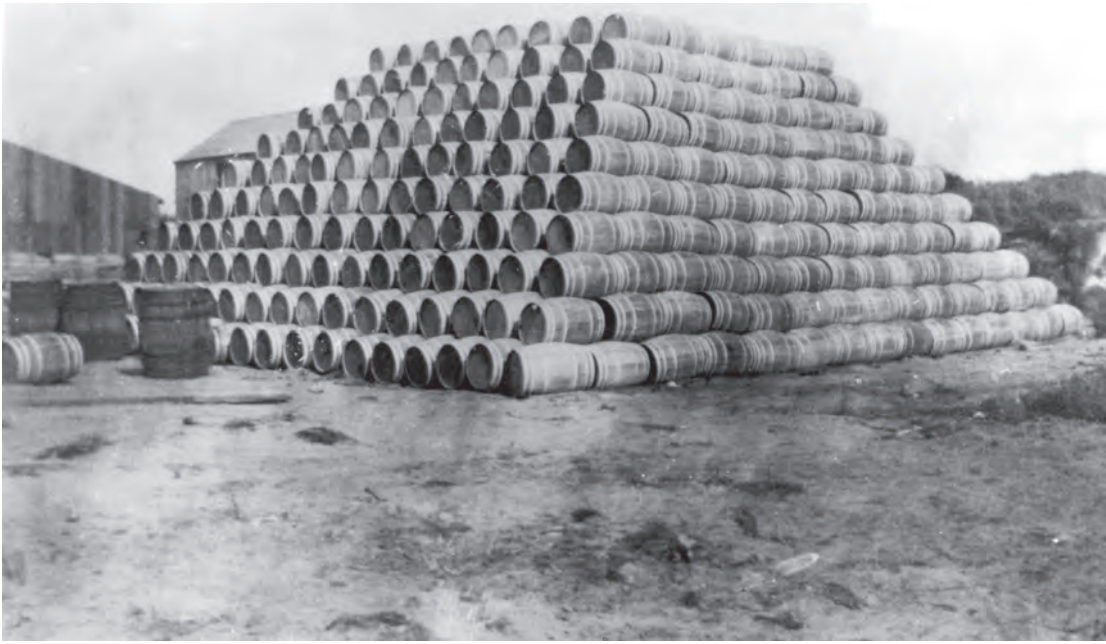
"Nushagak…on the mouth of the Nushagak River was included in the Alaska Commercial's Kuskokwim Division and was administered also from Unalaska. Once a year, a Company schooner stopped there to trade with John W. Clark. Clark…did about $10,000 a year in furs, though his was a more elaborate enterprise [than at Bethel]. He had eight employees and his own stores at Nushagak, Togiak and Iliamna."
Lois Delano Kitchener, 1954[402]

WHILE at Nushagak in late 1890 and early 1891, Albert B. Schanz observed and wrote about how John W. Clark managed and operated the fur trade from southwestern Alaska into Cook Inlet.

> The bulk of the fur trade of this section has been from the beginning of American occupation and still is to a great extent in the hands of a single man, an independent agent of the Alaska Commercial Company who is possessed of more than usual energy and ability, succeeded in extending his operations into adjoining districts, and though no sea otters frequent the waters of Bristol Bay, he managed to inspire the Eskimo denizens of the Togiak River and lake system with sufficient energy to undertake a tedious annual migration eastward to the distant shores of Cook Inlet, when they return with from 50 to 100 of the precious skins.[403]

402 Lois Delano Kitchener, *Flag Over the North: The Story of the Northern Commercial Company,* Seattle, Washington: Superior Publishing Company, 1954, 164.

403 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 253.



Wooden barrels at Diamond J Koggiung cannery or Peter M. Nelson's saltery at the mouth of the Kvichak River, circa 1914. Clark was salting salmon at Nushagak by 1879 in barrels or tierces like these which weigh 400 pounds when full of mild-cured salt salmon. Photo courtesy of the San Francisco National Historical Park, Mrs. Pete Nelson Collection, G 12.5130 m.

Schanz wrote about the status of the Bristol Bay fur trade in 1890–1891 and Clark's pivotal role in orchestrating it for the Alaska Commercial Company from Nushagak. He said the fur trade was now second in economic importance to the growing canned salmon industry. The four Nushagak Bay salmon canneries produced 100,000 to 120,000 cases of salmon annually, and their value to the region surpassed the value of the fur trade. Schanz also remarked that Clark managed sub-stations of his trading operation at a number of Bristol Bay villages through Native traders who, when traveling was optimal, brought all the furs they had amassed to the Nushagak trading post. Schanz went on to report that the Native traders usually gathered land–based furs, including ground squirrel pelts, red fox, beaver and other terrestrial species. A good number of seal skins and sea otter pelts, the latter being worth between $200 and $600 each, were collected at the Nushagak trading post. Clark annually shipped more than 4,000 furs from his post to the Alaska Commercial Company in San Francisco.[404]

* * *

404 *Ibid.*, 95–96, 253.

Prospector Hugh Rodman explored the west side of Cook Inlet and the Iliamna-Lake Clark country in 1897 and 1898, and wrote an account of his travels. On July 5, 1897, Rodman explored along the coast between Iliamna Bay and Kamishak Bay, where he met a Bristol Bay Yup'ik family traveling in one baidarka heading for Kamishak Bay, probably to hunt sea otters for trade with Clark at Nushagak.[405]

Descendants of the Riktorovs of Old Iliamna recalled that their ancestors were sea otter hunters on Cook Inlet in the late nineteenth century.[406] Some of the Riktorov brothers—Vasili, for sure, and no doubt others, such as Mikhail, Epheme, Cusma, Evon, Andrei and Alexie—also hunted sea otters. One favorite spot for sea otter hunting was the water south of Iliamna Bay around Augustine Island.[407] Mikhail was the Alaska Commercial Company agent at Old Iliamna in 1894 and 1896. He held that position with the concurrence of Clark.

A diary, probably kept by Schoechert at the Carmel Mission has an entry on March 12, 1896, on the arrival of Vasili Riktorov and his sister, "a very old lady" from Old Iliamna village.[408] They were Mikhail Riktorov's brother and sister. Schoechert said he had stayed at their home in Old Iliamna, and in return the Riktorovs would spend the night with Moravians at Carmel, stay the following evening for prayers, then move to the priest's house at Nushagak.[409]

Schanz commented on the status of walrus ivory as a trade item coming from the Nushagak Trading post in 1890–1891.

> In former times walrus ivory was an important article of trade in this district, and the huge pinnipeds were hunted by the Natives on the sand dunes of Hagemeister Island and the north side of Alaska Peninsula, but now the animals have been well-nigh exterminated.[410]

405 Hugh Rodman, "Rodman Alaska Diary," July 5, 1897, 17, unpublished manuscript at the Pratt Museum.

406 Gus Jensen, personal conversation, December 2, 1997.

407 Znamenski, *Through Orthodox Eyes,* 284, 286; Alexie Evon interviewed by Joan Townsend in Pedro Bay, Alaska, June 1973, along with Macy Hobson and Rose Hedlund, Item #33, CD #13, University of Manitoba, Elizabeth Dafoe Library, Archives & Special Collections, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

408 The very elderly woman from Old Iliamna was probably Daria Riktorov who was reported in 1909 to be about 100 years old by schoolteacher Hannah Breece. Hannah Breece, *A Schoolteacher in Old Alaska: The Story of Hannah Breece,* edited by Jane Jacobs, New York: Random House, 1995, 95.

409 Anonoymous, Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian Mission at Carmel, Alaska 1895–1896, Moravian Archives, March 12, 1896; possibly Daria Riktorov (1807?–1911?)

410 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 253.

Clark probably reached his zenith as a fur and ivory trader at Nushagak in the early 1890s. It is not known when Clark purchased the Alaska Commercial Company store at Nushagak. The exact nature of the business arrangement between Clark and the company is not known, but it appears that Clark was an independent merchant who operated like a franchisee with the Alaska Commercial Company. He sold his furs to the Alaska Commercial Company and purchased supplies from the company to stock his Nushagak trading post and outlying stations. The Mulchatna trading station was listed in some inventories for the Alaska Commercial Company in 1889 and 1891. It is believed to have been located near the confluence of the Mulchatna and Nushagak rivers and served the Yup'ik people of the upper Nushagak River as well as the Dena'ina Athabascan people living on the middle and upper Mulchatna River. The post has probably fallen into the river; archeologist James VanStone could not locate the site during a reconnaissance in the summer of 1964.[411]

A review of the surviving business ledgers from Alaska Commercial Company, housed at Stanford University's Cecil Green Library, Special Collections, found references to Clark's fur shipments. There is also some data about his will, and about his wife, Natalia, and her finances in the late 1890s. Overall, there is nothing about the Nushagak trading post's sales of general merchandise and inventory, but there are fairly comprehensive but incomplete records about furs and ivory shipped from Nushagak to San Francisco in the 1880s and 1890s. Furs gathered at the Nushagak trading post in 1883 were: land otter, sea otter, beaver, red fox, cross fox, white fox, martin, mink, brown bear, blue fox, muskrat, wolverine, wolves and seal skins.

The ledgers probably provide some of the best nineteenth century records extant on the volumes and kinds of furs and ivory shipped from Nushagak. Some of the ledgers had whole pages or parts of pages excised out and some of the missing parts covered the Nushagak trading station. The data is included here because they have apparently not been peviously published and might be of interest to land managers, biologists and other historians.

The Alaska Commercial Company used the symbol of a diamond with the first letter of the trading post to represent their far-flung stations, such as Diamond N for Nushagak. These symbols were evident in the company ledgers perused at the Green Library. Some of the other posts were Diamond K for Kodiak, Diamond O for Onalaska, also known

411 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 60; Ellanna and Balluta, *The People of Nondalton,* 65.

as Unalaska, Diamond U for Ugashik and Diamond T for Togiak. The Alaska Packers Association subsequently adopted the same designation for their Bristol Bay canneries. For example, Diamond NC was their symbol for the Clarks Point cannery, Diamond EK was for their saltery at Igushik and Diamond PHJ was the symbol for their Scandinavian cannery, where the initials stood for an early superindendent, Philip H. Johnson, who was involved with Clark in the Wood River fish trap in 1890–1891.[412]

Clark traded for sea otter pelts that were caught from Ugashik and Cook Inlet. He apparently never obtained a great number of sea otter pelts, but company records from 1886 to 1895 indicate a fairly good catch was made most years. Since sea otter furs were so profitable to the company, Clark did not need a great number to make a profit. The sea otter pelts had to be lucrative for the hunters, or they would not have made the long, 300-mile round-trip from Togiak each spring. In 1886, Clark amassed 31 sea otter pelts from the Ugashik and Nushagak posts. In 1887, he gathered another 31 sea otter skins at the Nushagak post. In 1888, he gathered 65 pelts. In 1889, Clark gathered 44 sea otter pelts. In 1890, he shipped 54 pelts. In 1891, he gathered another 51 pelts. In 1892, Clark gathered 20 sea otter skins, and in 1895, he only gathered 18 otter skins. These sea otter skins were for sales in London, demonstrating the international reach of the Alaska Commercial Company, a nineteenth-century example of a multi-national company.[413]

Alaska Commercial Company traders like Clark outfitted hunters and prospectors, and assisted government agents, such as Signal Service operator McKay and census enumerators Petroff in 1880 and Greenfield and Schanz in 1890. The company also hauled the mail to various coastal villages at no cost to the Federal government. In addition, traders frequently acted as local bankers, holding Native citizens' money and storing gold dust for propectors. The Alaska Commercial Company was also deeply involved in the creation and growth of trade in Alaska Native artifacts and curios.[414]

412 The Alaska Packers Association (APA) ulitized the diamond and initials to designate their Bristol Bay canneries and the saltery near the mouth of the Igushik River, which was misspelled by some as Egushik, thus Diamond EK. The Scandinavian cannery was known as Diamond PHJ for its superintendent, Philip H. Johnson. The Clarks Point cannery was designated Diamond NC, probably an abbreviation for Nushagak Cannery or Nushagak Clark. The Diamond J cannery was for the Kvichak River APA plant. The Diamond NN cannery was for the Naknek River cannery. The Diamond E cannery was for the Egegik River cannery and Diamond U designated the Ugashik River cannery at Pilot Point on the Alaska Peninsula.

413 Alaska Commercial Company Collection, Stanford University, Cecil Green Library, Special Collections, Ledger JL6-48, 49, 52, 60, 66, 67, 75, 76, 83, 94, 103, 108, 113, 123, 133, 143, 153, 163, 185, 191. The pages for 1895 were cut out of the ledger. In Clark's last year of life, 1896, he amassed about 450 red fox skins, 28 brown bear hides and 50 pounds of ivory at Diamond N. There were no entries from Diamond U or Diamond T. In 1897, "J.W. Clark's shipment" contained almost 1,400 red fox pelts, about 90 brown bear hides and nearly 150 beaver hides.

414 Graburn, Lee and Rousselot, *Catalogue,* 34.

Alaska Commercial Company Shipments, 1871–1897

		Ivory walrus tusks	Beaver pelts	Red fox furs	Sea otter pelts	Brown bear hides	Reindeer (caribou) hides	Seal skins
Year	**Location**	WEIGHT in pounds	QUANTITY					
1871	Diamond N (Nushagak)		2,600	1,700			188	
	Diamond T (Togiak)							
	Diamond U (Ugashik)							
1882	Diamond N		412 (276+136)	1,044 (900+144)	1			
	Diamond T	2,507 (527 pieces)						
	Diamond U							
1883	Diamond N	1,023* (210 pieces)		2300*				
	Diamond T	1,000						
	Diamond U	2,132						
1884	Diamond N							23,000
	Diamond T							
	Diamond U							
1885	Diamond N	66			18			
	Diamond T	400						
	Diamond U	520			7			
1886	Diamond N				27			
	Diamond T	332						
	Diamond U	600						
1887	Diamond N				60			
	Diamond T	650						
	Diamond U	450			3			
1888	Diamond N				45			
	Diamond T	530						
	Diamond U	1,000						

The Alaska Commercial Company was awarded an exclusive 20-year right to harvest Pribilof Island fur seals by the Federal government in 1870. The company grew extremely wealthy as a result of the monopoly in the international fur seal market. Consequenently, they had numerous bitter rivals, and, over the duration of the lease, four Congressional inves-

		Ivory walrus tusks	Beaver pelts	Red fox furs	Sea otter pelts	Brown bear hides	Reindeer (caribou) hides	Seal skins
Year	**Location**	WEIGHT in pounds	QUANTITY					
1889	Diamond N			750	54			
	Diamond T							
	Diamond U	426				17		
1890	Diamond N			10,000				
	Diamond T	525		500				
	Diamond U	450		845	51	32		
1891	Diamond N							
	Diamond T	181						
	Diamond U	300						
1892	Diamond N	77				24		
	Diamond T	196				10		
	Diamond U	200				4		
	Total, 3 posts	*473*				*38*		
1893	Diamond N		200	640		30		
	Diamond T			537		18		
	Diamond U		17	532		18		
	Total, 3 posts		*217*	*1709*		*66*		
1894	Diamond N		160	900		42		
	Diamond T			800		20		
	Diamond U		32	282		25		
1895	Diamond N	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Diamond T	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Diamond U	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1896	Diamond N	50		450		28		
	Diamond T	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Diamond U	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1897	Diamond N	150		1,400		90		
	Diamond T							
	Diamond U							

tigations were conducted on the company. But each time, the company was found innocent of any criminality. In spite of their innocence, in 1890, Congress awarded a new exclusive contract for the fur seal harvest to the company's bitter rival, the Northern Commercial Company. Without the fur seal lease, the fortunes of the Alaska Commercial Company declined.

It was perhaps in the early 1890s that Clark purchased the company's buildings at Nushagak.[415]

Writing in 1891, Reverend Sheldon Jackson assessed the Alaska Commercial Company.

> More than any purely commercial company…the Alaska Commercial Company dealt humanely with the Native population. It gave them employment and fair compensation; it provided many of its employees with…houses…and largely supported the widows and orphans of the communities where it had trading stations.[416]

John Clark's priorities, with the exception of the Wood River fish trap, seem to fit Jackson's assessment.

In the final analysis, the Alaska Commercial Company's hegemony in Alaska was analogous to the reign of a benign sovereign. Perhaps this would also be an apt characterization of John Clark's dominance in his Bristol Bay bailiwick.

415 *Ibid.*, 28–29.
416 *Ibid.*, 37.

CHAPTER 13

Clark and the Naming of Lake Clark, 1890–1891

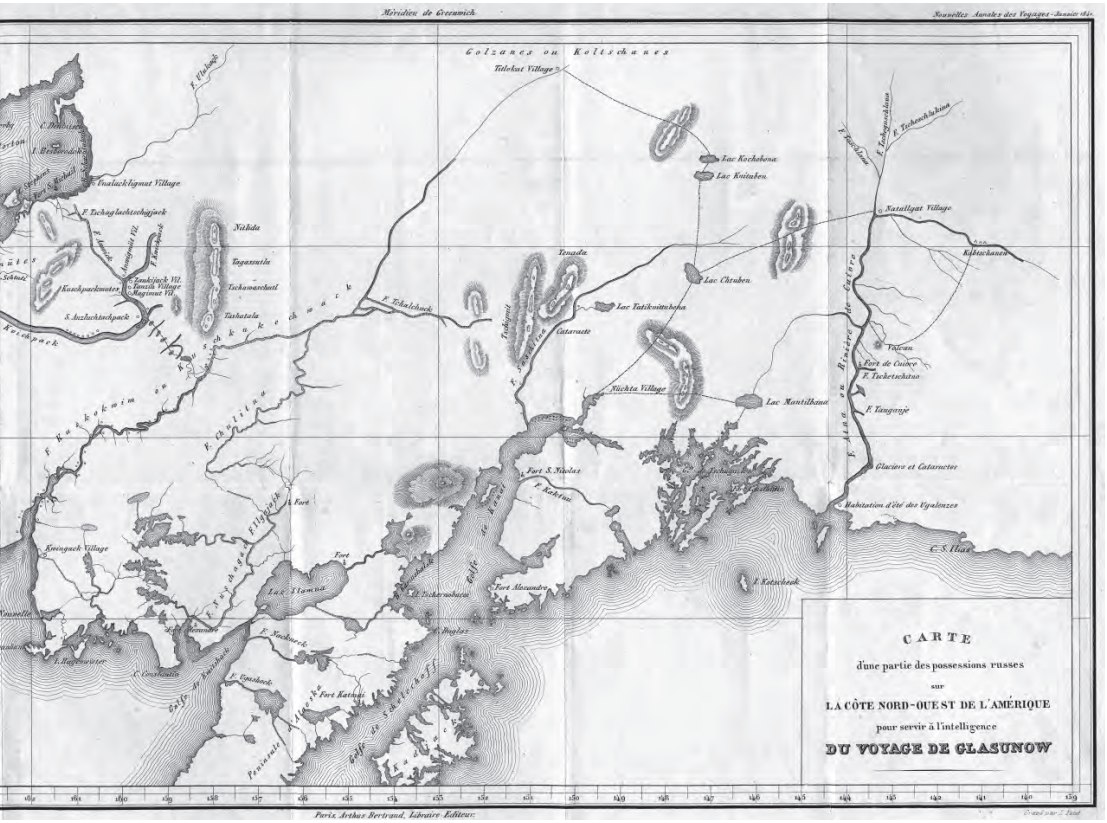
During December 1889 and January 1890 John H. Kilbuck made a dog sledding trip from the Bethel Mission to Carmel. He recorded a cautionary saying used by Nushagak Natives about winter travel. Clark would soon come to appreciate the admonition. *"Never mind, it is better to travel on the snow than under it," meaning it best to wait until storms subside before venturing forth."*[417]

IN what would prove to be a *momentous* association for Clark, Albert B. Schanz, a 27-year-old reporter-historian-astronomer for the New York City-based *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* arrived at Nushagak on October 11, 1890. He arrived by baidarka, accompanying census enumerator William C. Greenfield, who had been working on the Eleventh Census on the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. Schanz stayed at Carmel with the Moravians and struck up a close friendship with Frank and Mary Wolff. While at Carmel, he decided to launch a sledding trip in search of a large, undocumented lake north of Iliamna Lake. Schoechert wrote that Schanz was "… a man of much information and is a sociable gentleman."[418]

Ivan Petroff had first visited Nushagak in 1880, while he was collecting information for the 1880 U.S. Census, and he returned to Nushagak for the 1890 census. He hoped to travel up the Nushagak River and make a portage to the Holitna and Kuskokwim Rivers, but the current was too swift in late May, and his local guides and baidarka paddlers would not complete the trip. Petroff returned to Nushagak and asked Frank Wolff if he would undertake the census in the Nushagak, Togiak, Ugashik districts and apparently also in the Iliamna districts. Wolff agreed. Petroff departed

417 *The Moravian,* February 5, 1890.

418 *The Moravian,* May 31, 1891; the following chapter is a paraphrase of Schanz's "Our Alaska Expedition" that appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* in the fall of 1891.



Map 4 A map based on Andrei K. Glazunov's travels through interior Russian America in 1833–1834. The fort on the north side of the Newhalen River where it enters Iliamna Lake is probably that of Eremy Rodionov, a Russian fur trader, circa 1818. Lake Clark is the large lake northeast of Iliamna Lake. It is erroneously shown to lie adjacent to Mt. Iliamna. Carte d'une partie des possessions russes sur la cote nord-oest de li Amerique pour serer a' l' intelligence de voyage de Glasunow, grave par L. Petit. From *Nouvelle Annals des Voyages.* Paris: Gide fils, 1819-1870; Jan. 1841. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum.

Nushagak onboard the *Albatross*, with Captain Tanner, bound for the mouth of the Kuskokwim to continue his census activities by other means. On June 20, 1890, Wolff went to Ekuk to take the census. On July 2, Wolff traveled by boat to Lake Aleknagik to conduct the census. On July 21, he took the steamer *Arctic* to the Naknek River and Paugvik village, and on August 11, Wolff went to Clarks Point to census the Nushagak Canning Company cannery.[419] However, in spite of his promise to Petroff, Wolff hoped to find someone else to undertake the arduous winter sledding trip up the Nushagak River to the Iliamna country to census the upriver villages. With Schanz's unexpected arrival at Nushagak, Wolff found the right man to complete the census, as the reporter was hunting a big story.

419 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak*, 15; *The Moravian,* March 4 and March 11, 1891.

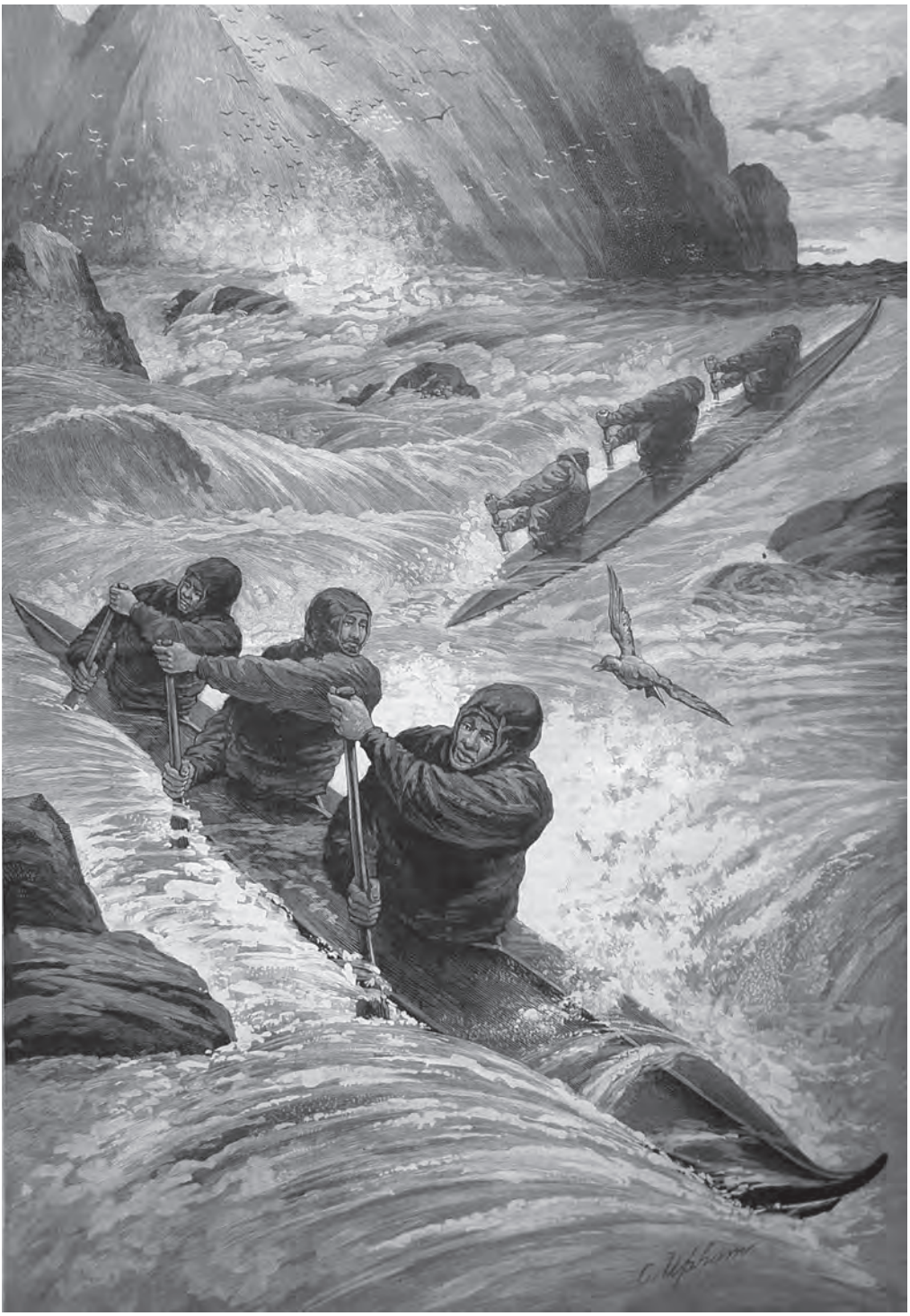
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper was a weekly national tabloid with wide influence throughout the United States. In a time when the Federal government was not supporting exploration of the largely unmapped Alaska district, the newspaper stepped into the void and financed exploration to furnish exciting copy and sell more newspapers.

Schanz wrote a glowing profile of Clark, offering tantalizing hints about his background and describing his character and qualities.

> At Nushagak, in charge of the trading post, there has lived for nearly a score of years a man whose personal qualifications for a worldly career, whose reading, breeding, manly characteristics, and genial traits have been a loss to the world for all that time. I refer to John W. Clark, the agent at this point for the land fur industry of the Alaska Commercial Company. An excellent portrait of this gentleman will be found in this issue. His object in devoting himself to such a hermit life has not been material gain, but his peculiar, thoughtful qualities of mind have given him that taste for the solitude and the natural grandeur of Alaska which has been displayed by many other brilliant men who have visited that mysterious Territory and have left it only to return to it. I was received by Mr. Clark with the greatest hospitality and, much to my surprise, was introduced by him to a study containing shelves replete with all the masters of ancient and modern literature. A few minutes conversation revealed to me the man, had not his countenance and bearing shown me his excellent traits.[420]

Schanz had been traveling in Southeastern Alaska, the Yukon Territory and interior Alaska since April 1890, with explorer H. E. Wells and others, sponsored by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. He became ill, and, on June 22, 1890, Wells left him to recover near Forty

420 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* September 26, 1891.



Yup'ik guides take Schanz and Greenfield to Nushagak in baidarkas near Kulukak Point in 1890.
Courtesy of the Alaska Collection, Anchorage Public Library.

Mile Creek at John E. McGrath's boundary survey camp on the upper Yukon River.[421]

Travel in western Alaska was extremely difficult in the nineteenth century, and, therefore, it will be useful to digress to document how Schanz and Wells made their respective ways from the interior to Nushagak. After separating from Schanz, Wells and his small party continued to explore interior Alaska during the summer of 1890. Meanwhile Schanz gradually recovered his health at the surveyor's camp, and, on August 13, with one companion, descended the Yukon River in a whip sawed plank skiff. On the lower river they were picked up by a small trading steamer and taken to the Alaska Commercial Company trading post at St. Michael.

While at St. Michael, Schanz met William C. Greenfield. Both men wanted to leave Alaska for the winter, but by early September, no more ships were expected to call for the year, so Schanz and Greenfield decided to hire Yup'ik guides and make a 900-mile baidarka trip down the coast of western Alaska to Nushagak, then to Kodiak, where ships headed south would still be calling. The two had four Yup'ik guides and two baidarkas, with Schanz and Greenfield in the middle hatches of each skin boat. They left St. Michael on September 11, and, after a difficult journey, arrived at Clark's trading post on October 11. A year later Schanz described some of the challenges they faced.

> September 11, and a nasty, murky, rainy day.... It was certainly late to start on such an undertaking, and before the month's trials were over, we had had many a bitter encounter with storm and tide-wave, and with the advance ice-crusts and snow-flakes of the impending winter. Nights, black nights, in our frail barques on the shoreless Kuskokwim; wet, cheerless nights, cramped in our hatches and fighting the southwest hurricane; tempestuous and sleepless nights on the open Behring Sea, and hungry, soggy nights ashore, huddled with aching vitals before a feeble fire of dwarf willow—all haunt me still.[422]

421 E. H. Wells, *Our Alaska Expedition,* June 27, 1891.

422 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* September 26, 1891.

It is likely that their guides took Schanz and Greenfield from Goodnews Bay upriver on a portage into the Togiak River drainage to Togiak village. Next the guides would have paddled out of Togiak Bay and down the coast around into Kulukuk Bay, upstream into the Igushik River drainage, and downstream to the western shore of Nushagak Bay. Schanz did not give many details about the final leg of his journey to Nushagak but Wells left an apt account that is worthy of inclusion here.

> The traveled route from Goodnews Bay, Alaska to Nushagak is about three hundred miles in length, and follows a network of intersecting small streams and lakes. So complete is the chain of waters that overland portaging of one's effects is only necessary in three places, and then for a distance of less than a [few] miles.[423]

Aside from, perhaps, Wells' inflation of the mileage, his characterization of the portages was accurate. Wells explored Alaska's interior all summer and did not arrive at St. Michael until navigation had closed, so he traveled by baidarka to Nushagak and hoped to get to Kodiak via the Katmai Trail to find a ship to take him south. Wells left St. Michael on September 21 and traveled with two guides in a three-hatch baidarka. Later, he hired other guides to travel up the Yukon River to Russian Mission, where they arrived on October 1. Wells and his crew had to act quickly if they were to avoid freeze-up.

On October 2, Wells and his two guides left for the portage to the Kuskokwim River, and by October 16 they had left the mouth of the Kuskokwim headed for Goodnews Bay. Wells arrived at the Bristol Bay Packing Company cannery on the west side of Nushagak Bay near Kanakanak, the Bradford cannery, in late October 1890. Wells was hosted by Bradford winter watchman Frank Krause. While awaiting winter weather to freeze a section of the lower Nushagak River so he could cross over to Clark's trading post at Nushagak village on the east side of the bay, Wells made arrangements with two fishermen staying at the Scandinavian cannery, near present-day Dillingham, to use their dog sleds and teams to travel to Katmai village over the Katmai Trail, where he hoped to obtain ship passage to Kodiak and on to San Francisco.

423 Wells, *Our Alaska Expedition,* June 27, 1891.

On December 18, Wells was finally reunited with Schanz at Clark's fish house, after a separation of approximately six months. The two explorers decided to pursue different routes to Katmai Bay. Wells would travel directly across the Alaska Peninsula to Katmai village on the Pacific coast, while Schanz would go in search of a large, unmapped lake north of Iliamna Lake, censusing villages along the way, before crossing the Alaska Peninsula to Katmai. By the time Wells and Schanz returned to the outside world, they would have been incommunicado for eight months, a major problem for newspaper reporters. Wells was full of news he wanted to get off his chest detailing all the sights and events of the Alaska wilderness he had experienced. He wanted to write about his adventures for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* and he was in a hurry to get to San Francisco and the telegraph office so he could send his story to the newspaper's editor in New York City. Schanz also was eager to report his explorations, but first he wanted to document the northern source of Alaska's largest lake, Iliamna, or in the Dena'ina language Nila Vena, "islands lake."[424] While at Clark's fish house Wells had time to assess the state of affairs in Nushagak Bay, and his portrait of the bay in late 1890 was very concise.

> Nushagak is one of the principal canning and trading stations on the Behring Sea coast of Alaska. There are four salmon-packing establishments on the inlet, Trader Clarke's store, a Moravian mission and school, and four large Native villages, the whole being bunched within an area of six square miles.[425]

The canneries were the Bradford at Kanakanak, the Scandinavian near Chogiung (present-day Dillingham), Arctic Packing at Kanulik and Nushagak Canning Company at Stugarok, or Clarks Point. The four large villages were Nushagak, Kanulik, Ekuk and Igushik or Kanakanak. This was the extent of the major population and commercial hub in the Bristol Bay region at of the close of 1890. The salmon canneries drew local people from more remote locations to the shores of Nushagak Bay, mostly during the commercial fishing season, but also some upriver people put down

424 Karen E. Evanoff, *Dena'ina Elnena: A Celebration,* Anchorage: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010, 133.

425 Wells, *Our Alaska Expedition,* September 19, 1891.

roots and stayed around settlements near the four canneries. In 1890, Nushagak village had a population of 268 people and was the largest village in the region.[426]

Wells and two companions stayed at Clark's trading post from December 18, 1890, to January 28, 1891, when they departed for Katmai. While at Clark's, Wells built a 12-foot-long dog sled of oak, ash and pine, clad with metal runners, which he claimed capable of carrying some six hundred pounds. The Wells party consisted of three sleds with cannery men and Yup'ik guides and mushers. Three other sleds traveled part way to the Katmai Trail with them. The Wells party pressed into service nearly all the available sled dogs at Nushagak and the Scandinavian cannery, some 65 dogs in total. One interesting bit of camp accouterment that Wells had was a three-burner, coal-oil stove with five gallons of oil to heat his tent. Wells said "the stove proved to be a treasure."[427]

Since there was no room at Clark's for Schanz to stay, he accepted an invitation from Wolff to stay at Carmel. While living at Carmel, Schanz frequently visited Clark at his fish house, and they discussed winter dog sled travel in Alaska. Once the fall snow stayed on the ground, Schanz began to purchase sled dogs from surrounding Yup'ik villages on Nushagak Bay. Wolff made a dog sled for Schanz, and soon the latter was training his team for a winter sledding trip to the headwaters of the Bristol Bay basin.

Schanz wrote about the genesis of the sledding trip that would lead to his naming a large, stunning Alaska lake for his friend John W. Clark.

> One evening, when my team and I were guests of Mr. Clark's hospitable board and fish-house, my trader host happened to mention, in a comfortable conversation over a cup of tea, that he had repeatedly heard, through trading parties from the interior, of a large lake north of Lake Iliamna, and the real source of the latter's water supply. The hint was enough.…My first object was to persuade Mr. Clark to accompany me on a search for this great lake, a proposition to which he did not prove himself at all averse. He required, however, a few weeks' time to consider.…When the

426 *Ibid.*, Orth, *Dictionary,* 712.
427 Wells, *ibid.*

> allotted time was over, however, Mr. Clark signified his willingness, almost anxiety, to join me and he made the welcome announcement that he would furnish two teams, and that one of the two would be in charge of Innokente Shishkin, a young Russian residing at the post.

Wolff said the sled was 11 feet long, 20 inches wide, 25 inches high and weighed 75 pounds. It had runners of barrel hoop-iron and could carry 250 pounds of gear. Schanz made his own dog harnesses during the long winter nights. He wrote of extremely cold temperatures occurred at Nushagak in January, including a reading of -58 degrees Farenheit, thus assuring that the trail along frozen rivers and lakes would be sound. Wolff wrote on January 26, 1891, about Schanz's upcoming trip north to Iliamna.

> To the north or northeast of the lake [Iliamna] is said to be a lake [the future Lake Clark] which has not been mapped yet. He will survey and locate it properly for his map. As I have not completed the census work in that direction, he will do some of the work for me which will save me considerable traveling this winter.[428]

The Leslie expedition lead by Schanz and Clark departed Nushagak on January 29, 1891, one day after Wells left for the Katmai Trail. The party consisted of 3 sleds, 33 dogs, and 7 people: Clark, Schanz, Shishkin, and 4 Yup'ik men from Kanulik to drive the dogs and do camp chores—Anokhtoknagok or Vasutka, Apangesin, Tabai and Achakhpaoluk. Clark's Yup'ik name was Angaiok, meaning "partner." Schanz's was Ingokhluk, meaning perhaps "bad medicine." Innokente Shishkin's nickname was Kossaiyarok, or "Little Cossack."[429]

428 *The Moravian,* March 11, 1891; Schanz, op. cit.,, September 29, 1891. At least three Russian explorers had already mapped the location of the large lake north of Iliamna by the name of "Kidzhik" (Korsakovskiy) in 1818. Ivan Vasilev mapped the lake in 1829. The Creole Andrei Glazunov's map from his explorations covering the Bering Strait and the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers in 1830–1834 documents the existence of the lake that would be named Lake Clark by A. B. Schanz in 1891. The General Manager of the Russian-America Company, F. P. von Wrangell, wrote an account of the Dena'ina in 1839 based on the travels of Vasilev and Glazunov, and he called the lake north of Iliamna "Kyzzhakh." Russian Naval explorer Lavrentiy Zagoskin traveled through the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers in 1842 and 1844, and his map also includes the lake Schanz named after John W. Clark. Lynch, *Qizhjeh,* 8–9; Vasilev, *Russian Exploration,* edited by VanStone, 76; Unrau, *Lake Clark,* draft, 104–107; Lavrentiy A. Zagoskin, *Lieutenant Zagoskin's Travels In Russian America 1842–1844,* edited by Henry N. Michael. Toronto: The Arctic Institute of North America, University of Toronto Press, 1967, 359.

429 Father Victor Nick, personal conversation, February 22, 2011. Yup'ik linguist, Marie Meade, believes that in the

Schanz said they were hauling some 1,000 pounds of supplies spread among the 3 sleds. The contents of the sleds were encased in heavy-duty drill. Their outfit consisted of a canvas tent, sleeping bags made of marmot skins and bedding weighing 13 pounds, partly made of brown bear hides and woven grass mats. Personal items included 3 extra pairs of mukluks, heavy fur clothing in the form of a ground squirrel parky, a fur cap, wool pants, extra underclothes, a union-suit, lamb's wool shirt, woolen socks and dried grass in place of insoles for their mukluks.

Schanz bade farewell to his Moravian hosts, Wolff and Schoechert, and left Carmel with a Yup'ik sled driver, Tabai, driving the dogs down the bluff at Carmel, to meet Clark and Shishkin and the rest of the party on Rohlffs Slough. Clark's sled had an American flag waving from a short staff. Above them, on the bluff, people from the mission, Kanulik and the Arctic Packing Packing Company cannery waved and fired a few guns. Clark signaled his leader, Kamukhpak or "Big Dog" and the "three teams, howling with energy, plunged into the snow-drifts and galloped northward."

Three people drove the dog sleds while the other members of the party walked in snowshoes, as the sleds were reserved for hauling supplies, unless the trail was smooth and well packed. Traveling on the edge of the frozen, but still tidal, Nushagak River was rough. A chaotic mass of icebergs and snow-drifts made the going "positively appalling," wrote Schanz. They only made about 10 miles the first day and camped near Lewis Point on the lower Nushagak River.[430]

The next morning it was sleeting and snowing. While trying to get a recalcitrant dog into harness Schanz was badly bitten on the forearm. Schanz drew his revolver and was going to kill the sled dog, but his sled driver Tabai interceded and the dog was spared. It eventually became a fine sled dog, but not before biting Tabai as well. After three days of travel, they had made fewer than 50 miles. Schanz's injured arm became swollen and remained useless for a number of days.

On February 1, improved trail conditions enabled the party to reach Kokwok village, just downstream from present-day Ekwok. In a barabara owned by one of Clark's friends, a man by the name of Pikhluyok, they had a tea party with 28 people squeezed into the small, semi-subterranean house. Schanz conducted the census. Clark translated Schanz's

Bristol Bay dialect Clark's nickname suggests a "partner." Both Ms. Meade and Yup'ik translator-interpreter, Monica Sheldon, think Schanz's moniker suggests "bad medicine." Matthew O'Leary, e-mail message, March 21, 2011.

430 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* October 3, 1891.

A.B. Schanz descending an ice terrace on the Katmai Trail in 1891 as he nears Katmai village at the conclusion of his sledging trip in which he named Lake Clark for John W. Clark. H-511 courtesy of New York Public Library, Print Collection, Mirian and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs.

questions (probably into Russian), Vatutka translated them into Yup'ik, and the answers came back to Schanz in reverse order. Kokwok had 46 residents. Kokwok was known to have a very large *qasgi*—a men's ceremonial hub, workshop and social hub house in Yup'ik, known as *kashim* in Russian. The *qasgi* was made of white spruce planks, was 5 inches thick, 3 feet wide and 50 feet long, and was the focal point of all village ceremonies, particularly winter dances.[431]

Before leaving Kokwok, the Leslie expedition picked up a guide who claimed to be familiar with the large lake north of Iliamna. His name was Tokcichoakh; they called him Kokwok, but the "facetious Clark" turned that into "Cock-o'-the-walk." In addition, the expedition purchased some waterproof mukluks made of king salmon skins, and more dried and fresh fish.[432]

On February 10, at the next upriver village, Agivavik, just south of the present-day village of New Stuyahok, they met a fellow who greeted them with a very long-winded speech about nothing in particular. Clark finally spoke emphatically in Yup'ik to the man. "Here you! You shut up! You've talked enough." Schanz recorded the man's reply to Clark. "Yes," replied the chap with more grace and diplomacy than any civilized bore I ever heard of. "I was just about to remark that I had said all I had to say. I'm through." The census taking at Agivavik did not go as smoothly as it had at Kokwok, because some of the people did not understand the point of the census and grew suspicious and difficult. The travelers were only able to purchase enough dogfish for one day.

Before leaving the Nushagak River for its remote northeastern tributary, the Mulchatna, the Leslie expedition weathered a 2-day blizzard and passed the village of Akokpak, on or before February 5. On February 6, they arrived at Stuyahok village, 35 miles up the Mulchatna River, the Nushagak's largest tributary. There were only six people living at the village, and they had very little food. One of Schanz's dogs died at the village, and they were able to obtain a replacement by trading tea, sugar, flour and bacon.

A blizzard held the party in a small crowded barabara at Stuyahok. Schanz wrote the Natives on the Bering Sea coast referred to this kind of storm as a:

431 VanStone, *Eskimos of the Nushagak,* 125.
432 *Ibid.,* October 10, 1891.

> purga …It is a storm of high wind and intense cold, yet accompanied by a heavy fall of sharp, needle-like snow crystals. No living being could exist an hour exposed to the full force of such a storm, and later on the trip we had to 'run for it' repeatedly. During our delay at Stuyahok those who had been frost-bitten suffered intense pain, the respective parts affected beginning to blister and in some instances to suppurate. My own nose and cheeks were disfigured by large blisters, giving me an appearance as if scalded. Mr. Clark's facial beauty was marred similarly.[433]

When they resumed their journey northeast up the Mulchatna River, the guide Kokwok said that the 4-days' supply of dogfish remaining would be sufficient to reach the lake north of Iliamna. Schanz reported the party's own food was running low, because they had not correctly estimated the amount of food they would consume working in the cold weather. In addition, they had given away a considerable amount of food to the hungry people at Stuyahok village. The travelers did not have enough fat in the form of lard and bacon for the coming days of tough sledding they anticipated and would suffer as a consequence.

About 50 miles up the Mulchatna River, the expedition turned east at the confluence with the Kokhtuli, Yup'ik for "forest river." Before leaving the Kokhtuli River for the Kogiukhtuli Creek, Yup'ik for "swan river," a second sled dog died, the sled dog recently acquired at Stuyahok, when a large wolf suddenly attacked and dragged him into the timber along the creek. Later Clark and Schanz found the remains of the partially devoured dog half a mile from the trail.

Schanz remarked on the exceptional campcraft skills and all around competence of the Yup'ik men in winter-camping, calling them, "splendid fellows in a camp." He said they were skilled with axes and very attentive to his needs.

> Not one of them ever dreamed of looking to his own comfort on our trip until Mr. Clark and myself had been most carefully attended to.…

433 *Ibid.*, October 10, 1891.

Upon arrival at the camping place there is not a moment's delay. Hardly have the sleds stopped before two men are in the woods with their axes making the chips fly. While the guide with his snow-shoes is stamping down the snow for the tent floor, the fourth man has unhitched the dogs and unloaded the tent, while the fifth has taken the steel pick and is laboriously [making a hole] through six feet of river ice in order to get at some fresh water. The dogs, as soon as unhitched, have curled themselves up into wooly balls, distributed about the camp in indiscriminate heaps, and taking a nap before supper. Everything goes like clock-work. The first chopper has cut down an evergreen and has trimmed off an armful of spruce boughs for bedding just as the guide has finished stamping down the tent floor. The tent is up in a jiffy, and at the same time the chopper number two has "packed" an enormous dry log into camp and has a roaring fire going just in time for number four, who is coming up from the river with five camp kettles of water. The two men at the tent spread grass mats over the layer of spruce boughs, and bear-skins and sleeping sacks make a soft couch for the traveler.…all Messrs. Clark and Shishkin and myself would have to do was crawl into the tent and light our pipes until the bowls of boiling black tea were brought on with a mess of lobscouse. The boys would now remove our wet fur boots so as to dry them before morning, and then they would look to their own shelter and food. Three of them would look to the construction of a wind-break and to the feeding of the fire, while the rest fed the dogs and covered the sleds so that the dogs and marauding wolves might not get at the provisions. Then, after supper, we would crawl into the sleeping-bags, leaving our fur-capped heads free, and smoke and spin yarns,

> while the Esquimau boys in their windbreak sang droning songs and mended their clothing and footgear, and finally we would pull in our heads like snails, and snore until, in the morning, we would find our breath had congealed on our eyebrows into icicles six inches long.[434]

By February 11, the Leslie expedition was down to one more day of dogfish and very little food for human consumption. All they had was a bit of bacon, some hard tack and tea. Thoughts of his first year in Russian America must have intruded into Clark's mind, as he considered the similarly lean circumstances he faced being hungry with the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1866–1867.

The travelers were ready to leave the Swan River and Nushagak drainage to mush over low rolling hills and countless frozen ponds as they went east into the narrow south fork of the Chulitna River which ran into the large lake in the Iliamna-Kvichak River drainage. Chulitna is a Dena'ina word that means "flows out river."[435] The change of language from Yup'ik to Dena'ina for the geographical places the party encountered signified they were passing through an area of cultural and linguistic interface. An invisible cultural boundary line had been crossed. The Nushagak Yup'ik men did not know the Dena'ina lands as well as their own.

When Clark asked Kokwok if they were on the correct stream to reach *the lake*, he was given an evasive reply. The dog food ran out, and their own food ran dangerously low. A big dogfight ensued after one of the dogs stole the last of the Yup'ik men's salt salmon. The next day, two more sled dogs died, and a third, Clark's leader, was sick and unable to work. All the men shared the last of their food, hard tack, certainly far from the optimal trail food of king salmon strips. It was 38 degrees below zero, and a strong north wind was blowing stinging snow. The hard labor of dog sledding uphill and downhill caused the men to perspire profusely, freezing their clothes "hard as rock," whenever they ceased their physical exertions. In spite of everyone running along on snowshoes, nearly everyone had varying degrees of frostbite. Clark froze his face very badly, and he was to be troubled with it for the duration of the trip. Schanz's toenails fell out, and his right-hand-man Tabai's right heel was severely frostbitten. Apangesin's

434 *Ibid.*, October 24, 1891.
435 Evanoff, *Dena'ina*, 129.

An ilustration that appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* captioned: "The Sledge Expedition—A Halt For Rest." Schanz is likely standing third from left and Clark stands second from the left, Shishkin could be the man standing on the left.
H-2016 courtesy of New York Public Library, Print Collection, Mirian and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs.

face had been badly wind blown, and it looked like raw meat. For a time it appeared they were all too frozen to make camp, but through toughness and the will to survive, they were finally able to make camp. Once the storm let up, they broke camp and meandered east along the sinuous Chulitna River ending their day (February 13) camped between a chain of three connected lakes that they called in "bitter facetiousness" "Brown," "Jones" and "Robinson." The Dena'ina name for the lakes is Nikabuna Lakes, or "big island lake." They were clearly in the drainage of a large river and they thought it would surely lead them to their destination.[436]

During the night, one of the sled dogs stole a pair of fish skin muklucks, and a dog fight erupted. Next morning, one of Shishkin's dogs had run off, and Clark's leader Kamukhpak was on his last legs, having

436 Porter, Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* 93.

eaten salt salmon and a tarred, red-leaded [painted] rope. The great leader could no longer pull the sled, nor could he keep up with the expedition by trotting behind, so Clark allowed him to ride in the basket of a sled for a time. However, when the sled became mired in a snowdrift, Clark ordered the dog off the sled, and he fell behind and was never seen again.

On February 14, Schanz reported the situation.

> Things had now grown desperate, and the wearisome struggle along the intricate bends of the Chulitna was wearing us out. Our food supply consisted of only a few rations of hard-tack… [and] tea. Mr. Clark and I…climbed an eminence to reconnoiter, and discovered…we were making four miles to gain one.[437]

437 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* October 31, 1891.

Clark and Schanz spoke with their guide Kokwok, and he confessed to being out of his element and did not know the Chulitna River country, much less the location of the large lake they sought. Exasperated, Clark said, "If we are driven to extremities I know who will be the first in the soup." The beleaguered travelers now relied on common sense and thought they discerned a "mountain-pot" that likely held the large lake they sought to the east, against an unbroken backdrop of snowy peaks, the Chigmit Mountains. Schanz wrote, "Mr. Clark and I snow-shoed it ahead ourselves, so as to have no more dilly-dallying, and it was this determined undertaking which undoubtedly saved our lives." The night of February 14, Clark, Schanz and Shishkin decided that if they did not reach the unmapped lake by the following day, they would select the twelve strongest dogs and two healthiest Yup'ik men and send them on an express to the Iliamna villages to obtain food and more dogs.

On February 15, the weather was a bit warmer and the trail over the frozen Chulitna was very good. The dogs had newfound energy and pulled the sleds briskly over the smooth trail. The river wound its way through a wide, wind-swept, grassy flat, and the party sensed an imminent change of scenery. The bedraggled Leslie expedition went around a bend in the river and passed through a little rocky canyon and emerged at the mouth of the Chulitna River facing out on the wide frozen lake north of Iliamna.

> Eureka…spread out before us, was the great white expanse of Lake Clark. For so I named this beautiful expanse of water, in honor of my traveling companion. Clark and I shook hands in mutual congratulations, and our boys formed a smiling group in spite of their sore trials.[438]

The travelers did not know where the Dena'ina village on Lake Clark was located. But they proceeded east in hopes of striking a sled trail or meeting someone who could direct them to the village. Soon the expedition encountered a young Dena'ina dressed in furs and jeans. None of the Yup'iks understood the language of the young man, but Clark said the Russian word for dried fish, "Eukuli, eukuli?" The Dena'ina replied, "Mala"—Russian for, "Not much." The young man led the way eastward with the Leslie expedition in tow. Late in the afternoon of February 15,

438 *Ibid.*

they arrived at what Schanz called Nikhkak but which was actually historic Kijik village, on the north side of Lake Clark, across from and north of present-day Port Alsworth, where they were greeted by the chief and the entire village.

Clark, Schanz and party were treated hospitably by the Kijik chief who was wearing cowhide boots and a swallow-tailed coat. He told the visitors he had made several trading trips to Cook Inlet, including to Knik village, up Knik Arm above present-day Anchorage. Their dogs received their first dogfish in five days. The party rested, ate and recuperated from their arduous journey. They continued to take it easy on February 16. Schanz wrote he took a few photographs around the village, but no photographs from the expedition are known to exist. They also conducted a census of Kijik and another nearby village they called Kilchikh, and counted 40 souls. (However, the Russian Orthodox Church census for 1890 listed the Kijik population as 137.[439])

Schanz reported that he and Clark hoped to explore the easterly part of Lake Clark, but because they had so little food for themselves and their dogs, they opted to stay at Kijik and learn as much as possible about the geography of the area from the chief and leave the following day for a trading post on Iliamna Lake where they hoped to replenish their larder. Writing later in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* Schanz spread erroneous information about Lake Clark's eastern end, observing it, "washes the feet of the giants Redoubt and Iliamna."[440] In fact the eastern end of Lake Clark is about thirty miles west from either of those strato-volcanoes. Schanz did get it correct when he likened the Chigmit Mountains to "the Switzerland of Alaska."[441] Schanz wrote the first documented description of Lake Clark in the American press when the Leslie expedition travels and adventures were serialized in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and circulated throughout the nation the summer and fall of 1891.

> Lake Clark is the typical Alaskan mountain lake, for it has all the characteristics of an Alaskan lake in a marked degree. It is very long, very narrow, very irregular, and very deep, and is surrounded

439 Ellanna and Balluta, *The People of Nondalton,* 66–68.

440 The eastern end of Lake Clark is called Little Lake Clark. The distance from the eastern most part of Little Lake Clark to the summit of Redoubt Volcano is 29 miles. The distance from the same location to the summit of Iliamna Volcano is 33 miles.

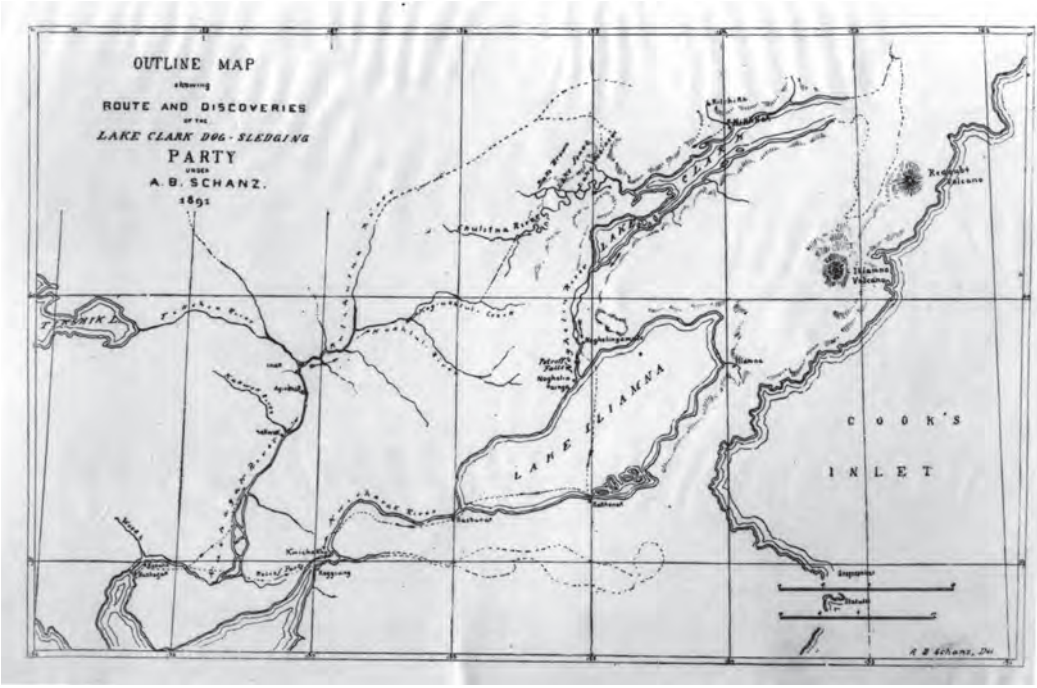
441 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 93, 92.

> on all sides by high mountains. It is nearly seventy miles long; it is at its widest point hardly ten miles wide; it is crooked and full of bays and bights; we tried in vain to find its bottom, and the mountains hemming it in tower from five thousand feet to an altitude of twelve thousand. The general direction of the lake is about northeast and southwest, and it extends from the base of the range bordering Cook's Inlet to the 155th meridian.…It has five noteworthy affluents, and its outlet was found to be a river of great volume, running generally almost due south, and supplying Iliamna with its vast store of crystal water.[442]

Schanz also documented the first reference to the Telaquana Trail, an ancient Dena'ina route running north from Kijik to other villages at Telaquana Lake in the Kuskokwim drainage. Schanz referred to the Dena'ina as the Kilchikh Indians and noted the similarities of their language to the Kenai Indians on Cook Inlet. Importantly, Schanz noted the Kenai name for Lake Clark was Kilchikh-Vonn, which is the phonetic spelling for Qizhjeh Vena or Kijik and meaning "place people gather lake." This is a testament to the fact of the prodigous annual red salmon migration to the Kijik area and to the extensive white spruce and birch forest resources. Large permanent villages were occupied at various locations on the Kijik River delta for several hundred years before the party arrived on Lake Clark. Kijik is considered to be the largest intact grouping of prehistoric Athabascan villages in Alaska, and is now part of the Kijik National Historic Landmark.[443]

The Kijik people gave Clark and Schanz directions to the southern end of Lake Clark and the Newhalen River, which drains the lake's water into Iliamna Lake. On February 17, after 19 days on the trail, the Leslie expedition departed Kijik and headed south over the frozen Lake Clark. They had traded for 100 dried red salmon, which they hoped would nourish both man and beast until they found additional succor at one of the Iliamna villages.[444]

442 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 7, 1891.
443 Lynch, *Qizhjeh,* 6–10.
444 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 93; Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 7, 1891.



Map 5 Schanz's map, based on his trip of 1890–1891, in which he bestowed the name Lake Clark on the large tributary lake north of Iliamna Lake. Notice the tentative t-shaped border at the northeastern end of Lake Clark, lying next to Iliamna Volcano and Mount Redoubt, that Schanz created without groundtruthing. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

About seven miles south of Kijik village, a point protrudes to the northeast and Schanz named it Cape Shishkin in honor of Innokenty Shishkin. The travelers chopped a hole through seven feet of ice on Lake Clark and made a futile effort to sound the depth of the lake. Their reel only went down to 606 feet, and it had still not hit bottom. The deepest recorded depth in Lake Clark is 860 feet. The surface of Lake Clark is about 260 feet above the level of Bristol Bay (Bering Sea), which lies approximately 140 miles to the southwest. The depth of Bristol Bay near shore is about 240 feet. Schanz stated that the bottom of Lake Clark was deeper than the bottom of the Bering Sea near coastal Bristol Bay.

That night the party camped near a wide, pond-like part of the upper Newhalen River known as Nundaltinshla or "little lake that extends across."[445] Wolves howled during the night, and, in the morning, one of Shishkin's sled dogs was missing.

445 Evanoff, *Dena'ina,* 126.

On February 18, the expedition traveled down the Newhalen River valley toward Iliamna Lake and arrived at a Yup'ik village called Noghelingamute. Here they obtained a small amount of food and learned that the lower river was impassable because of tremendous rapids. They also enlisted a bright young man by the name of Stapinum to guide them over the Newhalen Portage to Iliamna Lake. Schanz reported their weakened condition. "Our progress was exceeding slow, for nearly everyone was crippled, and we had lost so many dogs with which we had started only twenty-five were left, and many of these, poor fellows, staggered along with bleeding feet."

On the way to Iliamna, the expedition was led past the great rapids on the lower Newhalen River. Schanz called the falls "one of nature's gems of beauty, but in our condition not even the charms of such a scene could awaken adequate appreciation. I made a memorandum of Petroff Falls, (after Ivan Petroff).''[446]

On February 19, Schanz and Clark told their guide Stapinum that he could return to his Newhalen River village, as they were almost to the north shore of Iliamna Lake. Schanz said the lake "had been visited previously by my companions," although he did not say that Clark had ever seen the great Alaska lake Iliamna himself.

At 10 A.M., the party began their laborious sledding "over the corrugated surface of Lake Iliamna, a series of snow-drifts, sometimes hard, sometimes soft, but always trying to one's patience." The entire party was more or less incapacitated. Tabai's frozen foot caused him great pain and suppurated. Clark's face was swollen and distorted with bright-red inflammation, appearing like erysipelas.[447] In spite of smoked goggles, Clark became snow blind and had to be carried on his sled. Schanz had swollen feet and could only limp along a mile behind the other two sleds. Shishkin suffered from gastrointestinal distress. In a word, the expedition was all used up.

The Leslie expedition was traveling toward Kakhonak village 22 miles south of the mouth of the Newhalen River. They had little food except a few, frozen half-rotten dogfish and few prospects for obtaining additional food in the middle of the 78-mile-long Iliamna Lake. In their debilitated state, the travelers were extremely vulnerable. With no shelter, a sudden storm blowing up on the lake would surely lead to their almost-

446 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 7, 1891.

447 Erysipelas is a severe disease of the skin and subcutaneous tissue caused by streptococcus and characterized by growing inflammation. *The American Heritage Dictionary Second College Edition,* 464.

certain death. In the twentieth century, there were cases of people being overtaken by winter storms and and perishing on Iliamna Lake.

At one point in their misery, Schanz and Clark played a popular "game" still current with contemporary travelers in Alaska's wilderness—naming what food one would most like to have at the moment to give a boost of energy to continue on to one's destination? Schanz wrote they both agreed "a piece of hard tack, with a good big slab of raw bacon fat would be the most tasty morsel our imagination could conjure up."[448]

While feeding the sled dogs their last ration, a vicious dogfight broke out. After the famished dogs calmed down, the party proceeded on. As nightfall descended, a cold February moon partly illuminated their surroundings, as the miserable men and dogs limped toward the south shore of Iliamna Lake. They had no choice in the matter, because as tired and beat as they were, they did not have the option to camp on the ice in the middle of the very dangerous Iliamna Lake. They had to proceed on until they reached the shoreline and, hopefully, find Kakhonak village. Schanz said Tabai's stoical patience trudging behind their dog team, in spite of his frozen foot, inspired him to emulate the Yup'ik man's perseverance by walking in front of the team to keep them moving.[449]

At 9:30 P.M., the dogs sensed a nearby village and suddenly took off in a mad dash. Soon the entire party was standing by a dogfish storage cache about one mile west of Kakhonak at a small settlement Schanz called Napaimute. Minutes later they were sitting in a barabara at a table with a boiling chia-nik before them. Schanz counted 11 people living at Napaimute.[450]

On February 20, the Leslie expedition moved over to Kakhonak where they were met by a relief sledding party from Clark's Nushagak trading post with all manner of provisions. Clark's assistant at Nushagak, Mr. Edge, surely understood that the severe weather since the departure of the Leslie expedition would likely cause the expedition to travel more slowly than expected, hence requiring more supplies. Schanz wrote:

> …a sled party was sent out to meet us on Lake Iliamna with pork, bacon, butter, tea, sugar, hard-

448 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 7, 1891.
449 *Ibid,* November 7, 1891.
450 Orth, *Dictionary,* 673.

> bread, candles, tobacco, other delicacies, which we were in splendid condition to appreciate. To do justice to our groaning banquet-table we decided to remain at Kakhonak for a short rest. Our host was a Bristol Bay Esquimau named Alexie, a genial fellow, who was garrulous in several languages.

While at Kakhonak village, Schanz again took the census and counted 22 people.[451] Later, on February 20, a few Dena'ina from Old Iliamna village arrived at Kakhonak on the way to the Nushagak trading post. They were traveling with a light sled pulled by 20 dogs. It is very plausible that the leader of the Dena'ina party was Mikhail Riktorov or one of his brothers, such as Vasili or Cusma.

On February 21, four dog teams left Kakhonak traveling west down the lake toward the mouth where present-day Igiugig is located, which is the head of the Kvichak River. They passed the mouth of the river without Schanz making any reference of a village at Igiugig. The Leslie expedition traveled down the frozen Kvichak River and stopped at the Yup'ik village at Kaskanak and took the census, counting 66 people.[452] They proceeded down the Kvichak River and stopped at another Yup'ik village, Kwighakh, likely present-day Levelock.

The Leslie expedition covered the approximately eighty miles from Kakhonak to the last Kvichak River Yup'ik village, Koggiung, in four days, arriving on February 24. Schanz apparently censused Koggiung and counted 123 people, making it the largest village in the Naknek-Kvichak districts.[453]

Schanz described their condition upon their arrival at the Yup'ik village of Koggiung, another Alaska Commercial Company trading post, managed by a Creole named Mishka.

> We arrived at Bristol Bay in a sadly dilapidated condition, Mr. Clark's face was terribly bloated and inflamed; Shishkin's right leg and digestive organs were useless; my own feet were crippled,

451 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 11, 1891; Orth, *Dictionary,* 487.
452 *Ibid.,* 499.
453 *Ibid.,* 535.

> as were my right forearm and knee;…Tabai was altogether helpless with his frozen foot and face, and our boys all were more or less done up.[454]

On February 25, a dog team arrived from Ugashik village on the Bering Sea side of the Alaska Peninsula about one hundred miles south of Koggiung with Father Vasili Shishkin, Innokente's father. Father Shishkin was on his way home to Nushagak, and Clark decided to accompany him.

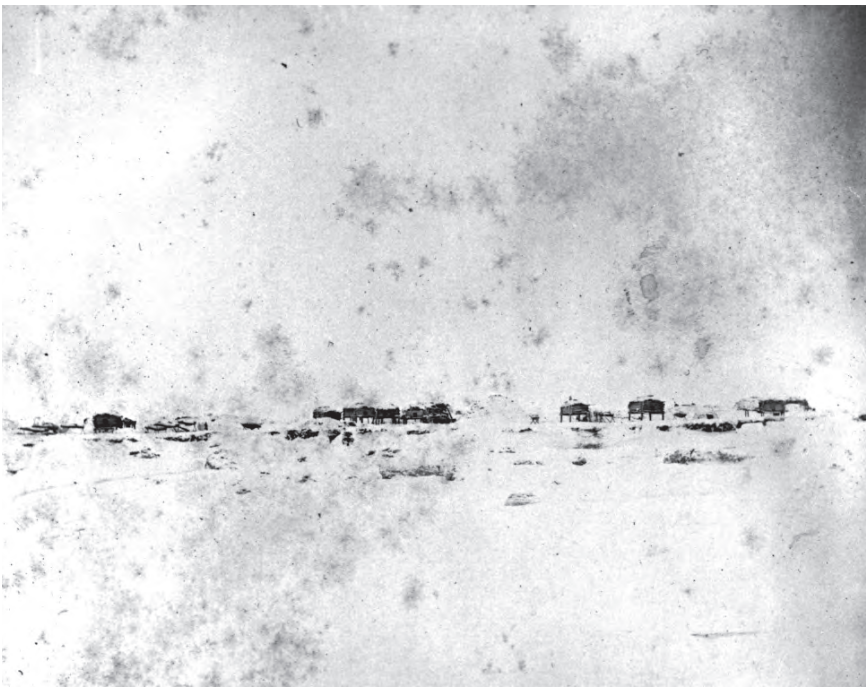
On the morning of February 26, Schanz and Clark shook hands in farewell at Koggiung. Clark and Innokente Shishkin, with their two sleds, joined Father Shishkin's sled and departed Koggiung for a crossing of the Kvichak River upstream, probably near the present-day Levelock village. Then they traveled down the west side of the Kvichak River mouth to the site of Nakeen cannery (circa 1925–1960), where they would have picked up a well-used portage trail to take them overland to the Nushagak River and the present-day site of Portage Creek village, then down the Nushagak River to their homes at Nushagak.

Of the four Kanulik guides with the Leslie expedition, Apangesin and Achakhpaoluk returned home with Clark, and Kokwok returned to his village. Vasutka continued with Schanz, as he made his way by dog sled to Paugvik (Naknek) and Old Savonoski on the way to the Katmai Trail and the Pacific coast. Schanz paid Tabai, who stayed at Koggiung to try to recover. Schanz said Tabai was helpless with his frozen foot and face and might become an invalid. Given the lack of medical care available in southwest Alaska in 1891, it is very much an open question if Tabai even survived his injuries. Schanz ultimately arrived at Katmai village on March 8th.

Wells, already on Kodiak, hired the Alaska Commercial Company schooner to pick up Schanz at Katmai, and they were reunited at Kodiak. Wells and Schanz chartered another schooner to sail them to Sitka, and from there they took a steamship to Port Townsend, Washington, arriving on May 1, 1891.

Soon after, in the fall 1891, the name "Lake Clark" began to appear regularly in print in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* and soon became accepted usage in the world of geographers, cartographers, prospectors and government explorers. The Dena'ina word for Lake Clark, Qizhjeh

454 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 11, 1891.



A photograph of raised storage caches at Koggiung village on the lower Kvichak River captioned: "Cogayong Eskimo village photographed by J.W. Clark." If Clark took this picture in February 1891, it is likely the only known photograph from the Leslie Expedition extant. H-1243 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection

Vena, was only used by the Dena'ina people of Alaska, and, in 1891, during America's colonial period, it would have been impossible for them to compete against *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* spreading a new name to the four corners of the United States.[455] The name Lake Clark caught on quickly, and, by the time Wilfred Osgood arrived in 1902—the first government explorer to visit the lake in the twentieth century—the name "Lake Clark" was in wide use.[456]

Schanz summed up the accomplishments of his sledding trip with Clark.

> So the end of the Lake Clark expedition had come. The expedition had encountered about every hardship with which the Arctic winter can impede progress, but in the main it had been success-

455 The Dena'ina word Qizhjeh Vena has been anglicized to the word Kijik.

456 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 11, 1891, and September 19, 1891.

> ful. The expedition had explored three large rivers previously known; had originally discovered three important streams and the second largest lake in Alaska: had settled the question as to the source of Iliamna's water supply, and had taken the census of fourteen Esquimau and two Kenai villages.[457]

In an 1897 Associated Press article entitled "The Klondike Country, Editor Arkell and Others Claim It by Right of Discovery," Schanz spoke about Clark and prospects for discovering gold in the Lake Clark region. He mentioned his winter sledding trip and said Clark had grubstaked a prospector on the Autchanak River.

> and all along that stream as well as its branches, we found prospects indicating pay dirt…North of Lake Iliamna the spots still unfilled on many maps, we found a lake nearly eighty miles in length and twenty or forty in width, which we named Lake Clark. I made the first map of the lake and reported same on my return through Ivan Petroff, the Alaskan geographer…I expect one of these days that Golconda or King Solomon will sink into insignificance when the gold story of Lake Clark is revealed.[458]

Where is the Autchanak River? Schanz never mentions a river of that name in his account of the 1891 sledding trip to Lake Clark. In fact, Schanz assigns the correct name to each river he encounters along the route. Schanz is clearly not telling the truth when he claims to have seen prospects indicating gold when he was traveling over several feet of ice and snow. How would he have been able to see any indicators of gold without looking at the streambeds of the so-called Autchanak River? Schanz probably was referring to the Mulchatna River which had seen a good deal of prospecting activity by 1890, probably as early as the first cannery construction on Nushagak Bay at Kanulik in 1883, or perhaps even earlier. Some of the men from California who came up to Bristol

457 Schanz, *Our Alaska Expedition,* November 11, 1891.

458 Anonymous, Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times,* "The Klondike Country, Editor Arkell and Others Claim it by Right of Discovery," July 25, 1897, 1, 3. W.J. Arkell was the editor of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper..*

Bay almost certainly went prospecting up the Nushagak and Mulchatna rivers. Clark probably grubstaked some of these earliest prospectors who poled plank skiffs up the Nushagak, Mulchatna and Chilikadrotna rivers more than two hundred miles to the southwestern most extent of the Bonanza Hills.[459]

Petroff made some observations about the Mulchatna River based on his visits to Nushagak in 1880 and 1890, but it is believed he never personally traveled on the river. He did travel on the Nushagak River with Yup'ik guides. Undoubtedly, he was informed about Mulchatna River prospectors by Clark and other informants who had been up the river.

> the Malchatna River enters [the Nushagak River] from the east, a turbulent mountain torrent, scarcely navigable for any kind of canoe, though the Natives, as well as the ever present miners succeed in 'tracking up' their annual supplies. The few people living on the banks of the Malchatna are of Athabaskan origin. They pass their winters in log houses covered with earth, but lead a roaming life during the summer, erecting a temporary shelter of pole or bark whenever they choose to tarry on their hunting expeditions.[460]

Schanz wrote about the Mulchatna River in 1893 and said the river's gravel banks showed good "color." He also said "several prospectors and placer miners have been sent up recently." The implication was that prospectors left from Nushagak on their way to the Mulchatna River, and probably to the Bonanza Hills, many were outfitted by Clark from his Nushagak trading post. Schanz said that most of the color was fine gold and now "a number of gentleman" were attempting to acquire a machine produced by the California Gold-saving Company which apparently was able to mechanically concentrate fine gold so it could be saved.[461]

---

459 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 96; Penny Rennick, editor, *The Nushagak River,* Volume 17, No. 1, Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, "Lonely Eldorado," by Thomas K. Bendtzen, 1993, 63; Philip S. Smith, Geological Survey, Bulletin 655, *The Lake Clark-Central Kuskokwim Region, Alaska,* Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1917, 38.

460 *Transactions and Proceeding of the Geographical Society of the Pacific 1881–1892,* San Francisco, volume II "Geographical and Ethnographical Notes on Alaska," by Ivan Petroff, 2–3, Bancroft Library, F 856 G 4.

461 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 93, 96.

Another person who wrote about prospecting in the upper Nushagak River drainage was Reverend John Schoechert, who lived at Carmel for 11 years and had traveled widely thoughout much of the drainage. In 1900, Schoechert warned would-be "gold seekers" and miners they would be wasting their time looking for gold in the Mulchatna River country.

> But now about Nushagak, Lake Clark or the headwaters of the Kuskokwim. I council people to stay away…there is absolutely nothing that will make it pay. Colors may be found almost anywhere in Alaska. It would not be Alaska if some color could not be found here. But I can affirm that to the best of my knowledge not $20 worth of gold has been found in the above-named district.…I wish someone would take my letter and write a warning, that people may stay away if an artificial boom is created. Stories like this are in circulation: that fishermen on the Nushagak by throwing out their anchor have discovered gold in large quanties, that the bars on the Mulchatna turn out from $8 to $10 a day, that pans have been found to turn out from $10 to $125, etc. There is no truth whatever in such stories. As I said before, not $20 worth of gold has been taken out of the Nushagak or its tributaries.[462]

Schoechert was correct, after all there was never a Turnagain, Klondike or Nome gold rush in the Bristol Bay country. Repeated glaciation apparently dispersed what concentrations of gold there might have been, so it is thinly scattered here and there in certain parts of the uplands.

Schanz was fond of hyperbole, such as his claim of 7-foot-thick ice on Lake Clark. He also grossly exaggerated the size of Lake Clark, which is just shy of 41 miles long and 4-½ miles wide. Schanz must have heard from Clark about a small tributary stream of Lake Clark called

462 *The Moravian,* August 22, 1900; Henkelman and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 407.

Portage Creek, documented in 1902 by biologist Wilfred Osgood as Achteedeedung Creek, which is the only known gold-bearing creek entering the lake. Osgood said there were six prospectors placer mining gold on the creek, "but nothing that pays for working." If the Autchanak River and Achteedeedung Creek are various spellings for the same stream, and if that stream is the only gold-bearing tributary of Lake Clark, and if Schanz is to be believed, Clark grubstaked a prospector on Portage Creek as early as 1891.[463]

463 Wilfred Osgood, "Lake Clark, a Little-known Alaskan Lake," Volume XV, No. 8, *The National Geographic Magazine,* August 1904, 329.

CHAPTER 14

The Last Years of John W. Clark of Nushagak

ATTENDANCE at the Carmel school began to go up in the 1890s, partly because Shishkin retired. Also, he may have left Nushagak in 1893, for Sitka and Wolff left Carmel in 1894. During the 1892–1893 school, year attendance went up to 23 students, most of whom were boarders. Overall numbers increased when several families moved to Carmel from the Kuskokwim country. The school curriculum included basic carpentry, but nothing about subsistence activities or commercial fishing skills. The Moravians built an 18- by 24-foot shop of logs with a built-on chicken coop.

On August 24, 1893, Wolff wrote, "We have a wire fence, which encloses several acres of ground about our mission,…We find this enclosure very agreeable and convenient, especially in summer, as it gives us a little private domain of our own, where no one has any right except those who are allowed there or are taken there for protection."[464] During the winter of 1893–1894, Wolff traveled by dog team up the Naknek River, perhaps as far as Savonoski village probably to recruit more boarding students. Later he went up the Kvichak River to Iliamna Lake. But on August 1, 1894, the Reverend Wolff and family departed Carmel for San Francisco, and in October 1894, Wolff was dismissed from the ministry of the Moravian Church.

During the following school year, 1895–96, school attendance reached a daily average of 37. Perhaps the absence of Wolff led to a more welcoming school environment. The Reverend Samuel Rock replaced Wolff at Carmel on July 6, 1896. Philippine King, a Registered Nurse, moved from Bethel to Carmel when Dr. Joseph H. Romig, M.D., arrived in Bethel. Miss King had been at Bethel since 1893 and arrived at Carmel after a 22-day voyage onboard the *Swan*, captained by John Kilbuck. Kilbuck described sailing around Cape Constantine and into Nushagak Bay on August 29, 1896.

464 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 131–132.

John W. Clark photographed in San Francisco in the 1890s.
H-1268 Courtesy of the John W. Nicholson Collection.

> …we steered for Ekuk…,the bluffs at this point loomed up right ahead of us. Soon we pass the first village…on the Nushagak River. There is a small Greek chapel at this place [Ekuk]. Around that bluff there is a spit projecting out and see black…boxlike affairs—these are 'Lighters'—Yes, there are buildings coming out into plain sight—This is 'Clark's Cannery' [Clarks Point]. Beyond the next bluff, after we round that point, a few miles ahead, we will be in front of Nushagak—Here we are, and hurrah there is Carmel. Up on the hill back of Nushagak we saw quite a concourse of people who were watching us, sail by… Mr. Clark sent a note of congratulations upon our safe arrival, when he found out who we were, and sent me an invitation to come and see him, before I leave.[465]

Miss King provided medical care for the Moravians and people from Nushagak Bay. King would provide Clark his only professional medical care during his final illness later that fall. During the winter of 1898–1899, when every Native child under 2 years of age died at Kanulik and Miss King treated the sick, Samuel Rock said that Philippine King "has the stuff in her of which heroes are made."[466]

Schoechert wrote that Chinese cannery workers gave alcohol to Native people with many adverse effects. The Moravians helped form a Temperance Society at Nushagak in 1894–1895. Cooperative efforts by Clark, the Russian Orthodox Church, the canneries and the Moravians helped diminished alcohol use for a time.[467]

Schanz had spent a great deal of time with Clark at Nushagak, and on the trail to Lake Clark in the winter of 1890–1891. He provided some background into alcohol abuse in an article on the Eleventh Census. "…some of the Eskimos have learned to distill from flour paste, sugar, dried fruit, berries etc. [into] a horrible kind of liquour, which they drink." Clark

465 Journal of John H. Kilbuck to Edith Kilbuck, August 6, 1896, to February 12, 1897, The Moravian Church Archives, 24–26.

466 Henkelmann and Vitt, *Harmonious,* 135.

467 *The Moravian,* March 11, 1891.

disapproved of the home brewing and attempted to stop the practice.[468]

As can be expected, the creation of the canned salmon industry in Bristol Bay was not all positive. By 1888, the four canneries operating on Nushagak Bay had brought with them a whole host of problems for the Native people to contend with, perhaps the two most pernicious being infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and influenza, and alcohol abuse. Wolff said the bay was swarmed by 200 white fishermen, 300 Chinese laborers and 6 to 8 sailing ships from 4 large canneries from early to mid-June to late July, and sometimes later, into late August. Many of the sailors, fishermen and Chinese laborers were habitues of the San Francisco bar scene, with all the attendant personal temptations that environment enabled. Some of these outsiders were a bad influence on the trusting, indigenous people.[469]

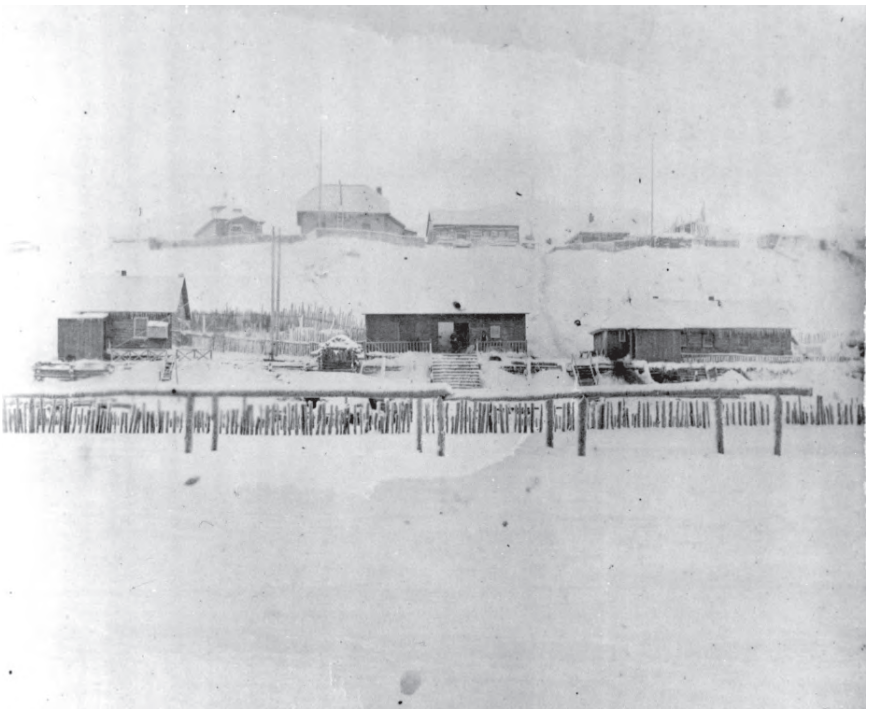
In a more hopeful endeavor, the Moravians also worked with various Nushagak Bay residents, such as Clark, to organize and develop a winter overland mail route from Katmai village to Nushagak for mail delivery in September, January and March. Some of the subscribers were: Nelson Larson $5, Chas. Nelson $10, J.W. Clark $5, Paul Kayankoff (possibly Kashevarov) $5, Otto Larson $10, Christ Larson $20, Lewis Larson $10, Frank Krause $5, (winterman at the Bradford cannery) Chas. Anderson $5, Fred Andersen $10, Fred Koltchoff $5, (the latter two were wintermen at the Scandinavian cannery), Peter Nelson $5, Gust Larson $10.[470]

A few random connections between Nushagak and Carmel demonstrate a mellowing of relations between the two camps of the Clark-Shishkin-Orlov clan and the Moravians. In the absence of Shishkin and Wolff, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Jackson, Clark's new store assistant and his wife, visited the Moravians in September 1895. Frank Krause from the Bradford cannery brought the Moravians his second load of firewood on a small scow. Cannery man Gust Larson was unable to get Clark's scow to haul firewood to Carmel. In late October, the Moravians visited Clark and his assistant Jackson, and borrowed a house cat for a few weeks, no doubt to use as a mouser. Clark borrowed five sections of stovepipe from the Moravians. In November, Moravian teachers Mary and Emma Huber walked to Nushagak to visit Mrs. Jackson, Clark and his wife Natalia. A few days later, Clark, Natalia and their daughter Dora visited at Carmel.

468 Porter, Schanz, *Report on the Population,* 93.

469 *The Moravian,* August 15, 1888 and December 16, 1891.

470 Anonymous, "Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian Mission at Carmel, Alaska From 1895–1896," Moravian Church Archives, April 24, 1896.



A winter scene at Nushagak with the Alaska Commercial Company complex arrayed on the lower level and the Russian Orthodox Church and priest's house on the upper level left and at center. The tall pole right of center probably marks Fedor Kalmakov's grave. H-2304 courtesy of the Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich Collection.

In December, Mr. and Mrs. Schoechert visited the Clarks and borrowed a thermometer. An understanding was reached with Clark to give the Moravians a $35 credit in his store in exchange for the Carmel school fee of the daughter of Clark's employee, Gust Lindstrom, covering terms through September 1898.[471]

Additional documented contacts between Nushagak and Carmel shed more light on life in the area. In January 1896, Schoechert took a sledding trip to Iliamna Lake. He arrived at Koggiung on the 24th and was greeted by Louis Guenther, who had been Arctic Packing Company's first winter man at the Kanulik cannery in 1884. Guenther was now acting in that capacity at the new Point Roberts Packing Company, part of Alaska Packers Association's Diamond J cannery at Koggiung.[472] Schoechert wrote the cannery complex was built well. He visited the Koggiung village and even held services in the village *qasgi*. Schoechert also visited a Mr.

471 Schoechert, "Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian's Mission at Carmel, Alaska 1895–1996, September 6 through December 26, 1895," Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

472 Unrau, *Lake Clark*, 148.

The Moravians' Carmel Mission complex as photographed by Dr. Lincoln Cottren of San Jose, California in 1895. Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

and Mrs. Shishkin, perhaps Father Shishkin's son Innokenty and his wife. He also visited "Mr. Rohl," who was undoubtedly Frederick J. Roehl, Sr., Bristol Bay fisherman, independent Koggiung storekeeper and founding father of the large Bristol Bay regional family.

Back at Carmel, Schoechert contracted with 12 men to cut firewood for him up the Nushagak River at $2.75 per cord, delivered to the beach in front of Carmel. In March, Schoechert took his dog team to Clark's cannery and then returned to Nushagak and visited the Clarks and the Jacksons. A few days later, Schoechert had to purchase a few provisions from Clark's trading post, and he wrote that they cost three times what they did in San Francisco. Schoechert later went upriver, measured the wood cut by the choppers, and paid them for their labors. One group of choppers cut 18 cords while the other group cut a little more than 17 cords. He paid the two bosses $7.20 each, and the other men received between $6.10 and $5.95 each. In March, Schoechert complained in his diary that if some of the Carmel parishoners sold the Moravians furs or game, Clark would not sell goods for cash to those parishoners. By early May, Clark offered to send several boatloads of manure to the Moravians

in exchange for hay they had provided him. Presumably Clark owned a draft horse or milk cow.[473]

After Father Shishkin retired in 1893 and apparently left Nushagak, Deacon Orlov expected to replace him, but because Orlov did not have formal religious education, he was passed over for Father Vladimir Modestov. The new priest arrived in 1894 and had difficulties with the "Clark-Shishkin-Orlov clan." In 1895, Russian Orthodox Church officials ordered Orlov to take a new position on the Yukon River, but because of the ill health of his wife, Aleksandra Larionova, he refused the transfer and was subsequently fired from the clergy. On October 30, 1895, the Moravians visited Orlov, whose wife had died the previous day and they said Orlov was grateful for the visit. They also visited the new priest, Father Modestov, who had arrived at Nushagak after Shishkin left. The illness and death of her mother in October 1895, coupled with her father's loss of his position as church deacon, must have been a very trying time for Natalia Clark, but times would be more difficult for her in 1896.[474]

John W. Clark died December 8, 1896. He had dislocated his ankle in October or November. While Clark was ill, the Moravian missionaries, most importantly nurse Philippine King, visited him at his home to treat and comfort him.[475] Hearing the news while on a sledding trip upriver in November and December 1896, Schoechert wrote:

> the death and burial of Mr. J.W. Clark, trader at Nushagak occurred. The missionaries showed their friendship by visits and by waiting on him during his sickness. Miss Philippine King's medical aid was very helpful, and though she could not save his life, she eased the suffering in many ways. She spent considerable time there, nursing Clark in his last illness.[476]

The descendents of John Clark have heard that he died of blood poisoning after butchering fish, a malady that occurred frequently enough that there was great fear of it. An 1890 San Francisco newspaper had an

473 Schoechert, "Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian Mission at Carmel, Alaska, From 1895–1896," September 6, 1895, to May 7, 1896, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

474 Znamenski, *Through Orthodox Eyes,* 23.

475 *The Moravian,* October 6, 1897.

476 Schoechert, "Report of the Carmel District For The Year 1896–1897," 23.

Philippine King was the first trained nurse at Bethel Moravian Mission in 1893. In the summer of 1896, she sailed in a homemade sloop, captained by John Kilbuck, from Bethel to Nushagak where she was probably the first registered nurse to live in Nushagak Bay. During the fall of 1896, she nursed John Clark in his final illness. Courtesy of the Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

account of the Bristol Bay Canning Company's bark, the *Newsboy*, returning to port from Nushagak with 19,240 cases and 342 barrels of salt salmon. Also on board were five cannery employees who had "a mysterious blood disease by being cut while handling salmon. Their hands and arms are swollen to great size and having running sores."[477] One scenario was Clark had a cut on his hand and bacteria from fish slime entered his blood stream and caused sepsis. This family story is only partly correct. According to the Moravian missionary John Schoechert, Clark indeed died from blood poisoning. However, it was caused by complications from a sprained ankle, not fish butchering.

> …the death of Mr. Clark, who a few months after having celebrated his fiftieth birthday died from a sprained ankle, erysipelas setting in; besides his blood was in a very poor condition. He died December 8 [1896]. He was attended to by Miss King who waited on him for several days.…On my return I [was] met by his [Clark] friend the Nushagak priest, and party who told us that Mr. Clark was not expected to live, and before we returned he was dead and buried. He was buried at Nushagak by his father-in-law Deacon Orloff, four of the missionaries from Carmel being present at the funeral. Brother Rock offered a prayer at the request of Mrs. Clark.[478]

477 *The San Francisco Chronicle,* "Poisoned by Fish," August 25, 1890, 10.
478 *The Moravian,* June 9, 1897, 364.

Erysipelas is a sudden infection of the skin that is generally caused by streptococcus bacteria. Individuals with a leg ulcer or injury, such as a dislocated ankle, might, if the skin were broken, be more prone to infection. In this time before penicillin and other antibiotics, complications could prove fatal, as was the case with Clark.[479]

In 1889 Lord Lonsdale commented that Clark was "much worse in health for exposure & climate."[480] This was two years before Clark suffered the ordeal of a frost bitten face and snow blindness on the trip to Lake Clark with Schanz. Schanz had mentioned Clark had severe frostbite on his face during their 1891 trip in search of Lake Clark and likened his condition to erysipelas. If one recalls the rigors of climate that Clark and the other Western Union Telegraph Company men endured around Norton Sound in 1866 and 1867, coupled with his subsequent life on the Alaska frontier, a pattern of exposure and lack of a balanced diet emerges. Physically, Clark was probably an old man at the age of 50. For most of Clark's life in Alaska, he lived far from any medical attention. It was only when the Moravians brought Philippine King to Nushagak in 1896 that a trained medical professional lived close by. At some point, probably in the late nineteenth century, Nushagak Bay canneries began bringing in doctors and nurses to care for their fishermen and crews during the season. But even today, blood poisoning not treated with strong antibiotics is frequently fatal. In remote Alaska in the late nineteenth century, it was probably always fatal.

Clark's grandson, John Nicholson, learned about his grandfather's death from his mother and wrote in his autobiography.

> Feodora Clark Nicholson, my mother, was just 6 years old when Grandfather Clark died on December 8, 1896. After the funeral, he was buried on top of Nushagak hill above the old Fort Alexander site. Today, his heavy, marble headstone can be found, although brush has overgrown the cemetery. When my grandfather died, my mother and her two sisters received an inheritance of $10,000 each. It is unknown how much money my grandmother received when Mr.

479 http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/erysipelas.htm; Dr. David J. Powers, personal conversation, June 19, 2011.

480 Lonsdale, *A Victorian,* 82.

Nushagak village seen from the high-water line looking south circa 1897–1898. The Clark house is on the lower level to the right. The store-warehouse is in the center, and the small log house where McKay lived in 1881–1883 is lower left. The Clark complex was apparently built by the Alaska Commercial Company in the 1870s.
Courtesy of University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Rasmuson Library, Archives, Samuel Call Collection, Accession A-66-10-307.

Mittendorf purchased the trading post, but it was a significant amount.[481]

Feodora also inherited a third interest in a lot in San Francisco at 2105 Bush Street, part of the Western Addition, about a forty minute walk from the headquarters of the Alaska Commercial Company.[482] A three-story, wooden Edwardian house is located on the site. The house might date from Clark's period of ownership. Each Clark daughter inherited a third interest in the property, but there is no full documentation, because Clark's will was probably destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco fire. Nicholson also stated that Clark became the owner of the Alaska Commercial Company trading post at Nushagak before his death which

481 John W. Nicholson, *No Half-Truths: Reminiscences of Life in Bristol Bay, Alaska 1906–1995,* Anchorage: Publication Consultants, 1995, 17.

482 "Assets Belonging to the Estate of Feodora Clark, A Minor," San Francisco, California, September 4, 1908. Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The grave of John Clark and his wife Natalia Hoidahl on the hill overlooking their home at Nushagak. Willows and alder are now encroaching on the Nushagak Cemetary.
Courtesy of the author.

enabled the widow Clark to sell the post to August Mittendorf after her husband's death. Mittendorf ran the trading station at Ugashik for Clark and was apparently married to Father Shishkin's daughter Nadia. Clark probably purchased the company trading station after Alaska Commercial Company lost their exclusive fur seal harvest monopoly in the Pribilof Islands in 1890. The transaction papers were probably lost in the San Francisco fire. Aside from a few photographs, none of Clark's personal papers or books seem to have survived with his descendants into the twenty-first century.[483]

During his lifetime Clark cast a big shadow in the Bristol Bay region, and, with his death, things changed around Nushagak with regard to keeping a lid on alcohol abuse. Clark's high standards were not followed by the next Nushagak trader, August Mittendorf, if we are to believe Schoechert. According to him, six months after Clark's death the trading post became part of the problem of alcohol abuse around Nushagak. Clark's death obviously had a deleterious effect on the temperance movement at Nushagak Bay. Writing sometime after Clark's death, Schoechert lamented the new trader's behavior.

> Since the death of Mr. Clark they are carrying on terribly at Nushagak. The man who used to make whisky is in charge of the store and is drunk continually. Brother Rock will write a letter to the ACC, which we will both sign, to inform them and request them to stop such things. At [Koggiung], where Brother Guenther is, it is just the same. The trader is drunk much of the time.[484]

After John Clark's death, the 28-year-old Natalia Clark remained a widow until 1899, when she married Hans Hoidahl, a Norwegian-born commercial fisherman, in October. On February 9, 1899, a $3,000 cash transfer from the estate of John W. Clark was made to M. C. Sloss, as directed by guardian Charles Gissig. Earlier, on October 20, 1898, the Clark estate sold 136 shares of Alaska Packers Association stock for $13,834 to M. C. Sloss. Natalia died on January 18, 1918, possibly a victim of the

483 Schoechert?, "Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian Mission at Carmel, Alaska from 1895–1896," September 6, 1895.

484 *The Moravian,* June 2, 1897.

Left to right: Parsha Clark, Natalia Clark Hoidahl, her second husband, Hans Hoidahl, and Feodora Clark, possibly photographed in San Francisco in 1901. Parsha and Feodora were John and Natalia Clark's youngest daughters who were living in San Francisco and attending school at that time. The whereabouts of their oldest daughter, also named Nathalia, is not known. Hoidahl married the widow Clark in 1899. Courtesy of Dennis Herrmann and Herman Herrmann, Jr.

Left to right: John W. Nicholson, Parsha Clark Squires and Feodora Clark Nicholson in San Francisco in about 1910. Courtesy of Dennis Herrmann and Herman Herrmann, Jr.

Parsha Clark Squires in Santa Barbara in 1926. Courtesy of Dennis Herrmann and Herman Herrmann, Jr.

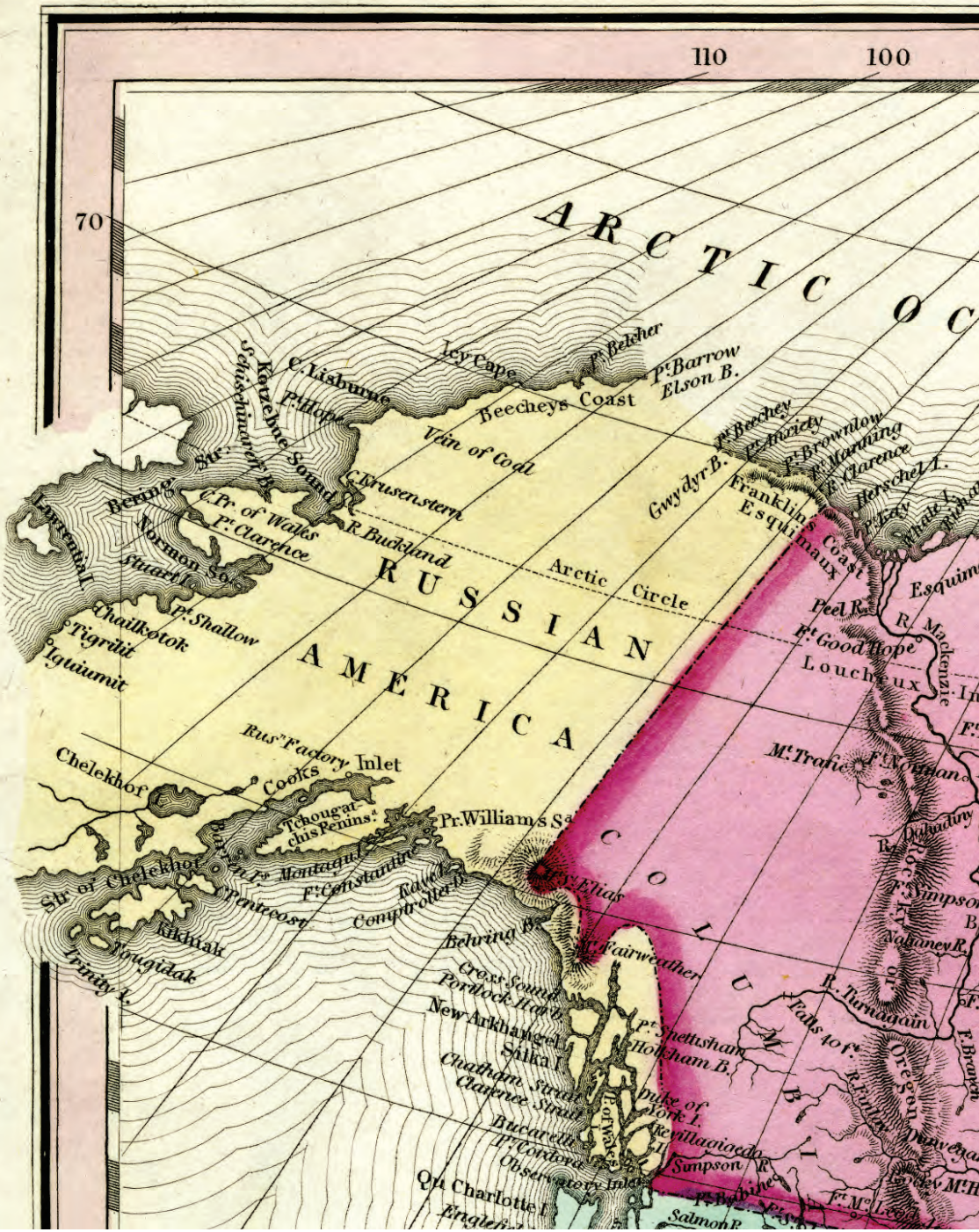
Hans P. Nicholson and his wife Feodora Clark Nicholson circa 1910. Courtesy of Dennis Herrmann and Herman Herrmann, Jr.

worldwide pandemic of Spanish influenza, and was buried next to John Clark overlooking their home at Nushagak.[485]

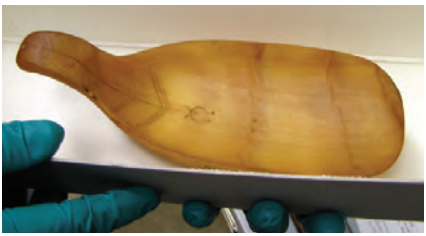
Ten years after Clark's death, the Moravians ended their efforts to establish a permanent mission in the Bristol Bay region. They withdrew from Carmel. The Moravians redoubled their efforts in the Kuskokwim country, where they had been more successful, and still maintain a strong presence there. Of interest today, there are several active Moravian churches in southwestern Alaska, including in Dillingham, the successor regional hub village of Nushagak. Bethel has the largest congregation. One of John and Natalia Clark's great-grandsons, William Nicholson, is the Bishop of the Moravian Church in Anchorage, Alaska.

Sockeye salmon, netted for sampling by the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve fish biologist in the fall of 2007 on the upper reaches of Lake Clark. The unnamed mountain in the background is nearly 6,000 feet in elevation. Photo courtesy of Dan Young, U.S. National Park Service.

485 Alaska Commercial Company Collection, Cecil Green Library, Stanford University, Special Collections, Transfer Journal, JL6-22, 239, 273; VanStone, *Nushagak, An Historic Trading Center In Southwest Alaska,* Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1972, 23.



Map 6 Lake Clark is shown as a small two-part lake northeast of Lake Chelekoff [Lake Shelekof], a variation of Iliamna Lake. The version of Lake Clark is connected to Lake Chelekoff by the unnamed Newhalen River. "North America," Tanner, Henry Schenck; from *A New Universal Atlas,* Philadelphia, published by Tanner, 1836. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum.



Charles L. McKay's Legacy

ABOVE: McKay's Bunting *Plectrophenox hyperboreus.* C. Lensink/USFWS.

LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Native Alaskan items collected by McKay for the Smithsonian Institution. Photos courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, McKay Collection.

Dall's sheep horn spoon probably collected from Old Iliamna village, or Lake Clark, during 1882 expedition. Item no. E56008.

Brown bear claw headdress from Bristol Bay region, 1881–1883. E56035.

The beaded headdress was probably made on Kodiak by Pacific Eskimos of sinew or rawhide and glass trade beads but collected at Ugashik on the north shore of the Alaska Peninsula. Item no. E56039

Fish skin gloves from Bristol Bay circa 1881–1883. Item no. E55967

BELOW: Waterproof coat, a camalaika or seal gut rain coat, Bristol Bay region circa 1881–1883. Item no. E56083

Views of Nushagak, Alaska, spanning 130 years

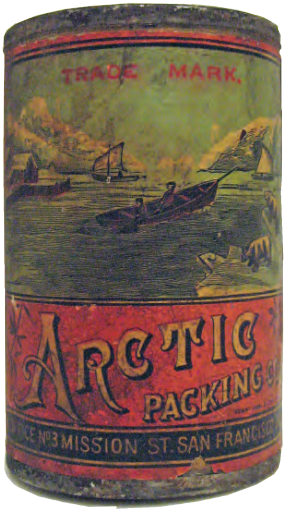
ABOVE: A 1941 aerial view of Nushagak, 55 years after Clark's death. Two huge salmon canneries were built about 1900 on either side of the Clark property. The cannery on the left was owned by Pacific American Fisheries, and the cannery on the right was owned by Libby, McNeill & Libby. Neither cannery was operating in 1941. Courtesy of University of Washington, Special Collections Libraries, Buschmann Family film collection, 2002-053, Reel 18.

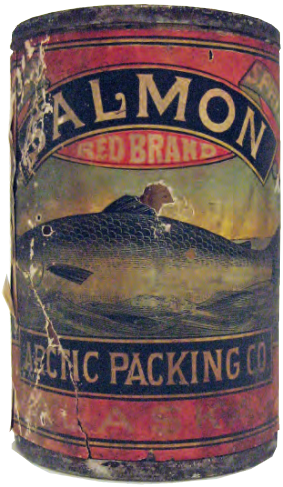
BELOW: A contemporary view of Nushagak village site. The cross stands on the site of the 1845 Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Photo courtesy of the author.

ABOVE: A view of Nushagak village circa 1884 with the grave yard on top of the hill, the Russian Orthodox Church on the left upper level. On the lower level, left to right, were McKay's cabin, the trading post and Clark's house. The steamship *Dora* rides at anchor in the Nushagak River, center. Oil painting by L. Bowman courtesy of the author.

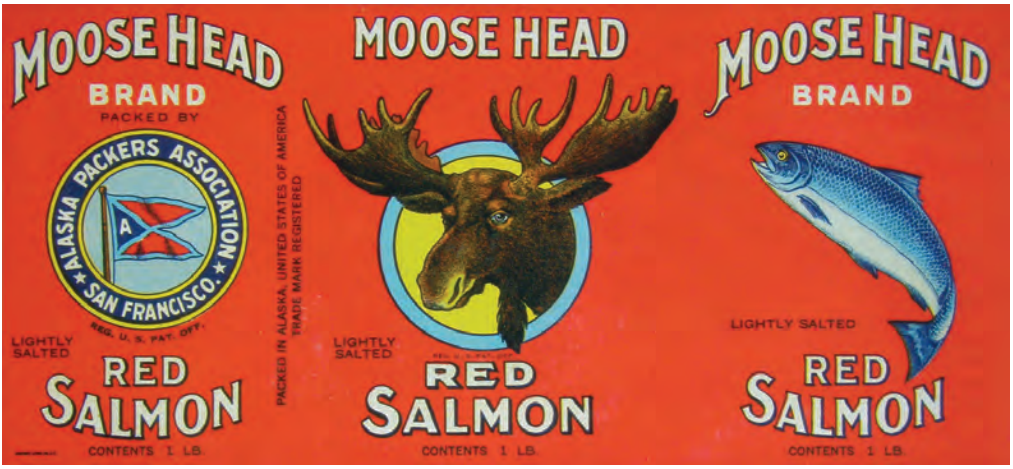
BELOW: A contemporary view of Nushagak village site, now only occupied during the summer commercial salmon fishing season. The cabins of the set-netters are at the base of the hill. Clark's house and trading station were below the lower terrace to the right. The cross marks the location of the Russian Orthodox Church. Photo courtesy of Clark James Mishler.

Lake Clark Pass as it appeared in August 2007 looking east. The Tlikakila River runs west from the divide with Cook Inlet waters and enters Lake Clark about six miles west of where the picture was taken. Otter Lake is visible in the lower left.
Photo courtesy of Chuck Lindsay, U.S. National Park Service.





Arctic Packing Company Red Brand Salmon canned salmon. The Arctic Packing Company cannery at Kanulik was managed by Carl C. Rohlffs in 1884 three miles east of Clark's trading station. Alaska State Museum, 96-4-1.



The Moose Head Brand of red salmon packed by Alaska Packers Association apparently was one of the first brand names from Clark's Nushagak Canning Company cannery at Clarks Point. This particular label would seem to date from after Clark's death in 1896. Courtesy of Karen Hofstad.

CHAPTER 15

Clark's Contribution to Alaska History

"I believe that for a space of twenty days from July 2nd to July 22nd, the Nushagak River, within the distance of twenty miles, is the busiest place in Alaska, for within that distance and within that time are caught, cleaned, cooked and packed $2,200,000 worth of Alaska red salmon. I will put the Nushagak, for a box of perfectos, for more fish and less sleep against any other place in the world."[486]
Colonel Russell S. Bates, *Alaska Prospector*, September 3, 1903.

COLONEL Bates described the uniquely frenzied pace of the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery. This passage is a metaphor for the industry that John Clark had such an important role in fostering, that is, the emergence of the shore-based salmon processing industry on Nushagak Bay. The commercial salmon industry that Clark helped initiate has been going strong in Alaska's Bristol Bay region for more than 130 years, and it remains the lifeblood of the economy of southwest Alaska.

Clark's most profound legacy to the state of Alaska is his significant role in the development of the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishing industry. The commercial fishery is the most lucrative and best-run salmon fishery in the world. This happy circumstance did not happen by itself but is the result of the actions of many entities that endeavor to preserve the salmon habitat on millions of acres of state, federal and private lands and waters: sustainable management decisions made by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division; careful land preservation management practices of the U.S. National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; the leadership of the Bristol Bay Native Corporation and various other Native village corporations and non-government organizations, such as

486 Colonel Russell S. Bates, *The Alaska Prospector,* "Nushagak," September 3, 1903.

the Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund.

Clark was the man on the scene by 1879 and during the ensuing decade, as the shore-based Bristol Bay salmon fishery was established. Unlike other early pioneers in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishing industry—such as Carl Rohlffs, J.P. Haller, P. H. Johnson, William Bradford and Crest Hale—Clark was a full-time resident of Nushagak, and, as such, had a greater knowledge of the resources of the region than his fellow processors. His intelligence, ambition and knowledge of the most advantageous locations to site salteries and canneries, and his broad experience in the bay, must have been invaluable as San Francisco firms sought to establish salmon processing plants on Nushagak Bay and the larger Bristol Bay in the 1880s and 1890s.

Clark probably started his career in commercial salmon fishing in Nushagak Bay by the summer of 1879. In 1880 Petroff documented him salting between 700 and 800 barrels of salmon annually for the Alaska Commercial Company. Clark established salteries at Clarks Point and seven miles above Nushagak on Rohlffs Slough in the early 1880s. He sent a crew of his employees to Egegik village in 1884 to establish a salmon salting station. He established the Nushagak Canning Company at his saltery at Clarks Point in 1887–1888. It is plausible to suggest that Clark might have had a role in the establishment of a saltery near Ugashik village, just as he did at Egegik in the early 1880s. It is not known what role Clark might have played, if any, in the establishment of other salting stations in Bristol Bay on the Kvichak and Naknek Rivers. With his wide knowledge and personal connections around Bristol Bay coastal villages, Clark was in position to advise potential processors on local conditions at various sites, including the availability of local labor and resources, such as timber for fish trap construction.

Clark was an unusual transplant to the rough frontier of mid- to late-nineteenth century Alaska. He was a man of some self-restraint who apparently was not solely motivated by self-interest in his pursuits, and he did not disregard the welfare of the indigenous population. From his first year in Russian America, 1866, teaching the Native cook Lunchy to speak English on a freezing night in a Western Union Telegraph expedition brush camp north of Unalakleet, Clark stood out as a cut above the average man. Another early example of his character was displayed when he volunteered to take a fellow laborer's place chopping holes through

frozen ground for telegraph poles.

Between 1868 and his death in 1896, Clark was a distinguished trader on the three major rivers of western Alaska—the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Nushagak. Clark traded for furs and walrus ivory on behalf of the powerful Alaska Commercial Company, whose owners held him in high regard. After 1890, he probably became an independent trader and more of an entrepreneur. He had a number of small village trading stations scattered around Bristol Bay, from Togiak, to Ugashik, to Old Iliamna, while maintaining a business arrangement with the Alaska Commercial Company. He was well-regarded by the Native people of southwestern Alaska, and he put down roots in the region by marrying a Creole and by fathering a number of children between 1867 and 1889. Clark was a very hospitable host to a number of travelers who rested from their physically demanding travels at his Nushagak trading station. Many visitors to "Clark's fish house," where he might serve them a breakfast of salmon, bread and hot coffee, later wrote rave reviews about the man's good manners and solicitous hospitality.

One visitor to Nushagak who lived nearly two years there was Charles L. McKay of the U.S. Signal Service, a collector of natural and cultural history specimens for the Smithsonian Institution. Clark materially aided McKay's collecting efforts and those of his successor, J. W. Johnson, with Bristol Bay Native people. In so doing, Clark developed a reputation as an honorable and conscientious businessman who played a role in gathering scientific data from the Bristol Bay region for the Smithsonian Institution and for the Alaska Commercial Company.

Clark helped influence Moravian missionaries to locate their successful mission at Bethel, Alaska in 1884. At the same time, Clark urged the Moravians not to set up a mission in Nushagak Bay, because the Russian Orthodox Church had long been firmly established throughout the region. Subsequently, he became caught up in a turf battle between the Russian Orthodox and the newly arrived Moravians on Nushagak Bay. Clark favored the Russian Orthodox, but in August 1884 he and his cook, Alexie, aided Moravian missionaries in translating the Lord's Prayer into Yup'ik for the first time. Clark conducted himself in an honorable and forthright manner in his relations with the Moravians. During Clark's last illness, the Moravian nurse Philippine King, the region's only medical professional at the time, cared for him and tried to relieve his pain and suffering from an acute infection in his leg.

Contrary to a popular misunderstanding about Clark, he was not an explorer. But in 1891 he facilitated and accompanied Albert Schanz on a winter journey into the interior of the Bristol Bay region. In so doing his name was attached to Lake Clark. In recognition of his important early role around Bristol Bay, a number of prominent place names are named after Clark, beginning in the late nineteenth century. These locations are: Clarks Point, in use before 1890; Lake Clark, named in 1891; Clark Slough, in use by 1911; Clarks Spit, in use by 1952; Lake Clark Pass, in use by 1959, but known as "Clark Pass" as early as 1937.[487]

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve was created when the greatest land conservation act in the history of the world was passed by Congress and signed into law by U.S. President Jimmy Carter on December 2, 1980. During the park's planning process in the 1970s, several possible names were considered for the nascent national park, such as Telaquana Lake National Park, Pluton Peaks National Park-Preserve, Rim of Fire National Park-Preserve, Crystal Peaks National Park-Preserve and Glacier-Volcanoes National Park-Preserve. But the Lake Clark name was always what the planners came back to in their planning sessions, because its location and identity had long been established. The rather superficial alternative names were discarded after 1978, in favor of the tried-and-true Lake Clark, which had been associated with the area under study since Albert B. Schanz named the lake for Clark in 1891.

In the 1970s, National Park Service planners knew very little about John Clark other than he was a nineteenth-century fur trader who lived at Nushagak, an abandoned village near Dillingham. However, they went with the long-established name Lake Clark, because the large, scenic lake was the crown jewel of the 4,000,000-acre park-and-preserve proposal. In short, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve was named after the lake of that name, not after John W. Clark. Of course, the Dena'ina people who have lived around the shores of Lake Clark for at least the past 1,000 years had their own name for the sublime lake, Qizhjeh Vena, "place people gather lake."[488]

John W. Clark was in the vanguard of Euroamerican settlement in Alaska. A compelling case can be made for the possibility that Clark was the first documented Euroamerican, permanent settler in western Alaska. He was a representative of America's western expansionism to

487 Ray E. McDonald as told to Lucille Kempley, "Giants of the Newhalen," *The Alaska Sportsman,* September 1938, 11.
488 Evanoff, Dena'ina, 117; John B. Branson, "Lake Clark or Qizhjeh Vena?" *The Bristol Bay Times,* August 27, 1993, 7.

the most northwestern part of the North American continent. Clark, like a number of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Euroamerican settlers in Alaska, learned how to live in the north by understanding how Native Alaskans lived in the north for thousands of years. In this two-way process of acculturation, there developed a fusion of Alaska Native, Russian and American cultures which formed a uniquely nineteenth-century-Alaska lifestyle. In Clark's case, his life, like those of his Native in-laws, revolved around the annual return of Bristol Bay salmon and travel by baidarka and dog sled.

Finally, Clark made Alaska his home. He was one of the very first of a long line of Euroamericans to be enchanted by the Great Land. Although he made several trips to California, he always returned to Alaska. Once he established himself at Nushagak with his family and business interests, he must have found fulfillment and satisfaction with his lot in life. But beyond those considerations, the overwhelming grandeur of the natural world that was nineteenth-century-Alaska must also have enchanted him, making him content with his life. The sea, the aurora borealis, the great lakes of southwestern Alaska with their vast stores of fresh water, the hundreds of productive rivers with their stupendous annual salmon runs, the annual waterfowl migrations, the walruses and sea otters, the powerful brown bears, the moose and caribou, all these grand natural resources, plus Clark's family and business interests, kept him in the country and contributed to making him one of the first—and certainly one of the foremost—adopted sons of the Bristol Bay region of southwestern Alaska.

Bibliography

Books

Adams, George R. *Life on the Yukon 1865–1867*. Edited by Richard A. Pierce. Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press, 1992.

Bendtzen, Thomas K., Bob King and Fritz Johnson. *The Nushagak River*, "Lonely Eldorado," Volume 17 No. 1, edited by Penny Rennick. Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, 1990.

Black, Lydia. *Russians in Alaska 1732–1867*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004.

Borneman, Walter R. *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

Breece, Hannah. *A Schoolteacher in Old Alaska: The Story of Hannah Breece*, edited by Jane Jacobs. New York: Random House, 1995.

Clark, Joe, with Joe Faith. *Nukalpiaq, A Good Hunter & Provider*. Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford Publishing, 2005.

Dall, William H. *The Yukon Territory: The Narrative of W.H. Dall, Leader of The Expedition to Alaska in 1866–1868*. London: Downey & Co. Limited, 1898.

DeVinne, Pamela B., editor. *The American Heritage Dictionary Second College Edition*. Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.

Dumond, Don E. *A Naknek Chronicle, Ten Thousand Years in a Land of Lands and Rivers and Mountains of Fire*, King Salmon, Alaska: Department of the Interior, Katmai National Park and Preserve, 2005.

Dumond, Don E. and James W. VanStone. *Paugvik: A Nineteenth-Century Native Village on Bristol Bay, Alaska*, Fieldiana No. 24, Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1995.

Dyson, George. *Baidarka: The Kayak*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1986.

Ellanna, Linda J., and Andrew Balluta. *The People of Nondalton*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

Eliot, Charles W. *John Gilley of Baker's Island*. First published in 1899 in *The Century Magazine*, and as a book, *John Gilley, Maine Farmer and Fisherman*, by the American Unitarian Association in 1904. Reprinted by Eastern National Park Monument Association in

concert with Acadia National Park, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1978.

Elliott, Henry W. *Our Arctic Province, Alaska and The Seal Islands*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886.

Evanoff, Karen E. *Dena'ina Elnena: A Celebration*. Anchorage: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010.

Fitzhugh, William W., and Aron Crowell. *Crossroads of Continents, Cultures of Siberia and Alaska*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.

Mack, Gerstle. *Lewis and Hannah Gerstle*. San Francisco: published by the author, 1953.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.

Graburn, Nelson H. H., Molly Lee, and Jean-Loup Rousselot. *Catalogue Raisonné of the Alaska Commercial Company Collection, Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

Haakanson, Sven, Jr., and Amy Steffian, editors. *Giinaquq, Like a Face*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2009.

Hartmann, J.A.H. "Exploration of Western Alaska." Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Moravian Church Archives, 1884 published in *Report on Education in Alaska 1886*, Appendix 1, edited by Sheldon Jackson. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1886.

Henkelman, James W., and Kurt H. Vitt. *The History of the Alaska Moravian Church 1885–1985, Harmonious To Dwell*. Bethel, Alaska: The Moravian Seminary & Archives, 1985.

Hudson, Raymond. *Alaska's Jesse Lee Home, Volume I 1889–1925*. Walnut Creek, California: Hardscratch Press, 2007.

Howe, Octavius T. and Frederick C. Mathews. American Clipper Ships: 1833-1858, Volume II, Salem, Massachusetts: Marine Research Society, 1927.

Hussey, John A. *Embattled Katmai: A History of Katmai National Park*. San Francisco: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1971.

Jacobsen, Johan Adrian. *Alaskan Voyage 1881–1883: An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America*, translated by Erna Gunther. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1877, 189–191.

Johnston, Samuel P., editor. *Alaska Commercial Company 1868–1940*, privately printed, no date.

Kitchener, Lois Delano. *Flag Over The North, The Story of the Northern Commercial Company*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1954.

Korskovskiy, Petr. *Russian Exploration In Southwest Alaska: The Travel Journals of Petr Korsakovskiy (1818) And Ivan Ya. Vasilev (1829)*, edited by James W. VanStone and translated by David H. Kraus. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1988.

Lindsay, Debra. *Science in the Subarctic: Trappers, Traders and the Smithsonian Institution*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993.

Lowther, Hugh, (Earl of Lonsdale). *A Victorian Earl In The Arctic: The Travels and Collections of the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale 1888–1889*. Edited by Shepard Kretch, III. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989.

Lynch, Alice J. *Qizhjeh: The Historic Tanaina Village of Kijik and the Kijik Archeological District*. Fairbanks: Anthropology and Historic Preservation Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 1982.

Mercier, Xavier Francois. *Recollection of the Youkon*: *Memories from the years 1868–1885*, edited by Linda Finn Yarborough, Anchorage: Alaska Historical Society, 1986.

Millard, Frank B. *History of the San Francisco Bay Region*, Volume 2, San Francisco: The American Historical Society, 1924, 333–334, for "Carl C. Rohlffs."

Morgan, Lael. *Bristol Bay Basin*. Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, Volume 5, No. 3, 1978.

Nearing, Rosemary. *Continental Dash, The Russian-American Telegraph*. Ganges, British Columbia: Horsdal & Schubart Publisher, Ltd., 1989.

Nicholson, John W. *No Half-Truths: Reminiscences of Life in Bristol Bay, Alaska 1906–1995*. Anchorage: Publication Consultants, 1995.

O'Connor, Daniel. *The Inner Man; Good Things to Eat and Where to Get Them*, San Francisco: H. H. Bancroft, 1891.

O'Neill, Gordon F. *Ernest Reuben Lilienthal and His Family*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1949.

O'Meara, Walter. *Daughters of the Country: The Women of the Fur Trade and Mountain Men*. New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1968.

Orth, Donald J. *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*. Geological Survey Professional Paper 567. Washington, D.C.: 1967.

Osgood, Wilfred. *A Biological Reconnaissance of the Base of the Alaska Peninsula*, North America Fauna. 24. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904.

Oswalt, Wendell H. *Historic Settlements Along the Kuskokwim River, Alaska*. Juneau: Alaska State Library Historical Monograph No. 7, Division of State Libraries and Museums, Department of Education, 1980.

Pleasant, Charlie, Joseph H. Romig, K. T. Khlebnikov and Petr Korsakovskiy. "The War of the Eye," *Our Story, Readings from Southwest Alaska*, edited by John Branson and Tim Troll, second edition. Anchorage: Alaska Natural History Association, 2006.

Pomeroy, Earl. *The Pacific Slope: A History*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965.

Raymond, Charles W. *Report of A Reconnaissance of the Yukon River, Alaska Territory, July to September 1869*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Schlachtmeyer, Sandra Spatz. *A Death Decoded, Robert Kennicott and the Alaska Telegraph*. Alexandria, Virginia: Voyage Publishing Inc., 2010.

Sherwood, Morgan B. *Exploration Of Alaska 1865–1900*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.

Spurr, Josiah E. *The Log of the Kuskokwim: An Exploration in Alaska*. Petersham, Massachusetts: Stephen H. Spurr, 1950.

Stein, Gary C. *A History of the Middle and Lower Yukon River*. Juneau: Division of Research and Development, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1981.

Unrau, Harlan D. *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska: Historic Resource Study*. Draft. Anchorage: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992.

VanStone, James W. *Eskimos of the Nushagak River: An Ethnographic History*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.

VanStone, James W. *Ingalik Contact Ecology: An Ethnohistory of the Lower-Middle Yukon, 1790–1935*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, Fieldiana No. 71, 1979.

VanStone, James W. *Nushagak, An Historic Trading Center In Southwestern Alaska*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1972.

Wheeler, Keith. *The Alaskans*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1977.

Whymper, Frederick. *Travels and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska*. London: John Murray, 1868.

Zagoskin, L. A. *Lieutenant Zagoskin's Travels In Russian America 1842-1844, The First Ethnographic and Geographic Investigations In The Yukon and Kuskokwim Valleys of Alaska,* edited by Henry N. Michael. Toronto: The Arctic Institute of North America, University of Toronto Press, 1967.

Znamenski, Andrei A. *Through Orthodox Eyes: Russian Missionary Narratives of Travels to the Dena'ina and Ahtna, 1850s–1930s*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003.

Letters

Letter, May 2, 1898, from the Alaska Commercial Company trading post at Unalaska to Alaska Russian Orthodox Church, Alaskan Russian Church archives, 1733–1938, Roll 137, frames 379–380, Washington, D. C.: Library of Congress.

Letter, March 2, 1881, from Spencer Baird to David Starr Jordan, Cecil Green Library, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University.

Letter, March 22, 1884, from Spencer Baird to James W. Johnson, Record Unit 33, Volume 160, 448–449, 467–470, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, May 19, 1883, from Spencer Baird to Charles L. McKay, Record Unit 33, Volume 142, 113–117, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, April 22, 1884, from Spencer Baird to John W. Clark, Record Unit 33, Volume 166, 487–490, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, July 2, 1890, from Dr. Tarlton H. Bean to Marshall McDonald, File of the Revenue Cutter Service, letters received by the Revenue Cutter Service, June 7, 1888, to December 29, 1890, microfilm m 641, roll 1, National Archives and Records Administration, Alaska Office, Anchorage, Alaska.

Letter, August 29, 1887, from Charles Beckwith to Rudolph Neumann, "Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, Unalaska, 1885–1889." Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Letter, August 15, 1867, from Charles S. Bulkley to William Ennis, Western Union Telegraph Expedition, 1865–1867, Record Unit 7713, C-22, 05, 03, Box 1, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, August 18, 1887, from John W. Clark to Spencer Baird, Accession no. 18416, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, June 17, 1883, from John W. Clark to Hector McKay, Record Unit 30, Office of the Secretary Correspondence, 1882–1890, Box 8 Folder 8, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, April 16, 1867, from William H. Dall to Spencer Baird, Office of the Secretary, Correspondence, Record Unit 7002, Box 18, The Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, July 19, 1883, from Nelson Groom to W. B. Hazen, Record Unit 30, Box 15, Folder 10, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, June 8, 1884, from J.A.H. Hartmann to Edmond de Schweinitz, John H. Kilbuck Papers, Box 10-Folder II, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Letter, March 26, 1982 from Dr. Thomas A. Jacobs to Marjorie Reichardt, William B. Bradford folder, Alaska Packers Association Collection, Box 78, Series 8, "Company History Files," University Archives and Records Center, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

Letter, May 1883, from Johan Adrian Jacobsen to Adolf Bastian, translated by Sonja Luhrman, Ethnologishes Museum, Berlin, copy in the possession of Ann Fienup-Riordan.

Letter, February 26, 1884, from Sheldon Jackson to Edmond de Schweinitz, John H. Kilbuck Papers, Box 10, Folder II, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Letters, October 20, 1885, June 5, 1885, and November 7, 1886, from James W. Johnson to Spencer Baird, Accession nos. 16878 and 18416, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, March 31, 1924, from David Starr Jordan to Leda B. Clark, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch Library, Cornell University, e-mail message Corey R. Earle, February 26, 2008.

Letter, August 13, 1881, from J. N. Mills to Spencer Baird, Record Unit 30, Office of Secretary, Correspondence 1882–1890, Box 15, Folder 10, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, September 25, 1881, from Charles L. McKay to Spencer Baird, Office of the Secretary, Correspondence, Record Unit 7002, Accession no. 11460.

Letter, April 14, 1882, from Charles L. McKay to anonymous, *The Indiana Student*, November 1882, Indiana University Bloomington, Archives.

Letter, undated, from Charles L. McKay, Accession no. 13527, 15, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, September 14, 1883, from Sarah A. McKay to Spencer Baird, Record Unit 30, Office of Secretary Correspondence 1882–1890, Box 8, Folder 8, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.

Letter, October 6, 1885, from Rudolph Neumann to John W. Clark, Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book, 1885–1889, Unalaska Letters. Alaska Commercial Company Papers 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Letter, August 9, 1886, from Rudolph Neumann to Reinhold Sipary, Alaska Commercial Company Copy Book 1885–1889, Unalaska Letters. Alaska Commercial Company Papers 1868–1911. Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Letter, September 18, 1890, from Vasili Shishkin to the Alaska Ecclesiastical Consistory, The Alaskan Russian Church, Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Church of North America, microfilm roll 149, D 216, 1–21, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Letter, June 15, 1890, from Captain Z. L. Tanner to Marshall McDonald, Alaska File of the Revenue Service, Letters Received by Revenue Cutter Service, June 7, 1888, to December 29, 1890, microfilm m 641, roll 1, National Archives and Records Administration, Alaska Office, Anchorage, Alaska.

Letter, June 28, 2008, from Georgia Tolbert to the author.

Letter, May 4, 1885, from William H. Weinland to Edmond de Schweinitz, John H. Kilbuck Papers, Box 10, Folder II, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Manuscripts

George R. Adams, Diary of Lieutenant George R. Adams Russian America 1865–1867, October 5, 1866, Charles S. Hubbell Collection, Special Collections Libraries, Allen Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

Alaska Russian Church Archives, Kijik Confessional Records 1854–1935, translated by Anne Suskamp and John Stinson, with assistance of Linda J. Ellanna and Andrew Balluta, from microfilm, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Fairbanks, Elmer Rasmuson Library, Alaska Polar Regions, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Accession LACL-00092.

Henry M. Bannister, Meterological Journal March 1st, 1866, to August 31st, 1866. Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7213, Western Union Telegraphic Expedition Collection, 1865–1867. Smithsonian Institution Gallery, Washington, D.C.

James Monroe Bean and Genevieve Suydam Bean Papers, circa 1870-1880. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Rasmuson Library, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Archives Department.

Charles S. Bulkley, Journal of the U.S. Russo-American Telegraph Expedition, 1865–1867, Daniel B. Libby, letter to Charles S. Bulkley, June 20, 1867, copy at the Alaska Resources Library and Information Services Library, Anchorage, Alaska.

Holy Cross Mission Collection, Box 11, Folder 7, Enrollment 1901–1917, Anastasia Clark, Gonzaga University Archives, Spokane, Washington.

Fred Smith, Diary of Fred Smith of Western Union Telegraph Surveys, 1865–1867, unpublished manuscript, Charles S. Hubbell Collection, Special Collections Libraries, Allen Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

Henry W. Weinland, Diaries and Journals 1884. Henry W. Weinland Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Ferdinand Westdahl, Alaska 1878, BANC MSS P-K 23–32, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Government Reports

Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, New York County, New York, Ward 12, dwelling number 1147, family number 1345. NARA Roll M432–549, Page 110B, Image 117.

Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, The Eighth Census of the United States, New York County, New York, Randall's Island, Boys Nursery, NARA Roll, M653-802, page 226, image 740, Family Library Film 803802.

Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, San Francisco, California, 1st Precinct of the 8th Ward South. Roll: Microfilm M593, 82, 334B., image 95; Family History Library Film: 545581.

Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, San Francisco, California, Roll: 73: Family History Film: 1254073: Page: 457C.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, San Francisco, California, District 146, Sheet 4, 274.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Alaska, Index A-Z, Heritage Quest, Bountiful, Utah, 2000, page 40. Koserfsky, Alaska, Series Roll 1829, T 623 page 52.

MacDonald, Lewis. "Chronological History of Salmon Canneries in Western Alaska," *1950 Annual Report No. 2*, Juneau: Alaska Fisheries Board and the Alaska Department of Fisheries, 57.

Moser, Jefferson F. "The Salmon and Salmon Fisheries of Alaska: Report of the Operations of the United States Fish Commission Steamer *Albatross* for the Year Ending June 30, 1898. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office,1899. Extracted from *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission, Volume XVIII*.

New York State, Adjutant General's Office. *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York for the Year 1899*, Volumes I–?. Albany, New York: New York State Printer, 1900.

Nushagak Canning Company, 17039, Articles of Incorporation, January 4, 1888, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

Petroff, Ivan. *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources, etc., of Alaska*. Also known as "Tenth Census-Alaska." Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, Census Office, Government Printing Office, 1884.

U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, Report of the Commissioner for 1889 to 1891. From July 1st, 1889, to June 30th, 1891, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893.

Porter, R.P., Albert B. Schanz, "The Fourth or Nushagak District." *Report on the Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census: 1890*. Chapter 6, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893.

Smith, Philip Sidney. *The Lake Clark-Central Kuskokwim Region Alaska*, United States Geological Survey Bulletin 655, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917.

Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission, Volume XII for 1892. Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1894.

San Francisco City Directories for John W. Clark, Henry Fortmann and Carl C. Rohlffs, at the San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, California, and California Historical Society, San Francisco, California.

Articles

Adams, George R. "First American Exploring Expedition to Russian America, Pioneer Fur Sealing In Alaska," 1868, BANC MSS P-K 215, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Alta California, "Arrival of the *Nightingale*," October 9, 1867; "Steamer *St. Paul*," August 19, 1877.

"Bark *Montana* went ashore at Nushagak, Alaska," September 16, 1885.

Anonymous, Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, "The Klondike Country, Editor Arkell and Others Claim it by Right of Discovery," July 25, 1897.

Bates, Russell R. "Nushagak," *The Alaska Prospector*, September 3, 1903.

Branson, John B. "Lake Clark or Qizhjeh Vena?" *The Bristol Bay Times*, August 27, 1993.

The Call, (San Francisco, California), "New Incorporations," January 6, 1888.

Crowell, Aron. "Postcontact Koniag Ceremonialism on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula: Evidence from the Fisher Collection," *Arctic Anthropology*, Volume 29 (1), 1992, 18–37.

Elliott, Charles P. "Salmon Fishing Grounds and Canneries, by Charles P. Elliott," *Compilation of Narratives of Explorations in Alaska*. Senate Report No. 1023, c.1900, 738–739.

Harrington, John J., editor, *The Esquimaux*, Volume I, Port Clarence, Russian America and Plover Bay, Eastern Siberia, 1866–1867, 39.

The Indiana Student, Volume IX, No. 1, November 1882, Indiana University Archives, Bloomington, Indiana, 11.

Jordan, David Starr. "Charles Leslie McKay," *The Indiana Student*,

Volume IX, No. 1, November 1882, Indiana University Archives, Bloomington, Indiana, 3–4.

Quoting letter of J. N. Mills in *The Indiana Student*, Volume X, No.1, November 1883, 5.

King, Bob. "Joseph Peter Haller," unpublished manuscript, copy in the history files at Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Field Headquarters, Port Alsworth, Alaska.

Los Angeles Times, Associated Press, "The Klondike Country, Editor [W.J.] Arkell and Others Claim it by Right of Discovery," July 25, 1897, 1, 3.

McDonald, Ray E., as told to Lucille Kempley. "Giants of the Newhalen," *The Alaska Sportsman*, September, 1938.

Mearns, Barbara, and Richard Mearns. "McKay of McKay's Bunting: A Native of Appleton, Wisconsin," *The Passenger Pigeon*, Volume 55, No. 2, Summer 1993, 139–141.

The Moravian, January 12, 1887, 19; February 2, 1887, 68; March 23, 1887, 183; September 28, 1887, 616; July 3, 1887, 583; October 26, 1887; August 15, 1888; October 17, 1888; April 17, 1889; April 24, 1889; August 21, 1889; September 11, 1889; October 8, 1889, 648; November 13, 1889; November 27, 1889; December 4, 1889, 580; February 5, 1890; March 11, 1890; July 23, 1890, 466; August 27, 1890, 551; November 12, 1890; December 17, 1890; March 4, 1891; March 11, 1891; May 13, 1891; "The Report of Carmel for 1890–1891," May 31, 1891; August 26, 1891; December 23, 1891; June 2, 1897; June 9, 1897, 364; October 6, 1897.

Osgood, Wilfred. "Lake Clark a Little-Known Alaska Lake," *The National Geographic Magazine*, Volume XV, No. 8, August 1904, 329.

Petroff, Ivan. "Alaska's Census, Conclusion of Mr. Petroff Enumerating Journey," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 10, 1881, 2. *Transactions and Proceeding of the Geographical Society of the Pacific 1881–1892*, San Francisco, volume II "Geographical and Ethnographical Notes On Alaska," by Ivan Petroff, 2–3, Bancroft Library, F 856 G 4.

Pierce, Richard A. "A Note on 'Ivan Petroff and the Far Northwest,'" *Journal of the West*, Volume III, October 1964, 436–439.

San Francisco Chronicle, "Poisoned by Fish," August 25, 1890, 10; "Canneries. A Big Run of Salmon and A Large Pack," August 30, 1891.

San Rafael Independent, "A Former Mayor of San Rafael Dead," undated May 1916. Alaska Packers Association Collection, Box 78, Series 8, "Company History Files." University Archives and Records Center, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington.

Schanz, Albert B. "Our Alaska Expedition," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, LXXII, June 27, 1891; LXXIII, September 26, 1891; October 3, 1891; October 10, 1891; October 24, 1891; October 31, 1891; November 7, 1891; November 11, 1891.

Sloss, Frank H. "Who Owned the Alaska Commercial Company," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Volume LXVIII, July 1977, 120–130.

Sloss, Frank H., and Richard A. Pierce, "The Hutchinson, Kohl Story, A Fresh Look," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Volume 62, January 1971, 1–2.

Swineford, A. P. "The Cruise of the *Thetis*," *The Detroit Free Press*, undated 1888, Folder 3, Governor A. P. Swineford Papers, Alaska State Archives, Juneau, Alaska.

Taggart, Harold F., Editor, "Journal of William H. Ennis, Russian America Telegraph Exploring Expedition," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, March 1954, Volume 33: 1, 166.

Ventura County Star Free Press, "Pasha Marie Squires," March 18, 1986, B 6.

Wells, E. H. "Our Alaska Expedition," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, LXXII, June 27, 1891; LXXIII, September 19, 1891.

Interviews

Evon, Alexie, interviewed by Joan Townsend at Pedro Bay, Alaska, June 1973, along with Macy Hobson and Rose Hedlund. Item #33, CD #13, University of Manitoba, Elizabeth Dafoe Library, Archives & Special Collections, Winnipeg, Manitoba, copy at Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Collection, Anchorage, Alaska.

Brown, Mel, telephone conversation, April 29, 2011.

Butkovich, Elizabeth Nicholson, numerous conversations, 1990–2009 and March 15, 2009.

Clark, Peyton, personal conversation, October 6, 2009.

Crowell, Aron, personal conversation, April 26, 2011.

Holmberg, James, personal conversation, October 6, 2009.

Jensen, Gus, personal conversation, December 2, 1997.

Liboff, Jerry, telephone conversation, April 28, 2011.

Merrell, Bruce, personal conversation, February 11, 2008.

Monsen, Melvin, telephone conversation, November 1, 2009.

Nelson, Fred, telephone conversation, April 28, 2011.

Nick, Father Victor, personal conversation, February 22, 2011.

Nicholson, John, personal conversations, 2000–2003.

H. P. Nicholson Family Bible. Annotations, in possession of the estate of Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich.

Nicholson, William, personal conversation, July 18, 2009.

Olson, Hjalmer, telephone conversations, October 22 and November 1, 2009.

Powers, Dr. David J., personal interview, June 19, 2011.

Znamenski, Andrei A., telephone conversation, August 8, 2009 and personal conversation October 9, 2009.

Unpublished Dissertations and Manuscripts

Alaska Commercial Company Records, 1868–1940 JL006, Ledgers JL 6-48 and JL 6-49, Cecil Green Library, Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University.

Alaska Commercial Company Records, 1868–1940 JL006, Transfer Journal, JL6-22, 239, 273, Cecil Green Library, Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University.

Alaska Commercial Company Records 1868–1911, Final Account of Union Trust Company of San Francisco in the matter of the estate of Feodora Clark, September 4, 1908, 4, Archives of the Arctic and Polar Regions, Collections of the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Jacobsen, Johan Adrian. "Journal," April 30, 1883, translated by Sonja Luhrman, Ethnologisches Museum of Berlin, in the possession of Ann Fienup-Riordan.

Kilbuck, John H. Kilbuck Papers, "Journal of John H. Kilbuck to Edith Kilbuck, August 6, 1896, to February 12, 1897," and January 1–9, 1889, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Osborn, Sannie Kenton. Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology, Appendix 1, lists all persons known to have been stationed at Fort Ross, California, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1997.

Petroff, Ivan. "Journal of trip to Alaska in search of information for the

Bancroft Library: San Francisco: ms. S, 1878," BANC MSS P–K 57–69.

Rodman, Hugh. "Rodman Alaska Diary," July 5, 1897, unpublished manuscript at the Pratt Museum, Homer, Alaska.

Schoechert, John. "Letters From Carmel, Alaska, August 17, 1889, Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Schoechert, John. "Extracts of the Diary of the Moravian Mission at Carmel, Alaska From 1895–1896," Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Wolff, Frank E. "The Report of the Mission at Carmel, For the Year 1888 to 1889," Moravian Church Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

E-mail Messages

Anbinder, Tyler. E-mail message, October 19, 2009.

Arndt, Katherine L., translator. E-mail message, March 5, 2009. Russian Church Archives, Vital Statistics Records, Nushagak, Kwikhpak, St. Michael parishes. Alaskan Russian Church archives records, 1733–1938. Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Microfilm–Manuscript Division; e-mail of March 16, 2009, microfilm roll 137, frames 379–380.

Brown, Mary Elizabeth. E-mail messages, October 21, 2009, and November 8, 2009.

Carapellucci, Janice. E-mail messages, November 19, 2009; November 24, 2009; December 2 and 5, 2009; February 1 and 2, 2010.

Collins, Marvin. E-mail messages, March 21 and 22, 2011.

Crowell, Aron. E-mail messages, April 5, 2011; May 12, 2011.

Di Giorno, Louis. E-mail messages to Janice Carapellucci, August 15 and 17, 2011.

Keats, Patricia. Society of California Pioneers, e-mail message, March 12, 2008; November 8 and 10, 2011.

Goldstein, Susan. San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco History Center, E-mail messages, March 15, 2008, and September 29, 2009.

Harrison, Corinne. E-mail message, December 16, 2010.

Hitchcock, Sean. E-mail message, March 10, 2011.

Hudson, Raymond. E-mail message, March 18, 2011.

O'Leary, Matthew. E-mail message, March 21, 2011, containing interpretations of Yup'ik words by Marie Meade and Monica Sheldon.

Reid, Anne. E-mail messages, October 31, November 1, 2, 3, 10, 2011.

Schlachtmeyer, Sandra Spatz. E-mail message, April 19, 2011.

Wallace, Harold. E-mail message, April 26, 2011.

Weise, John. E-mail message, March 9, 2011.

White, Mary. E-mail messages, March 11 and July 30, 2009.

Znamenski, Andrei A. E-mail message, August 8, 2009, "Father Vasili Shishkin to Alaska Ecclesiastical Consistory, September 18, 1890," The Alaskan Russian Church Archives: Records of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, Microfilm-Manuscript Division, 1984, microfilm, roll 149, D216, 1–21, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.

Internet Sites

A. W. Greely, United States Army, "Photographic History of the Civil War, Volume IV, the Civil War Military Telegraph Service, 2–3, http://www.civilwarsignals.org/pages/tele/telegreely/telegreely.html.

http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/erysipelas.htm.

The Huntington Library, *Early California Population Project Database*; 2006, http://www.huntington.org/Information/ECPPuserguide.htm#rules

Sally Cavell Johns, *Viva Los Californios! The Battle of San Pasqual,* http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/73fall/sanpasqual.htm.

Index

A

Achakhpaoluk, 175, 191
Achteedeedung Creek, 196
Adams, George R., 8, 36
Aglurmiut, 69
Alagnak River, 69
Alaska Commercial Company (ACC), v, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 54, 55, 57, 59, 63, 66, 67, 68, 74, 80, 81, 88, 91, 95, 96, 97, 98, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 114, 121, 125, 126, 127, 130, 133, 134, 140, 142, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 169, 171, 190, 191, 206, 208, 220, 221, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 236, 237
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 219
Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, 219
Alaska Division. *See* Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition 3, 8, 13, 14, 15, 21
Alaska Packers Association, 6, 102, 118, 127, 147, 157, 163, 208
Alaska Packing Company, *See* Scandinavian cannery, 118, 150, 154, 163, 172, 174, 200
Alaska Peninsula, 62, 63, 68, 69, 90, 100, 102, 126, 143, 161, 173, 191
Alaska Range, 1
Albany, New York, 10
Albatross, 153, 154, 156, 157, 168
Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt. *See* Alexandrovsk, 19, 97
Aleutian Islands, 54, 65, 97
Alexie (cook-translator), 103, 107, 108, 161, 190, 221
Amanka Lake, 106
American Museum of Natural History, 71
Anchorage Museum, viii, 37, 168
Anderson, Chas. 200
Andreanoff, Sophie, 50
Andrei (ships pilot), 97, 98, 111, 118
Angaiok, 175
Ankaiak, Andrei, 148, 149
Ankaiak, Jacob, 148, 149
Anokhtoknagok (Vasutka), 175
Anvik River, 46, 47
Anvik village, 5, 9, 42, 45, 46, 47, 51
Apangesin, 175, 191
Apostles Peter and Paul Church (Nushagak) 54, 58
Appleton, Wisconsin, 66
Arctic Packing Company, 109, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 131, 139, 140, 147
Arctic, 168
Ariel, 16, 17
Arizona, 17
Arkell, W.J., 193
Arndt, Katherine, 49
Atlantic Cable, 15, 16, 35, 36
Augustine Island, 161
Autchanak River, 193

B

Backman, Henry T., 149
Baird, Spencer, 17, 65, 66, 70, 89
Bannister, Henry M., 18
Baranov, Aleksandr, 19
Bastion, Adolph, 84

Bates, Russell S., 219
Bean, James, 18, 20, 35, 36, 38
Bean, T.H., 155
Beckwith, Charles, 118, 122, 123
Bering Sea Eskimos, 22
Bering Strait Division, 30
Bethel, Alaska, 108, 221
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, ix, 94, 99, 105, 111, 115, 116, 117, 138, 149, 202, 204
Bischoff, Ferdinand, 18
Bonanza Hills, 194
Boscowitz, Leopold, 43
Bradford cannery, 6, 118, 154, 172, 200
Bradford, William, 111, 220
Bristol Bay Canning Company, 6, 140, 142
Bristol Bay Native Corporation, vii, ix, 219
Bristol Bay, v, vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 19, 37, 38, 44, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 75, 80, 84, 87, 88, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 102, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 118, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 132, 133, 134, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 147, 150, 153, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 166, 173, 174, 187, 190, 195, 200, 202, 204, 208, 210, 129, 220, 221, 222, 223
British Columbia, 15, 18, 43
Bryant, Charles, 135
Buffalo, New York, 125
Bulkley, Charles, 15, 36
Butkovich, Elizabeth Nicholson, vii, 7, 94, 101, 110, 120, 121, 133, 141, 192, 201

C

California, ix, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 21, 38, 41, 43, 50, 55, 58, 109, 120, 125, 144, 150, 193, 194, 203, 223
Camp Adams, 30
Camp Clark, 34
Canada, 15, 16, 17
Cape Constantine, 61, 69, 81, 82, 90, 98, 197
Cape Newenham, 54
Carapellucci, Janice, vii, 12
Carmel Mission, 6, 113, 137, 148, 161, 202
Carter, Jimmy, 222
Catholic Church, 51, 93
Chappell, J. R., 36
Chicago Academy of Science, 17,
Chigmit Mountains, 70, 73, 76, 184, 185
Chilikadrotna River, 194
Chimeyune, 104, 105
Chogiung, 173
Chugach, 86
Chulitna Portage, 69, 71, 88
Chulitna River, 71, 75, 181, 182, 184
Civil War, 12, 16, 42
Clara Bell, 16, 22, 35, 36
Clark Slough, 222
Clark Spit, 222
Clark, Agniia, 28
Clark, Alexander-Max (Kiayaksuk), 50, 51, 52
Clark, Cornelia, 10
Clark, Feodora "Dora," 7, 120, 144, 205, 209
Clark, Georgiana, 9
Clark, Iakov, 49
Clark, J.W. (wool merchant), 38, 55
Clark, J.W., 2, 8, 9, 38, 54, 55, 128, 146, 192, 200, 203
Clark, Joe, 49, 50
Clark, John W., v, vii, ix, xii, 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 28, 38, 44, 45, 50, 51, 54, 60, 79, 87, 119, 120, 121, 126, 141, 159, 169, 174, 197, 203, 208, 222
Clark, John, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 27, 33, 36, 37, 42, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 55, 57, 60, 61, 65, 66, 75, 85, 88, 89, 91, 96, 100, 114, 116, 124, 134, 157, 203, 204, 210, 219, 222
Clark, Marie Anastasia, 50, 51
Clark, Matrena, 28
Clark, Natalia V.,(mother), 129, 144, 203, 208
Clark, Natalia, (daughter), 51, 120
Clark, Nathalia, (possible Clark daughter), 51, 120

Clark, Parascovia "Parsha," 120
Clark, Peyton "Bud," 11
Clark, Richard, 9
Clark, Vasilii, 49
Clark, William, 11
Clark-Shishkin-Orlov clan, 58, 96, 200, 203
Coal Land Act, 126
Collins, Perry M., 15
Columbia River, xi, x, 138, 139, 153
Commodore, 47
Constitution, 17
Cook Inlet, xiii, 44, 59, 88, 124, 157, 159, 161, 163, 185, 186
Coolidge, Calvin, 158
Crystal Peaks National Park and Preserve, 222

D

Dall, William H., 18, 20, 38
Davydov, Gavriil I., 86
Dement'ev, Nikolai (Demientieff), 49, 104, 106
Dena'ina Athabascan, 54, 162
Department of Commerce, 155
Diamond EK, 163
Diamond K, 162
Diamond N, 162, 164, 165
Diamond NC, 163
Diamond O, 162
Diamond PHJ, 163
Diamond T, 163, 164, 165
Diamond U, 163, 164, 165
Dillingham, vii, 45, 85, 102, 118, 154, 172, 173, 210, 222
Discovery, 86
Dora, 77, 102, 103, 104, 116, 123, 135, 137
Dull, John, 49, 50

E

East River, 10
Edge, George, 131, 138, 142
Egavik Creek, 34
Egegik Packing Company, 102
Egegik village, 68, 69, 102, 103, 220
Ekuk Spit, 199
Ekuk village, 80, 82, 85, 98, 120, 144, 145, 168, 173
Ekwok (village), 176
Ekwok (on Rohlffs Slough), 61
Electra, 127
Eliot, Charles W., n. 1
Elliott, Charles P., 157
Elliott, Henry W., 18, 38, 53, 62, 75, 97
Ennis, William H., 16
Etolin Point, 73
Evanoff, Zackar Riktorov, 88

F

Farallon, 142
Field, Cyrus, 15
Fienup-Riordan, Ann, viii, 92
Filson Society, 11
Fort Alexander, 19, 45, 65, 83, 98, 100, 128, 205
Fort Ross, 58
Fort Yukon, 17, 18, 19, 20, 36, 45, 46
Fortmann, Henry F., 6, 110, 111
Forty Mile Creek, 169, 171
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 89, 167, 169, 173, 182, 185, 191, 192

G

George S. Wright, 16, 18
Gerstle, Lewis, 43
Gerstle, W., 126
Gissig, Charles, 208
Glacier-Volcanoes National Park and Preserve, 222
Goodnews Bay, 106, 172
Grantley Harbor, 22, 30, 34
Graveyard cannery, 128, 133
Green Bay, Wisconsin, 114
Greenfield, William C., 167, 171
Greenland, 94
Greenwald, Alfred, 39
Greytown, Nicaragua, 17
Groom, Nelson, 81, 85
Guenther, Louis, 115, 119, 123, 132, 144, 201
Gulf of Anadyr, 21

H

Hagemeister Island, 62, 161
Hale, Crest, 220
Haller, J.P., 118, 220
Hammond, Jay S., 2
Harrington, J.J., 36

Harry Morse, 140
Hartmann, Adolphus H., 6, 96, 97, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114
Hazen, William B., 65, 81, 95
Healy, Michael A., 96
Henekelmann, James W., 108
Herendeen Bay, 126
Hiller, John, 120
Hirsch, Charles, 126
Hoidahl, Hans, 208
Holitna River, 167
Holmberg, James, 11
Holy Cross Mission, 51, 120
Huber, Emma, 114, 137, 200
Huber, Mary, 116, 117, 130, 137
Hus, John, 93
Hussey, John A., vii, 134

I

Igiugig village, 190
Igushik River, 61, 85, 106, 172
Igushik village, 85
Iliamna Bay, 161
Iliamna Lake, 54, 69, 73, 75, 88, 89, 91, 130, 161, 167, 173, 185, 186, 188, 189, 197, 201
Iliamna River, 73, 74, 76
Iliamna village (Old), 69, 71, 73, 74, 76, 161, 190
Iliamna-Lake Clark, 70, 75, 88, 91, 161
Illinois, 120
Imperial Valley, 120
Indiana University, 65, 66, 72
Inupiaq (Inuits) Eskimos, 22, 24, 28, 94
Ireland, 10
Isthmus of Panama, 5, 9, 16, 17, 37, 38
Ivanov, Aleksey (Vasili), 75

J

J.D. Peters, 150
Jackson, J.W., 200
Jackson, Sheldon, 94, 95, 116, 166
Jacobsen, Johan Adrian, 74, 75, 82, 83, 84, 86
Jensen, H.C., 115, 127,
Johnson, James W., 66, 85, 89, 101,
Johnson, P.H., 150, 154, 155, 220
Jordan, David Starr, 65, 66, 70

K

Kakhonak village, 130, 188, 189, 190
Kaltag village, 22
Kamishhak Bay, 161
Kamukhpak, 176, 182
Kanakanak village, 6, 111, 120, 172, 173
Kanik River, 61, 106
Kanulik village, 61, 102, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 119, 120, 130, 131, 136, 148, 149, 154, 173, 175, 176, 191, 193, 199
Karluk, 125, 128
Kashevaroff, Paul (Kashevarov), 102, 140, 200
Kaskanak village, 190
Katmai Trail, 59, 124, 132, 142, 143, 144, 172, 174, 175, 191
Katmai village, 132, 133, 137, 142, 144, 172, 173, 191, 200
Kayankoff, Paul, 200
Kenai Indians (Dena'ina), x, 54, 73, 75, 87, 88, 153, 162, 173, 181, 182, 184, 186, 190, 191, 192, 222
Kennicott, Robert, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 36
Ketchum, Frank, 20, 22, 36
Kijik National Historic Landmark, 186
Kijik village. *See* Kilchikh, 185, 186
Kilbuck, John H., 102, 111, 119, 132, 136, 137, 167, 197, 204
Kitchener, Lois Delano, 159
Kituralrai, Helen, 49
Klikitarik, 27, 47
Klondike, 51, 193, 195
Knik Arm, 185
Knik village, 185
Kodiak Island, xiii, 58, 86, 135, 140, 142
Koggiung village, 68, 69, 120, 157, 190, 191, 201, 202, 208
Kogiukhtuli Creek, 179
Kohl, William, 43
Kokrine, Sophie, 149
Koktuli River, 69
Kokwok (also known as Tokcichoakh, guide-dog musher) 178, 179, 181, 184, 191
Kokwok village, 69, 176, 178

Koliganek village, 69
Kolmakov, Fedor, x, 19, 53, 201
Kolmakov, Petr, x, 133
Kolmakovsky Redoubt. *See* Kolmakov Redoubt, 42
Koltchoff, Fred, 200
Komolkoshen, Nicolai, 104, 105
Korsakovskiy, Petr, n. 19, n. 69, n. 175
Korserefsky village, 120
Kotlik village, 49
Krause, Frank, 172, 200
Kukaklek Lake, 69
Kukaktlik River, 106
Kulukak Bay, 61, 62, 90, 106
Kuskokwim River, v, vii, xiii, 5, 9, 19, 42, 49, 50, 75, 88, 101, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 111, 113, 172
Kusquqvagmiut (Yup'ik) 69 (Yup'ik) viii, 13, 22, 24, 31, 39, 50, 54, 55, 57, 61, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 75, 82, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107, 111, 114, 115, 117, 123, 128, 132, 135, 136, 143, 145, 148, 161, 162, 171, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 181, 184, 188, 189, 190, 194, 221
Kvichak Bay, 69, 73, 142, 143
Kvichak River, 54, 63, 68, 69, 73, 74, 75, 137, 157, 160, 181, 190, 191, 197
Kwighakh. *See* Levelock , 190 (Lovelock: 190, 191)
Kwigillingok. *See* Quigalook, xiii, 5, 39, 42, 49, 50

L

Labrador, 94
Lake Aleknagik, 69, 123, 138, 139, 153, 168
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, ii, iii, ix, 1, 2, 222
Lake Clark Pass, 1, 54, 222
Lake Clark, v, xiv, 1, 2, 6, 54, 69, 70, 71, 73, 75, 88, 89, 153, 167, 175, 184, 185, 186, 187, 191, 192, 193, 195, 196, 199, 205, 222
Larionov, Ivan, 58
Larionova, Aleksandra, 58
Larionova, Elena, 58
Larson, Christ, 200
Larson, Gust, 200
Larson, L.P., 200
Larson, Lewis, 200
Larson, Nelson, 200
Larson, Otto, 200
Le Duke, Peter, 133, 134
Lebarge, Mike, 20, 36
Lee, Molly, 44
Leslie Expedition, xiii, 175, 178, 181, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191
Lewis and Clark Expedition, 11
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 11
Lewis Point, 176
Libby Station, 34, 35
Libby, Daniel B., 22
Lilienthal, Ernest R., 41, 126
Lincoln, Abraham, n. 16
Lind, Edward, 104
Lindsay, Debra, 21
Lizzie Horner, 18
Los Angeles, 7, 8, 120
Lowther, Hugh. *See* Lord Lonsdale, 132, 143, 205
Lukin, Ivan, x, 19, 20
Lukin, Semen, x, 19
Lunchy, (factotum), 28, 29, 31, 32, 220
Lyng, Mr., 115, 116

M

Mackenzie River, 17
Maksutov, Dmitrii, 42
McDonald, Marshall, 156
McGrath, John E., 171
McGuffin, (cook), 28, 29
McKay, Charles L., v, 66, 79
McKay, Hector, 66, 81
McKay, Sarah, 66, 82
McKay's Bunting, 87
Mercier, Francois, Xavier, 9, 38, 39, 49, 54
Mills, J.N., 87
Milton Badger, 16
Mittendorf, August, 206, 208
Mittendorf, Nadia, 208
Modestov, Vladimir, 203
Montana, 90

Moravian Church, ix, 4, 93, 94, 95, 108, 113, 115, 117, 132, 137, 138, 146, 147, 202 204, 210
Moroyak village, 50
Moser, Jefferson F., 157
Mulchatna River, 59, 75, 153, 158, 162, 178, 179, 193, 194, 195
Mulchatna villages, 72, 73
Mumtrekhlagamiut. *See* Bethel, Alaska, 50, 104, 105, 106, 108, 111, 113, 119, 132, 136, 149, 159, 167, 197, 204, 210, 221

N

Nakeen, 191
Naknek Lake, 69, 142, 143, 144
Naknek Packing Company, 143, 157
Naknek River, 69, 132, 137, 142, 143, 144, 147, 168, 197
Naknek Trading Company, 157
Napaimute, 189
Napaskiak, 105
National Museum, ix, 37, 66, 87
National Park Service, ii, vii, 210, 219, 222
Nature Conservancy, 220
Nelson, Chas., 200
Nelson, Edward, 65
Nelson, Peter, 200
Neptune, 110
Neumann, Henry, 126
Neumann, Rudolph, 97, 121, 123, 125, 126
New Hudson, New York, 12
New York City, viii, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 44, 55, 75, 167, 173
New York House of Refuge, 10
New York State, n. 10, n. 12
Newhalen Portage, 88, 188
Newhalen River, 186, 187, 188
Newsboy, 204
Nicholaiou, 104, 105
Nicholson family, 51, 129
Nicholson, John W., vii, 60
Niebaum, Gustave, 43, 54
Nightingale, 8, 20, 21, 36, 37
Nikhkak village. *See* Kijik, 71, 73, 88, 138, 185, 186, 187
Nikiforoff, Mr., 45
Nikolai, Hegumen, 58
Nila Vena. *See* Iliamna Lake,
Noghelingamute, 188
Nome, 195
Nonvianuk Lake, 69
North Carolina, 94
Norton Sound, 18, 22, 35, 46, 47, 205
Nulato village, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 36, 82
Nundaltinshla, 187
Nushagak Bay, v, vii, 14, 19, 50, 53, 57, 60, 61, 62, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 74, 80, 82, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 96, 97, 106, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 125, 127, 128, 135, 138, 140, 142, 145, 147, 148, 149, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160, 172, 173, 174, 193, 197, 199, 200, 205, 208, 219, 220, 221
Nushagak Canning Company, 6, 125, 126, 127, 128, 137, 168, 173, 220
Nushagak Church, *See* Apostles of Peter and Paul Church, 58, 59, 122, 132
Nushagak River, 124, 127, 137, 138, 139, 153, 157, 158, 159, 162, 167, 169, 172, 176, 178, 191, 194, 195, 199, 202, 219
Nushagak village, 54, 56, 62, 63, 68, 74, 80, 94, 98, 116, 119, 123, 135, 147, 172, 174
Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, 3, 220

O

Orlov, Alexandra Larionova, 107, 130, 203
Orlov, Evfimii Nikolaeva, 58
Orlov, Natalia Vasilieva, 6, 58, 93, 107, 119
Orlov, Vasili E., 58, 59, 121, 122, 134, 136, 149, 203
Osborn, Henry, 133
Osgood, Wilfred, 63, 67, 69, 82, 88, 192, 196
Oxnard, California, 120

P

Paugvik village, 69, 137, 142, 147, 168, 191
Pennsylvania, ix, 43, 94, 96, 99, 105, 111, 115, 116, 117, 138, 149, 202, 204
Perotte Company, 38, 43
Perotte, John. *See* Parrott, 38, 43
Peterson, Chris, Jr., 115, 131
Peterson, Chris, Sr., 115, 131
Peterson, Delilah, 115, 131
Petroff, Ivan, xiii, xiv, 55, 65, 95, 153, 167, 188, 193
Pikhluyok, 176
Pinart, Alphonse, 75
Pioneer Company, 5, 38
Plover Bay, 8, 28, 36
Pluton Peaks National Park - Preserve, 222
Point Clarence, 30
Point Constantine, 68
Point Roberts Packing Company (Koggiung), 201
Porcupine River, 17
Port Alsworth, ix, 185
Port Moller, 54, 126
Port Townsend, Washington, 155, 156, 191
Portage Creek (Lake Clark), 196
Portage Creek (Nushagak River), 191
Presbyterian Church, 95
Pribilof Islands, 43, 44, 60, 124, 208
Prince William Sound, 86

Q

Qizhjeh Vena (Lake Clark), 75, 88, 186, 191, 222

R

Ralph L. Anderson, 127
Raymond, Charles, 3, 45, 46, 47
Riktorov, Alexie, 161
Riktorov, Andrei, 97, 98, 99, 111, 118, 161
Riktorov, Cusma, 161, 190
Riktorov, Epheme, 161
Riktorov, Evon, 161
Riktorov, Mikhail, 73, 88, 161, 190
Riktorov, Saava, n. 58
Rim of Fire National Park-Preserve, 222
Rock, Emma (Huber), 114, 115, 137, 200
Rock, Samuel, 197, 199
Rodman, Hugh, 161
Rohlffs, Carl C., 109
Rohlffs Slough, 61, 102, 113, 176, 220
Roman Catholic, 10, 11, 93
Romig, Joseph, 197
Rothrock, J.T., 18
Russ House Hotel, 9
Russian America Company, x, 42, 88
Russian America, x, xi, xiii, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 88, 121, 181, 220
Russian Orthodox Church, viii, 4, 10, 49, 52, 67, 88, 96, 97, 100, 108, 113, 114, 122, 131, 132, 139, 142, 144, 147, 148, 151, 185, 199, 203, 221

S

Sadie F. Caller, 109, 111, 114, 116
Samwell, David, 86
San Francisco Earthquake, 44, 80
San Francisco Post Office, 9, 49
San Francisco, ii, ix, vii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 67, 69, 71, 80, 81, 84, 85, 90, 96, 97, 104, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 120, 121, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 134, 140, 142, 144, 146, 147, 150, 160, 162, 172, 173, 197, 200, 202, 203, 206, 208, 220
Sansome Street, 44, 80, 130
Savonoski village (Old), 69, 142, 143, 144, 191, 197
Scammon, William, 16
Scandinavian cannery, 118, 150, 154, 163, 172, 174, 200
Schanz, Albert B., 62, 75, 89, 136, 145, 150, 159, 167, 222
Schoechert, John, 96, 137, 195, 204
Schweinitz, Edmond de, 95
Scientific Corps, 16, 18, 20, 36, 37
Seward, Alaska, 20, 21, 22, 30, 44

Seward, William H., 15
Shaktoolik, 34
Shelikof Strait, 135, 142
Sherwood, Morgan, 19
Shishkin, Innokenty, 135, 187
Shishkin, Vasili, 58, 59, 100, 114, 191
Siberia, 8, 15, 16, 36, 44
Siberian Division (Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition), 21, 36
Signal, 65, 66, 67, 81, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 95, 101, 142, 163, 221
Sipary, Reinhold, 104, 125
Sitka, 19, 42, 43, 44, 58, 59, 105, 124, 142, 191, 197
Sloss, Frank H., 41, 126
Sloss, Louis, Jr., 126
Sloss, Louis, Sr., 42, 125, 126
Smith, Fred, 8, 23, 24, 30, 35
Smithsonian Institution, ix, 4, 13, 17, 18, 21, 37, 65, 70, 84, 87, 91, 221
Spaulding, Oliver L., 156
Spurr, Josiah E., 143, 144
Squires, Ellwell Robert, 120
Squires, Parsha, 120
St Lawrence Section, 126
St. Michael, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35, 36, 42, 45, 46, 47, 49, 65, 97, 100, 124, 126, 171, 172
St. Paul, (island), 60
St. Peter and St. Paul, 58
St. Petersburg, 15
Stanford University, 66
Stanton, Edwin, 16
Stapinum, 188
Steen, Martha, 9
Stevens, Ted, 2
Stugarok village, (Clarks Point), 102, 127, 173
Stuyahok village, 178, 179
Sugpiaq (Pacific Eskimo), 54
Swan Lakes, 70, 71
Swan River (Kogiukhtuli Creek), 179, 181
Swineford, A.P., 123, 124

T

Tabai, 175, 176, 191
Tanana River, 38
Tanner, Z.L., 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 168
Telaquana Lake National Park, 222
Telegraph Expedition (Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition), 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 31, 36, 38, 100, 121, 220
Teller, Alaska, 22, 30
The *Esquimaux*, 34
Thetus, 123
Thiele, Carl Gustav Adolf, 51
Thiele Family, vii, 50
Togiak River, 68, 106, 159, 172
Togiak village, 61, 62, 68, 82, 83, 100, 103, 104, 106, 119, 148, 159, 163, 164, 167, 172, 221
Tokcichoakh (also known as "Kokwok," guide-musher), 178
Tridikoff, Vasili, 130
Turnagain, 195

U

Ualik Lake, 61 106
Ugashik River, 68, 69, 163
Ugashik village, 68, 69, 163, 164, 167, 191, 208, 220, 221
Ukak River, 142
Unalaska, 5, 42, 54, 65, 81, 95, 96, 97, 103, 111, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 159, 163
United States Army Corps of Engineers, 45
United States Army, 3, 15, 45, 65, 81
United States Biological Survey, 69
United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 219
United States Fish Commission, 66, 128, 153, 154
United States Geological Survey, 143
United States National Museum of Natural History, 37
United States Revenue Service, 96
United States Signal Service, v, 65, 85, 87, 221
Unrau, Harlan, 43, 44

V

Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, 142
Van Stone, James, n. 60
Ventura, California, 120
Vitt, Kurt H., 108

W

Waldron, Olga, 149
Walrus Islands, 62
Washili (Older), 104, 105, 106
Washili (Younger), 105
Washington, D.C., 155
Wasserman, August, 43
Wayanda, 45
Weinland, William H., 10, 51, 56, 93, 96, 109
Wells, E.H., 136
Westdahl, Ferdinand, 20, 24, 36, 38
Western Union Overland Telegraph Company, 30
Western Union Telegraph Company Russo-American Expedition, v, 3, 8, 13, 14, 15, 21
Western Union Telegraph Company, v, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 36, 37, 41, 47, 75, 181, 205
White Act, 158
White, J.W., 45
Whitney, C.E., 61, 102
Whymper, Frederick, 20, 36
Wilder, 26
Wildwood, 140, 141, 142
Wolcott, 157

Y

Yukon River, v, 5, 9, 18, 19, 20, 22, 38, 41, 45, 46, 47, 51, 65, 120, 124, 171, 172, 203
Yukon Territory, 169
Yukon, 45
Yup'ik Eskimos, 22, 24, 50, 54, 57, 61, 67, 73, 74, 75, 82, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 95, 96, 97, 99, 101, 104, 114, 115, 117, 128, 132, 135, 136, 143, 145, 148, 161, 162, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176, 179, 181, 184, 189, 194

Z

Zinzendorf, Nicholas von, 94
Znamenski, Andrei, viii, 96
Zyrianov, Pelageia Nikifarovai, 58

GPO U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 2012 — 577-739 / R7882 Region No. 10

About the Author

John Branson is the historian for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve and has edited or authored eight books on the history of the Lake Clark area and the wider Bristol Bay region. He first came to Alaska in 1959 on a vacation and returned ten years later to teach high school history at the Bristol Bay High School in Naknek. He lives at Port Alsworth, Alaska.