

GRAVES IDENTIFICATION PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

GAAR-97-009

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Introduction

In June of 1997, a graves identification research project was initiated to provide park management with information concerning Native and non-Native burial practices within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The intent was to review existing literature and engage in discussions with individuals from nearby villages in order to document the ways in which people were buried in the country in prehistoric, historic, and modern times.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 mandates Federal agencies to "take reasonable steps to determine whether a planned activity may result in the excavation of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony" (Federal Register 60(232):62160). In addition, individuals are required to report any inadvertent discoveries of human remains found on federal lands.

In order to adequately and respectfully protect human burials from inadvertent disturbance, it is necessary for park staff to become familiar with their identifying features. Native burial sites may often be unmarked, appearing as faintly visible bumps on the landscape.

In other cases, burials may be marked with crosses, wooden structures, rocks, cairns, or even scatters of cans, jars, and utensils. It is conceivable that individuals unfamiliar with non-Western burial practices might mistake particular grave site markers for old camp trash and debris. Thus, a danger exists for burial markers to be 'cleaned up' by well meaning

individuals carrying out the park's wilderness objectives which include ridding the landscape of trash and camp debris.¹

Initial objectives of this research project included the following, as outlined in the original park proposal:

1. Identification of distinguishable native groups, known group territories, and/or boundaries through time.
2. Development of a database and accompanying GIS map of locations of specific burial places, based on both the literature review and consultation.
3. Review of information on mortuary and burial practices of each group and how these practices have changed through time.
4. Synthesis of the information about burial site locations to provide a tentative predictive model for where other grave sites might be located, especially as these sites relate to traditional backcountry and riverine campsites.
5. Development of descriptions of the surface manifestations of various burial sites (or those thought to have high potential as burial sites) that is understandable and useful to park managers, rangers, and staff who frequent the backcountry.

Several of these goals were unattainable due to a variety of problems, all of which will be discussed in this report.

Methodology

The study began with a search of existing literature pertaining to native populations which have inhabited and/or utilized resources within the area currently encompassed by Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve (GAAR). The three major users/inhabitants

¹ It is rumored that GAAR staff in the 1980s who mistook a burial marker scatter of cans and jars as camp trash gathered the items and removed them from the park.

include Nunamiut Eskimos, Koyukon Athapaskans, and Gwich'in Athapaskans.² Sources ranged from narratives of early explorers to works by archaeologists, anthropologists, travelers, naturalists, and natives themselves. In addition to library sources, select materials located in the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Rasmuson Library archives were reviewed.

Archaeological field note collections stored at the University of Alaska Museum were examined in hopes that they might shed light on the nature of burials in the Brooks Range. However, I was unable to locate any notes pertaining to archaeological or historical field work conducted within GAAR boundaries. The museum does have some notes from Mike Kunz's 1975 field work in the vicinity of Galbraith Lake, although none of these notes contained information related to burials. Of interest in the Galbraith Lake notes are numerous native placenames for sites within the Brooks Range obtained from Simon Paneak.

The Maxwell Museum of Anthropology (University of New Mexico) is suspected to house field notes and archival material from John M. Campbell, Lewis R. Binford, and Charles W. Amsden, all of whom worked at various times in Anaktuvuk Pass. A letter was written to the head of the collections department for more information about the existence of these collections and the extent of their content.³

A letter of request for access to grave site documentation stored at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Anchorage was sent to Ken Pratt, manager of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) collection. The ANCSA files are the result of several years of

² *Gwich'in* is currently the most widely used spelling. *Kutchin* is a common alternate spelling. The variation *Hwech'in* is used in the Yukon Territory.

³ As of January 1998 no response had been received.

research conducted under contract with the Cooperative Park Studies Unit (CPSU) based at UAF in the 1980s. Documentation of burial and sacred sites was part of 14(h)(1) ANCSA process. Unfortunately, access to many of these files is currently restricted, as the BIA and native organizations are in the process of determining legal ownership of the intellectual property contained in the taped interviews and written reports.

Letters of introduction outlining the goals of the project and requesting community participation were sent to various organizations in the villages of Anaktuvuk Pass, Allakaket, Alatna, and Kobuk. Selection for contact was based on the perceived likelihood of community interest and response, and the fact that these communities have had continuing ties to park lands. Although it is home to traditional users of GAAR lands, the village of Shungnak was not included in the initial round, since funds were insufficient for travel to more than four villages. It was determined that Shungnak would be contacted in the event that one of the other villages declined to participate. Letters were sent to the following:

- Dorothy Hopson, Mayor, Anaktuvuk Pass
- Mark Morry, President, Nagrasmiut Tribal Council
- Larry Edwards, First Chief, Alatna Tribal Council
- Herbie Moses, Mayor, Village of Allakaket
- Steven Bergman, First Chief, Allakaket Tribal Council
- Catherine Ipalook, Project Coordinator, Denakkanaaga
- Harold Attla, General Manager, K'oyitl'ots'ina, Ltd.
- Rosie Ward, Mayor, City of Kobuk
- Mary Bernhardt, President, Kobuk Elders Council

Response from the native community will be discussed later in the report.

Findings: Literary Sources

GAAR's research library contains very few cultural resource-oriented publications for the region, aside from internal reports of archaeological activities, such as those undertaken by Michael L. Kunz during the park's cultural resources inventory project spanning 1983 to 1986. The Rasmuson Library of the University of Alaska Fairbanks was the primary source for works listed in the attached bibliography. An annotated version of the bibliography was also produced for the park library.

Citations were compiled in an MSAccess file, with entries annotated as works were reviewed. Several unpublished and/or locally unavailable sources were entered into the database because their titles suggested that they contained subject matter relevant to GAAR. Some of these works may be available from other institutions via interlibrary loan. A number of complete articles were photocopied for the GAAR library, although most copying was done only for passages directly related to territorial boundaries or mortuary practices.

Findings: Archival Sources

Among the UAF archival collections reviewed were the William E. Brown Collection (91-131), Laurence Irving Collection (MS#186), Cooperative Park Studies Unit Collection (MS#537), and Ethel Ross Oliver Collection (MS#581).

- The William E. Brown archive contains notes, photocopies, photographs, and reprints of materials gathered by National Park Service historian Bill Brown which were used in writing *Gaunt Beauty...Tenuous Life: Historic Resources Study for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve*. The collection lacks a thorough index and has yet to be properly sorted and organized.
- Ornithologist Laurence Irving's collection includes Simon Paneak's journals containing natural history observations at Anaktuvuk Pass over a number of years. Commentary pertaining to cultural activities is scarce.

- The Cooperative Park Studies Unit (CPSU) archive is currently restricted by the BIA but I was able to look through portions of it and reviewed a finding aid. Based on a cursory review, it would appear that the CPSU collection at UAF has little to offer this study.⁴
- The Ethel Ross Oliver collection is notable for containing a few items associated with Anaktuvuk Pass resident Simon Paneak.

Response of Native Organizations

The response of native communities and organizations contacted for participation in this resource protection project was minimal, at best. None of the letter recipients contacted the park office for more information. It must be noted that the lack of response should not be construed as disinterest on the part of community members. It is quite possible that these individuals and agencies are short staffed and struggling to deal with more pressing issues. Another possible reason for lack of response may lie in the fact that many people tend to feel uneasy discussing matters related to the dead. Individuals are likely to convey a reluctance to speak with strangers and non-Natives about these very personal and private issues.

Cyd Martin discussed the project aims on several occasions with Vera Weber (of Anaktuvuk Pass' Simon Paneak Museum). Initial feedback was positive and Vera even suggested that we might be able to coordinate our research to assist the North Slope Borough in marking old graves within park boundaries. However, soon after our discussions, Vera sought advice from a third party and was given erroneous and misleading information, causing her to believe that the National Park Service could not guarantee confidentiality of information. This made her extremely reluctant to assist us in the project. Vera's fears about

⁴ Robert Drozda was hired by the BIA in 1997 to inventory and sort the ANCSA portions of the CPSU material stored at the Rasmuson Archives. Copies of ANCSA-related CPSU material are also stored in the museum collections of the National Park Service, Alaska System Support Office, Anchorage.

the confidentiality issue were abated following some clarification from Cyd Martin but other community members did not have the advantage of addressing questions directly to the NPS.

Cyd and I flew up to Anaktuvuk Pass on September 11th to attend the monthly City Council meeting, hoping to answer people's questions about the project and become more aware of their concerns. Unfortunately, the meeting was canceled due to insufficient numbers for a quorum. Unbeknownst to us, the council convened on September 23rd. At that time, members unanimously voted to decline participation in the project. Their concerns were listed in a letter to the National Park Service dated September 25, 1997:

- “1. This is a sensitive issue with our people.
2. The deceased should rest and not be disturbed; and
3. We have the right as a people to protect the gravesites.”

While it is quite clear from our perspective that park service aims are in agreement with the wishes of the people of Anaktuvuk Pass, it is apparent that they do not view this research project as a viable means of insuring protection of burial sites. Misconceptions and misunderstandings certainly played a role in the final decision. By this, I do not mean to imply that the council erred in reaching its final decision. It is very likely that no amount of clarification or reassurance on the part of the NPS could have swayed council members' feelings about the project.

In many communities, government agencies, archaeologists, and anthropologists are not considered to be trustworthy. Archaeologists are often viewed as grave robbers, even today, and members of the public continue to expect that archaeologists actively seek out human burial sites for excavation and study. Villagers have seen many cultural anthropologists come and go, as well. Anthropologists have occasionally been accused of

acquiring sensitive and non-sensitive cultural knowledge. At times, communities have felt that such knowledge was misinterpreted and/or misused by researchers. In some cases, archaeologists and anthropologists were simply ignorant of the full impact of their actions. Others continued collecting data and artifacts despite a keen awareness of the negative response of the Native community.⁵ Past indiscretions and present day tensions create barriers for research projects initiated by individuals from outside of the community.

Both Vera and Michael Pederson of Arctic Slope Native Association, Ltd., voiced concerns when asked to provide detailed information and site locations. In a letter to Vera Weber, Pederson expressed the views of many when he commented on the NPS objective to compile a GIS map of burial locations:

"The problem I have with this is that this map with the locations will detail all the information where these sites are. What would prevent others (especially archaeologists and anthropologists) from disturbing these burial sites if the sites are publicly identified? If they want to identify and locate burial sites, it should be done without providing detailed information on locations of those sites...If burial sites become general knowledge to the public, we may be dealing with the next wave of grave robbers, even though there are stringent federal laws protecting culturally historic sites and archaeological resources..."

Other matters also complicated the response process. Soon after the letters were sent out to communities, we learned that Alatna and Allakaket were upset with the park over an unrelated issue. As a result, we were told that participation would be highly unlikely from both villages. Kobuk community members also failed to respond. We had begun the project believing that of all of the villages, Anaktuvuk Pass held the most promise for a positive response, based on past experience and their current relationship with the NPS. Once we

⁵ A classic example is the work of the 1930s physical anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka who collected human remains throughout Alaska. In his writings Hrdlicka noted that some Natives were displeased and distressed by his work.

received the formal response from the Anaktuvuk Pass City Council, we decided to rethink our approach and examine options for future research and documentation. Research approach options are discussed in the final section of this report.

Native Populations and Shifting Territorial Boundaries (see maps pgs. 10-12)

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve lands are presently home to Nunamiut Eskimo and Koyukon Athapaskan peoples. Gwich'in Athapaskans (specifically the Dihai and Chandalar⁶ subgroups) are reported to have lived in the far western reaches of the park and preserve as recently as the 1820s, and near the eastern boundary as recently as 1860. Eskimo peoples living along the Kobuk and Noatak Rivers are also known to have ventured eastward into the Central Brooks Range for both seasonal hunting and long term residence. The following is a brief overview of the movement of peoples across the Brooks Range spanning a period roughly from 1800 to the present day.

Since at least 1800, human inhabitants of the central Brooks Range have included three groups of Inupiaq speaking Eskimo and three groups of Athapaskan speaking peoples. Among the Inupiaq inhabitants and subsistence users are/were coastal Eskimo (from areas such as Kotzebue Sound and Point Barrow), riverine or woodland Eskimo (Kobuk and Noatak River dwellers), and Inland Eskimo (Nunamiut of interior, northern rivers such as the Killik, Itkillik, Anaktuvuk, Colville, etc.).

Athapaskan speaking residents include(d) the Dihai Gwich'in, the Chandalar Gwich'in, and the Koyukon. Koyukon peoples generally live in wooded areas along major

⁶ Dihai Gwich'in and Chandalar Gwich'in were neighboring tribes with distinct languages (McKenna 1965:23). Chandalar Gwich'in are also referred to as Netsi, Nedsi, Natsit, Natche and Natsik.

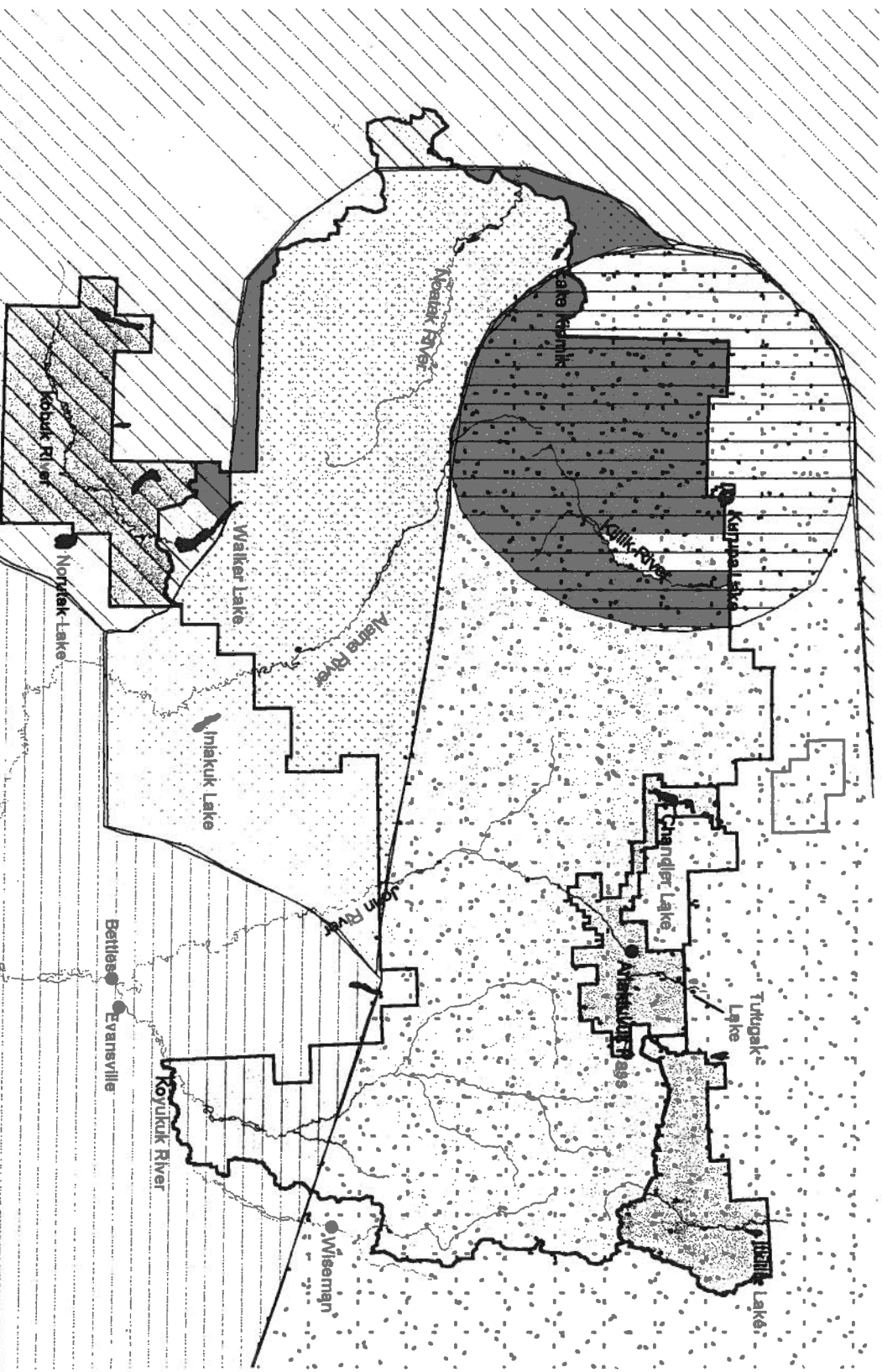
KEY:

- Towns
- Lakes
- ~ Rivers
- ▨ Park Boundary
- ▤ Park
- ▥ Preserve
- Park and Wilderness

**Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Eskimo and Athapaskan Territories c1837**

After Burch 1979

- ▨ Inland Eskimo
- ▤ Koyukon Athapaskan
- ▥ Athapaskan/Eskimo Shared Use Area
- ▤ Gwich'in Athapaskan
- ▥ Dikhai Gwich'in Athapaskan



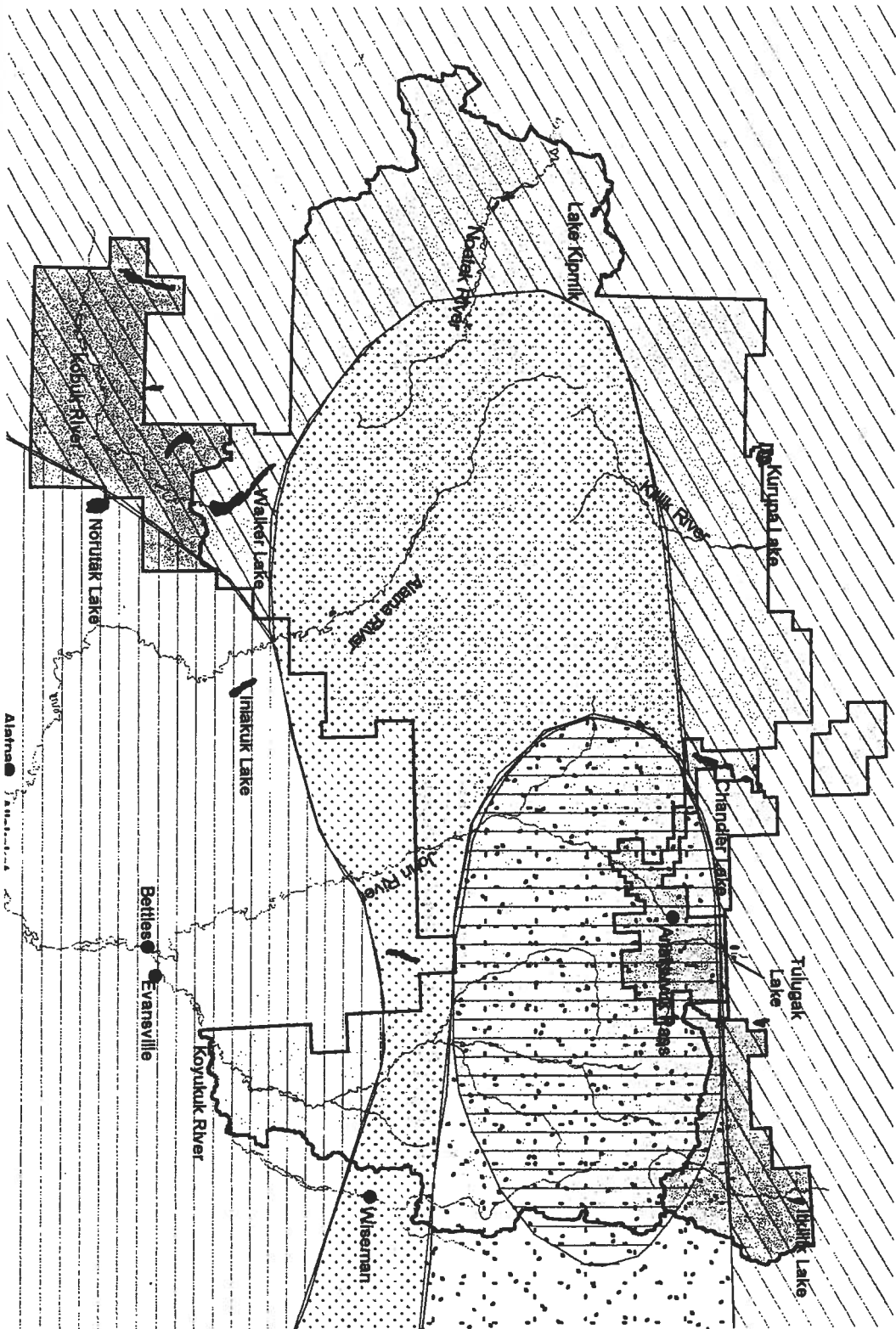
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- ▬ Park Boundary
- ▨ Park
- ▩ Preserve
- Park and Wilderness

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Eskimo and Athapaskan Territories c1854

After Burch 1879

- ▨ Inland Eskimo
- ▨ Kwitich'in Athapaskan
- ▨ Koyukon Athapaskan
- ▨ Dihai Kwitich'in Athapaskan
- ▨ Athapaskan/Eskimo Shared Use Area



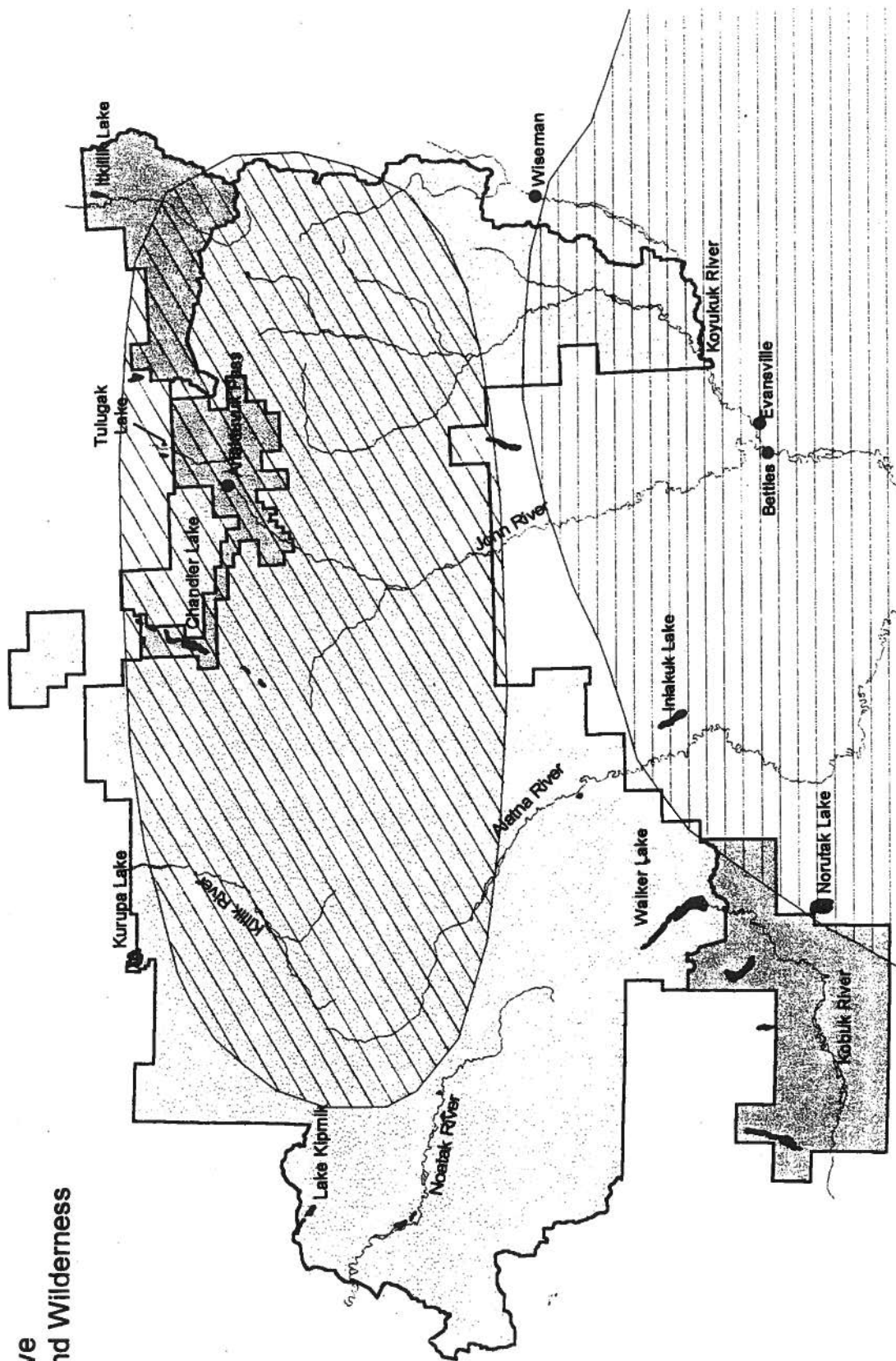
After Burch 1979

KEY:

- Towns
Rivers
Lakes**

Park Boundary

- Park
Preserve
Park and Wilderness**



rivers such as the Koyukuk and Yukon. Their diet is heavily dependent upon fish and moose. In contrast, Gwich'in peoples tend to live in mountainous areas, subsisting primarily on caribou. At present, Koyukon peoples appear to be the only remaining Athapaskans utilizing GAAR resources.

Native stories and early accounts suggest that Nunamiut Eskimo and Koyukon Athapaskans enjoyed relatively peaceful relations. The same may not be said for relations between the Nunamiut and the Gwich'in. Strained relations and warfare between the two groups may have stemmed from the fact that the Nunamiut and Gwich'in were often in direct competition for the same limited subsistence resources, namely caribou.

Prior to 1800, approximately one hundred Gwich'in are said to have lived in the Walker Lake area, between the headwaters of the Noatak and Kobuk Rivers (Spearman 1979:41). Early conflicts with Eskimos, presumably Nunamiut, forced the Gwich'in to abandon the headwaters area and move northeastward to the Howard Pass region. Sources differ as to the time frame for this relocation; some say the Gwich'in were at Howard Pass by 1820, while others indicate that the move was completed by the 1840s (Burch 1994:169, Gubser 1965:45).

By the late 1850s Nunamiut pressures had driven the Dihai Gwich'in from Howard Pass into the upper Killik area. Soon after, they moved into the Chandler Lake area. Oral history from both Gwich'in and Nunamiut sources indicate that a monumental battle was fought between the Nunamiut and Dihai in the area of Tulugak Lake. Defeated, the Dihai moved further eastward to the Itkillik and Chandler Lake regions where they eventually

merged with the Chandalar Gwich'in. Dihai assimilation into the Chandalar Gwich'in population is said to have taken place during the 1860s and/or 1870s.

As the Dihai moved eastward, the Nunamiut filled in behind them. Evidence also indicates that Inupiat from the Kobuk River and other drainages in the Kotzebue Sound region moved into the Brooks Range in the 1850s to hunt caribou as the Dihai were being forced out (Burch 1979:132). By the late 1800s many Nunamiut experienced lean times during years of drastic caribou declines. As a result, fair numbers of Nunamiut moved to the arctic coast where they turned to trapping for their livelihoods.

Koyukon Athapaskans also experienced shifting of territories, albeit less dramatically than their Gwich'in neighbors. According to E. S. Burch, Koyukon peoples moved up into the region of Wild and Iniakuk Lakes, and westward to Norutak and Nutuvukti Lakes (1994). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, there has existed a large 'buffer zone' (a mixed use territory) between the various Athapaskan and Eskimo communities. This area is rather amorphous and changeable but has been defined in general terms for several time frames by E. S. Burch.

In the 1830s, the region of Eskimo/Athapaskan interface reached from the Alatna Hills/Wild Lake area in the east, to the Arrigetch/Lake Kipmik/Kavachurak Creek areas in the west. By the 1850s the interface zone shifted east and north into the Ernie Lake/Takahula Lake area and into Kalhabuk Mountain region. It reached as far west as Lake Omelaktavik and the Nigu/Killik/Alatna headwaters region, and as far northeast as Tululik Lake and Sillyasheen Mountain (Burch 1994). Ed Hall has also noted that Walker Lake has been a multicultural use area for centuries (1974).

In the 1950s, William Irving reported that the Nunamiut frequented the following valleys: Kanayut, Anaktuvuk, Chandler, Okogmilaga, Okpikruak, and the Killik (1953:56). Irving also noted two central areas of Nunamiut activity for both contemporary and prehistoric times: the confluence of the Anaktuvuk River and Kangomovik Creeks (where there were sheep and caribou), and Tulugak Lake (a caribou drive terminus) (1953:59).

Near the southern reaches of GAAR there were many interactions between Koyukon Athapaskans and Kobuk River Eskimos. There are several popular travel routes joining upper Kobuk River communities to Koyukon settlements such as Alatna and Allakaket. People traveled in both directions along these routes to trade and hunt (Arundale and Jones 1989). Some individuals continue to utilize these travel routes today.

Of course, for all of the peoples living in the Brooks Range, life was not sedentary until the early or middle 1900s. Populations moved with the seasons so that they could hunt, trap and fish in the most plentiful areas. Groups of people traveled tremendous distances each year, making their way from the mountains to coastal communities and distant river valleys. As a result of the tremendous amounts of activity and movement, today one is likely to find evidence of numerous cultures and lifeways within the boundaries of GAAR.

Overview of Mortuary Practices

Findings from archival and library research have shown that relatively little has been written about the native peoples of the central Brooks Range. Among the existing literature, there is virtually no mention of mortuary customs. This is particularly true for the Nunamiut Eskimo and Dihai Gwich'in Athapaskan peoples. Some of the most comprehensive works on

the Nunamiut peoples were not published or field researched until the late 1950s and early 1960s, by which time the existing Nunamiut bands had consolidated settled in the village of Anaktuvuk Pass.

The Dihai Gwich'in seem to have been overlooked in the literature until as late as 1900. By this time, they had been pushed eastward by the Nunamiut and were assimilated into neighboring bands of Chandalar Gwich'in. In contrast to the Nunamiut and Dihai, Koyukon Athapaskans had direct contact with early traders and explorers. Living along major river routes, their communities and camps were far more accessible to parties traveling up the Yukon, Tanana and Koyukuk Rivers.

While explorations of the Yukon River and its tributaries were undertaken in the early and middle 1800s, few parties managed to venture far beyond river banks, let alone to any locations in the heart of the Brooks Range. By the later years of the 19th century explorations in the interior were on the increase. In 1885, Lt. George M. Stoney traveled up the Kobuk River and made his way into portions of the western Brooks Range, reaching as far east as Chandler Lake (Gubser 1965:11).

The following year, Stoney sent one of his men, William Howard, on a second attempt to reach the arctic coast. Howard traveled up the Kobuk River, crossing to the Noatak, and through Howard Pass. He eventually intercepted the Colville River, which he then descended to the Arctic Ocean (Gubser 1965:12). In 1901, Frank Schrader, working for the U.S. Geological Survey, "traveled up the John River from Bettles to the summit of Anaktuvuk Pass and then descended the Anaktuvuk River to the Colville..." (Gubser 1965:13).

Schrader and others mention meeting small groups of Indians and Inland Eskimos during their travels but it was equally common for such explorers to encounter no Native Alaskans, even during extended overland journeys. This is due to the fact that native populations in the central Brooks Range during the latter 19th century and early 20th century generally consisted of small nomadic bands who sustained themselves by moving across vast areas to hunt migrating caribou. These bands occasionally traveled to the coast in summer to hunt and trade.

Inland Eskimo visiting coastal areas were often mistakenly identified as members of local Eskimo populations. Many early explorers failed to appreciate or notice differences in cultural practices, language, and other distinguishing features. Another reason for scant cultural information is that many turn-of-the-century explorers ventured into the Brooks Range primarily to discover overland travel routes to the arctic coast, and not to report on native peoples and their customs. Therefore, it is not surprising that early accounts shed little light on lives of Brooks Range native populations.

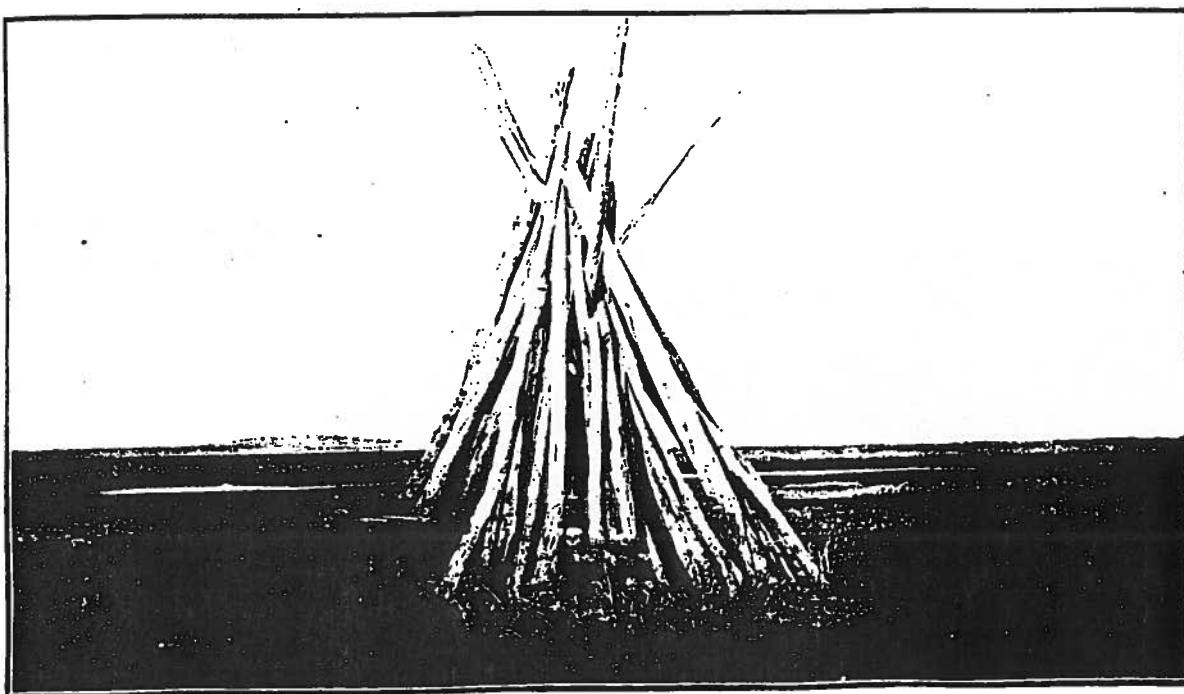
Although mortuary customs documented in the literature have not focused on the central Brooks Range, it is useful to examine recorded burial customs of native populations inhabiting regions adjacent to our study area since most groups were highly mobile and used broad territories. Areas of the Brooks Range have been home to a variety of different cultural groups (coastal Inupiat, riverine/woodland Inupiat, inland Inupiat, Dihai and Chandalar Gwich'in Athapaskan, and Koyukon Athapaskan).

Over centuries, the territories of these peoples overlapped and encroached on one another. In some instances, animosities lead to battles and many of the defeated groups were

forced to move into marginal areas. Eventually, significant territorial shifting took place. As these groups had contact with one another, some cultural elements are likely to have been shared or adapted over time, particularly among groups living in border zones or sharing hunting grounds.

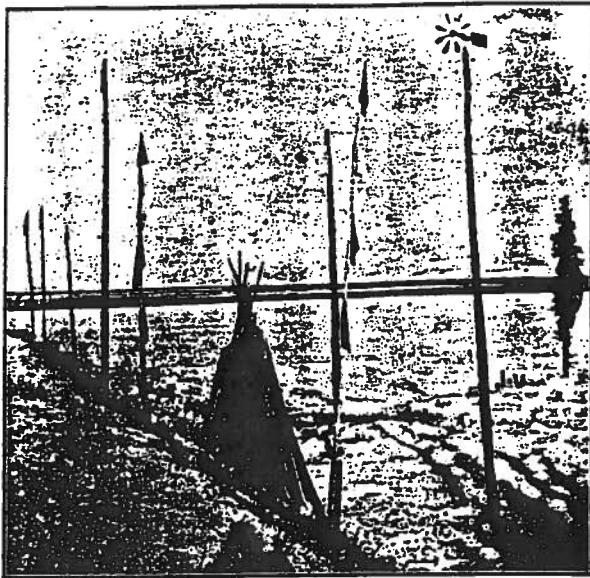
Environmental factors also contributed to cultural behavior and practices. Distinct cultural groups living in similar environments may share similar practices. For example, in a tundra environment where permafrost is common and large amounts of wood are lacking, one would logically assume that certain types of burial common elsewhere might be impossible or impractical. Among the less likely forms of burial in tundra zones are cremation, interment in soil, elaborate marking of grave with wooden logs, and placement of corpses in wooden boxes. On the other hand, riverine environments could provide timber of the size needed for box burials, hollowed log burials, 'teepee burials' (see below), or even cremation.

Examples of teepee burials. This style of burial was recorded along the northwest arctic coast and along portions of the Kobuk River. Large amounts of wood were required in forming these structures. Driftwood was often used along the coast. In some coastal locations, whale bone was used to mark graves.



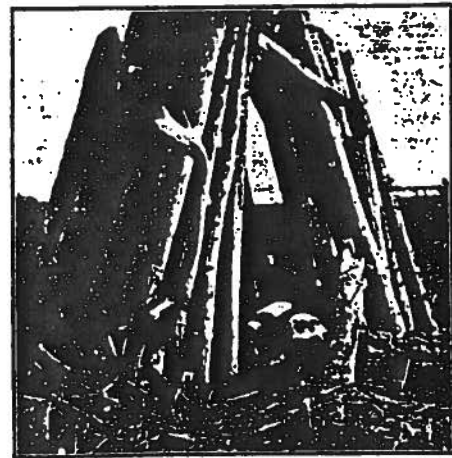
ESKIMO GRAVE, HOTHAM INLET

From Healy 1889.



Grave Decorations.

From Grinnell 1901. Kobuk River area.



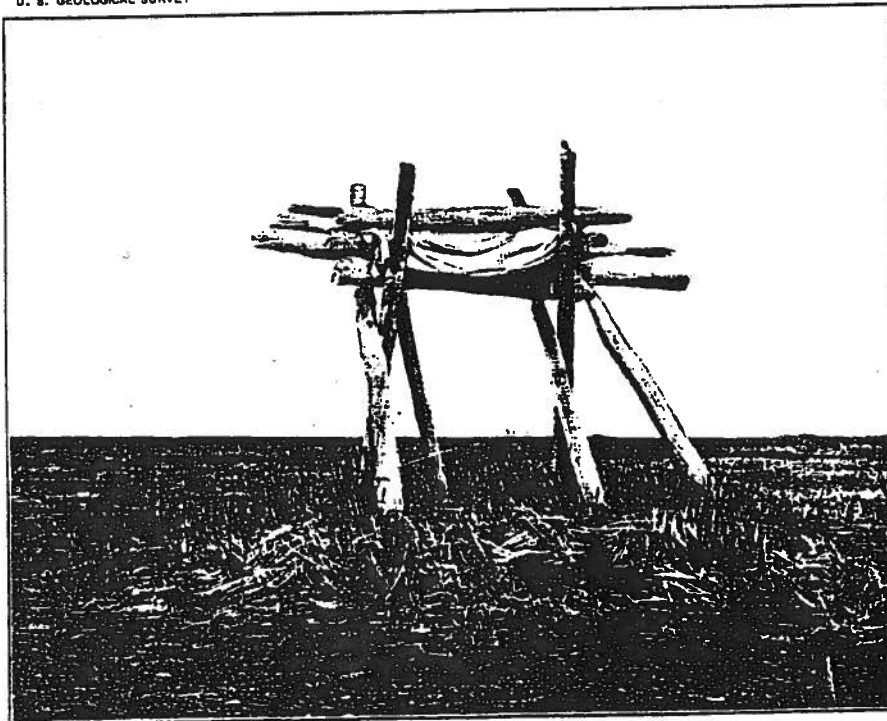
Ancient Indian Grave.

From Grinnell 1901. Kobuk River area

Examples of scaffold burials. Scaffolds require wood of substantial diameter and length, a resource not likely to be found on inland tundra. These images depict burials in coastal areas.

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

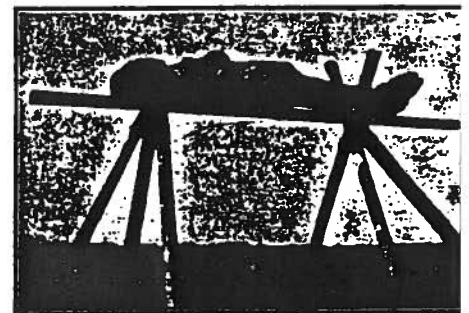
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A. BARRIER REEF AND ESKIMO GRAVE ON ARCTIC COAST NEAR ICY CAPE.

Looking S. 25° W.

From Schrader 1904.



Scaffold Burial.

From Grinnell 1901. Kobuk River area

As time passed, outside influences also played a significant role in altering beliefs and burial methods. For example, trade networks brought about increases in availability of axes and saws, making it possible for people to build plank coffins, while shovels and pick axes enabled digging into permafrost-laden soils for interment of human remains. Christian missionaries also had a profound impact on altering burial practices, often insisting that followers conform to the Christian custom of burying the dead well beneath the surface, even where permafrost was present.

The following are select customs and practices found in various published sources. While they provide some insight, they are by no means exhaustive descriptions. (Note differences in practices as recorded over time).

Koyukon Athapaskan Mortuary Customs

- "In earlier times the body was taken to an area of large trees, if possible, and was placed under a tree or in a dry spot and covered with logs, put in a conical pole cache, or laid on a scaffold between two trees" (Clark 1970:82).
- By 1885 inhumation was generally practiced. The body was placed in a log box which was covered with birchbark (Clark 1970:82).
- A gravehouse would often be built by friends and family to be placed over the grave approximately one year following the inhumation (Clark 1970:83).
- "Sometimes people abandoned sites where a strange death had occurred; even today people often avoid areas where there are burials" (Arundale and Jones 1989:160).
- Koyukon peoples also commonly burned small amounts of food at the gravesite in honor of the dead (this practice is still done today).

Gwich'in Athapaskan Mortuary Customs

- Chandalar Gwich'in customarily buried their dead in a manner known as flexed burial (seated position, facing the rising sun). When possible, graves were dug four to five feet deep. Shallow graves may occur in rocky ground, usually covered with a mound of stones. Grave goods may include tools, weapons, snowshoes, and dentalium shells. Poles topped with animal

effigies are sometimes raised at gravesites (McKenna 1965:59) [based on 1930s field data].

- Cremation of wealthy individuals was reportedly practiced by Chandalar Gwich'in in pre-contact times. Ashes were placed in a decorated skin bag, then tied to the top of a tree or covered with rocks if there were no trees in the vicinity. No living persons had witnessed a cremation or seen such bags in the country when McKenna inquired during his field research in 1933 (McKenna 1965:59).
- Elevated cache burials have been connected to Chandalar Gwich'in but McKenna states that this practice was not common until after they had steel axes. Other burial methods included placing the corpse in split, hollowed out logs, or raising a coffin on four posts or between two trees (McKenna 1965:60).
- Gwich'in are known to have used caves as burial chambers. Several cave burials in the vicinity of Anaktuvuk Pass have been attributed to Gwich'in Athapaskans (perhaps both Dihai and Chandalar Gwich'in).

Noatak Inupiaq Mortuary Customs

- Noatak Eskimo lay the corpse out on the tundra (Stoney 1900:86).

Kobuk Inupiaq Mortuary Customs

- "The Putnam [Kobuk] and Selawik tribes sometimes put the body in a rough box of hewn logs placed on the tundra. Frequently the dead are placed on the ground and a tent of poles made over them; and again they are laid between and across uprights. The graves of the rich are distinguished by stones or poles piled about them. The dead are never placed underground. Sleds, arrows, utensils, tools, etc., are left with them, but no food" (Stoney 1900:86).
- According to a Kobuk River inhabitant named Pegliruk: "They take a piece of old skin and put the dead man on it and drag it away. They leave him on the skin and build a tent of poles (conical) over him. They never change his clothes" (Giddings 1961a:22) [from 1940s field data?].
- According to a Kobuk River inhabitant named Oolyak: "[a] relation takes him [the corpse] over under the trees and wraps him in blankets, and lays him under the trees. He throws on a few logs or sticks" (Giddings 1961a:50) [from 1940s field data?].
- "A surface burial was examined by our party in 1940 at Ekseavik. Boat frame parts and a bit of a paddle indicated that the body had been laid out in an open canoe, accompanied by grave goods consisting of a rectangular stone lamp, two open brass bracelets, a thin-bored, cast lead pipe (only the bowl of which remained), a metal pipe cleaner, and numerous blue and

white glass beads...Part of a tepee-like [sic] structure of spruce poles still remained in place, supported against a tree which had undoubtedly been alive at the time of burial" (Giddings 1961a:154).

- "They had taken the dead man and all his personal belongings over to the bank of the river opposite the village, to a little knoll, where they built a platform on some poles leaned against each other for support. The body was wrapped in tent cloth and laid on this platform, which was about five feet above the ground - as high as the men could conveniently reach. After this the whole was firmly lashed with walrus thong, so the winds and the dogs cannot tear it down. By the side of the scaffold the dead man's sled was laid upside down, and hung on the willows around were all the personal belongings of the deceased" (Grinnell 1901:33)[Seen near present day Kobuk village. Grinnell identified this as an Indian burial].
- Grinnell also noted a child's grave on the Kobuk which had a stick teepee built over it. Alongside the teepee were several tall poles with cloth pennants attached to the tops (1901:56).
- The body of an elderly woman was seen on the ground: "She was dragged out of her igloo a few yards and left in the snow, for the dogs to eat up, we are told, as she had no special friends" (Grinnell 1901:70).
- "The dead are not interred nor does there appear to be any formal funeral ceremonies. The body is removed to some secluded spot, usually on a bluff overlooking the river, and laid upon the ground. A shelter is made by erecting a small conical-shaped structure of spruce logs over the body and a tree near by is stripped of its branches and small pieces of cloth are tied to it to mark the spot. the household utensils, sled, and some of the weapons of the deceased are left with him, and the spot is tabooed henceforth" (Healy 1889:83) [Healy is not specific in identifying the exact location where he witnessed this. However, it sounds similar to descriptions of Kobuk River burials from the period.]

Nunamiut Inupiaq Mortuary Customs

- In 1951, Helge Ingstad witnessed a Christian burial at Anaktuvuk Pass. The body was buried five feet deep and a cross was placed on top of the grave (Ingstad 1954:90).
- "Among the nomadic Eskimo, the body was left and the group traveled on" (Spencer 1959:252).
- "The body was wrapped, carried out some distance from the community, and laid on the ground. Coffins and graves came after European contact. There were no markers and the body was never revisited...The personal possessions were laid out with the corpse...Personal possessions included the deceased's weapons, used clothing, ornaments, and the like" (Spencer 1959:253).

- "Interment had been at a depth of 15 inches directly under large stones which protruded above the surrounding ground surface. A few badly rusted iron bars, a number of glass beads, and an obsidian spall accompanied the burial" (Campbell 1962? as reported in Kunz 1986:335).
- "...a burial concealed in [a] jumble of boulders at the base of [a] bedrock outcrop..." (Campbell 1962? as reported in Kunz 1986:339).

Coastal Inupiaq Mortuary Customs

- "The body was wrapped, carried out some distance from the community, and laid on the ground. Coffins and graves came after European contact. There were no markers and the body was never revisited...The personal possessions were laid out with the corpse...Personal possessions included the deceased's weapons, used clothing, ornaments, and the like" (Spencer 1959:253).
- Remarking on observations in 1914 at a coastal location near Barter Island: "...On a high knoll lies an old grave, for it seems to have been the custom here to bury on the ground and cover the grave with logs, not to erect a platform such as we saw at Port Clarence" (Jenness 1991:191).
- Remarking on a circa 1914 grave, Jenness noted that the body was placed in a hewn box which was nailed together. This was then covered with driftwood (1991:198-99).
- Of observations at Utkiavik (Point Barrow): "the corpse is wrapped up in a piece of sailcloth (deerskin was formerly used), laid upon a flat sled, and dragged out by a small party of people...to the cemetery...various implements belonging to the deceased are broken and laid beside the corpse, and the sled is sometimes broken and laid over it...all sorts of objects were scattered around the cemetery" (Murdoch 1988:425).

In pre-contact/pre-settlement times, burial at or near the place of death was likely to have taken place. In more recent times, it appears that the deceased were transported back to their home village (or a nearby village) to be buried in the local cemetery or in some location nearby.

Unattainable Goals

Several of the original graves identification project goals were not met due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the failure of the consultation process and the lack of publicly available information. No previously unknown grave sites were identified, nor were any known grave sites plotted on park maps or added to the park's GIS database (Goal #2, page two).

Formulation of a predictive model for determining areas of greatest potential for burial sites also remains a difficult task (Goal #4, page two). The literature review revealed that numerous drainages and mountain sites have been used by various Native Alaskan groups in the course of hunting and seasonal rounds. As was mentioned on page eleven, archaeologist William Irving noted heavy Nunamiut subsistence use in the Kanahut, Anaktuvuk, Chandler, Okogmilaga, Okpikruak, and Killik River valleys.

Archaeological surveys conducted within GAAR by both independent and NPS researchers have resulted in the recording of hundreds of camp, dwelling, hunting, and fishing sites along every major drainage of the park and preserve. Numerous knolls, hills, and mountain areas also contain evidence of human activity (including lithic scatters, cairns, inuksuks, tent rings, and butchering sites). Any area in which people have camped, hunted, or traveled will have potential for burial sites. Despite survey efforts of the past, there still remain vast areas of the park and preserve to be explored.

Observations and Suggestions for Alternative Approaches

The reluctance on the part of community members to share graves information with the NPS is not uncommon or unexpected. Death and burial are extremely sensitive topics for

discussion. Many people do not wish to speak about these matters among themselves, let alone share such information with outsiders and government entities. Unfortunately, a lack of knowledge on the part of the NPS may result in inadvertent disturbance of sites that we would otherwise hope to vigorously protect.

One of the key concerns raised was the assurance of confidentiality and the control of grave site information if it were shared with the NPS. As communities prefer to limit the control of such data among themselves, it may be possible for the NPS to work with local entities to assign an individual the task of reviewing park project proposals that could potentially impact sensitive cultural sites. For example, a designated person in Anaktuvuk Pass who has access to the North Slope Borough GIS database (which contains graves information) may be given copies of project proposals from researchers and clean up crews before the work is to begin. Maps and descriptions of work areas included in the project proposals could be reviewed by village representatives who could then return comments to the NPS and make recommendations as to which geographical areas within the workplans must be avoided, if any.

The NPS may also have greater success in obtaining information about possible graves if they approach the issue for *specific projects*. Dealing in the abstract can be difficult for many people, whereas concrete realities are much more approachable. Experience has also shown that many people prefer to deal with matters on a case-by-case basis, rather than drafting general policies and procedures for hypothetical circumstances.

General grave site descriptions and information may be obtainable in the future, particularly if research plans include the hiring of local individuals. Villagers may be willing to discuss burial issues with other community members if they can be assured of the proper

use of the data and confidentiality. It may prove useful to include involvement of local school children to assist with data collecting tasks, such as conducting interviews with Elders [as was done in a recent graves study in Galena (see Sink 1997)].

APPENDIX 1: ALTERNATE PLACENAMES FOR SELECT FEATURES IN THE BROOKS RANGE & VICINITY

USGS Designation	Other/Past Name	User/Designator
KOBUK RIVER	Putnam River Kowak River Kuvuk River	Stoney, 1900?
JOHN RIVER	Fickett River	H.T. Allen, 1887
IKPIKPUK RIVER	Chipp River	G.M. Stoney, 1900 Stoney attempted to rename the Ikpihpuk the Chipp. The name Chipp was reapplied to a tributary. See Orth.
CHANDLER LAKE	Nadvakvakpuk	Inupiaq? Means 'biggest.'
CHANDLER RIVER & LAKE	Narvakpuiluk	Spearman, 1982
PINGALUK RIVER	Pingingalook	Stoney, 1900
AMITCHIAK & KIPMIK LAKES	Kupiuak	Irving, 1962
KUTUK RIVER	Kootoark	Stoney, 1900
REED RIVER	Annelagaggerack	Stoney, 1900
WALKER LAKE	Kallulooktoark Carloogahlooktan (Athapaskan)	Stoney, 1900 Healy, 1887
TULUGAK LAKE SPRINGS	Nakaganik Springs	

NIGU VALLEY	Ahlasuruk	Irving, 1962
NUTUVUKTI LAKE	Nowtowvucktoy	Stoney, 1900
NOATAK RIVER	Nunataq	Burch, 1976
NORUTAK LAKE	Nowgettoark	Stoney, 1900
ALATNA RIVER	Allashook	Stoney, 1900
TULUGAK LAKE	Tuluak Lake	

APPENDIX 2: INUPIAQ NAMES FOR CULTURAL GROUPS LIVING IN THE VICINITY OF THE BROOKS RANGE
 (These were compiled from various works. Many are merely alternate spellings and/or pronunciations of the same terms.)

Inupiaq Name	Territory	Author/Source
ANAQTURVIGMIUT	Anaktuvuk Pass area	Burch, 1976b
ITKILLIKMIUT	Itkillik River in Ulu Pass, & Upper Dietrich	Hall, 1970 Gubser, 1965
IYAGAMIIT	Indians near Kobuk headwaters ("people of the rocks")	Anderson et al, 1977
KANGIANERMIUT	Colville Colville	Spencer, 1959 Rasmussen, 1927
KANGIANIGMIUT	Upper Colville, above mouth of Killik	Hall, 1970 Gubser, 1965
KANGIANIGMIUT	Kobuk/Noatak headwaters area	Handbook of N. American Indians
KANGIANIRMIUT	Upper Colville River	Foote, 1965
KANGIMALIRMIUT	Anaktuvuk Pass area	Burch, 1976b
KANIAGIGMIUT	Upper Colville River, west of Killik	Simon Paneak Museum display
KANIANERMIUT	Upper Colville River	Stefansson, 1914
KAYMALIKMIUT	Anaktuvuk, Upper John, Upper N. Fork and Upper Wild River	Hall, 1970 Gubser, 1965

KILLIKMIUT	Killik and Chandler Rivers, & drainages between	Hall, 1970 Gubser, 1965
KILLIMIUT	Killik River region	Spencer, 1959
KITLIKMIUT	Killik River valley Killik River Killik and Okokiloga River areas	Spearman, 1982 Foote, 1965 Simon Paneak Museum display
KOVAGMIUT	Kobuk River	
KUUVANMIIT	Kobuk River	Anderson, et al., 1977
KUUVAUUM	Kobuk River	Handbook of N. American Indians
KUVUGMIUT	Upper Kuvuk (aka Kobuk River)	Stefansson, 1914
KYMALIKMIUT	Anaktuvk area	Simon Paneak Museum display
NAKSARMIUT	Anaktuvuk area ("people of the divide")	Burch, 1976
NAPAAQTUGMIUT	Lower Noatak River	Handbook of N. American Indians
NAPAKTAGMIUT	Lower Noatak River	Stefansson, 1914
NARIVAKRUKMIUT	Chandler River	Foote, 1965
NAUPAKTOMIUT	Lower Noatak River	Hall, 1966

NOATAGMIUT	Upper Noatak River	Hall, 1966 Stefansson, 1914
NUATAAGMIUT	Upper Noatak River	Handbook of N. American Indians
NUNAMIUT	Inland Eskimo	common use
NUNATAGMIUT ⁷	head of Colville River	Stefansson, 1914
NUNATAMA	Inland Eskimo?	Stefansson, 1914
NUNATARMIUT	Inland Eskimo	Rasmussen, 1927 Larsen & Rainey, 1948
NUVUGMIUT	Barrow area	Handbook of N. American Indians Stefansson, 1914
OTURKAGMIUT	Coast between Icy Cape & Wainwright	Stefansson, 1914
SILALINIRMIUT	Anaktuvuk area	Burch, 1976
TAGIUGMIUT	Coastal Eskimo	Spencer, 1959
TAREORMIUT	Coastal Eskimo	Larsen
TAREMIUT	Coastal Eskimo	common use
TIGIRAGMIUT	Point Hope	Stefansson, 1914
TIKERMIUT	Point Hope	common use

⁷ Stefansson notes that 'for some reason the white man and coastal Eskimo alike, have siezed upon the name of this tribe as the name for all the inland dwellers' (1914:10). See also Burch "The 'Nunamiut' Concept and the Standardization of Error, 1976.

TIKERARMIUT	Point Hope	Rasmussen, 1927
TULUGAKMIUT	Tulugak Lake area (means 'raven people') Anaktuvuk River	Spearman, 1982 Foote, 1965
TULUGAMIUT	Anaktuvuk Pass region	Spencer, 1959
ULUMIUT	Ulu Valley Itkillik River drainage	Spearman, 1982 Simon Paneak Museum display
UTKIAVIGMIUT	Cape Smythe	Stefansson, 1914
UTQIAGVIGMIUT UYAGAMIUT	Barrow area Inupiaq name for Chandalar Kutchin (means "people of the rocks")	Handbook of N. American Indians Hall, 1969 Gubser, 1965

APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Have you traveled a lot in this area? If yes, where did you go?

Have you seen grave sites out in the country? What do they look like?

Have burial practices changed over time? If yes, in what ways?

Did people tend to place anything in or around a grave? If yes, what might one see on the surface?

Are most graves marked in some way? Were some graves marked well after the burial?

What should a person do when they come across a grave site? (what is considered respectful?)

Are there any sorts of things that one should not do near a burial site? (such as camp, fish, etc.)

When someone died out at camp, were they buried at that location or were they usually taken back to the village for burial?

Are there particular areas, such as certain camp sites or river valleys, that are known to have grave sites?

Is it possible to tell the difference between Nunamiut and Athapaskan graves? If yes, what are some distinguishing features?

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