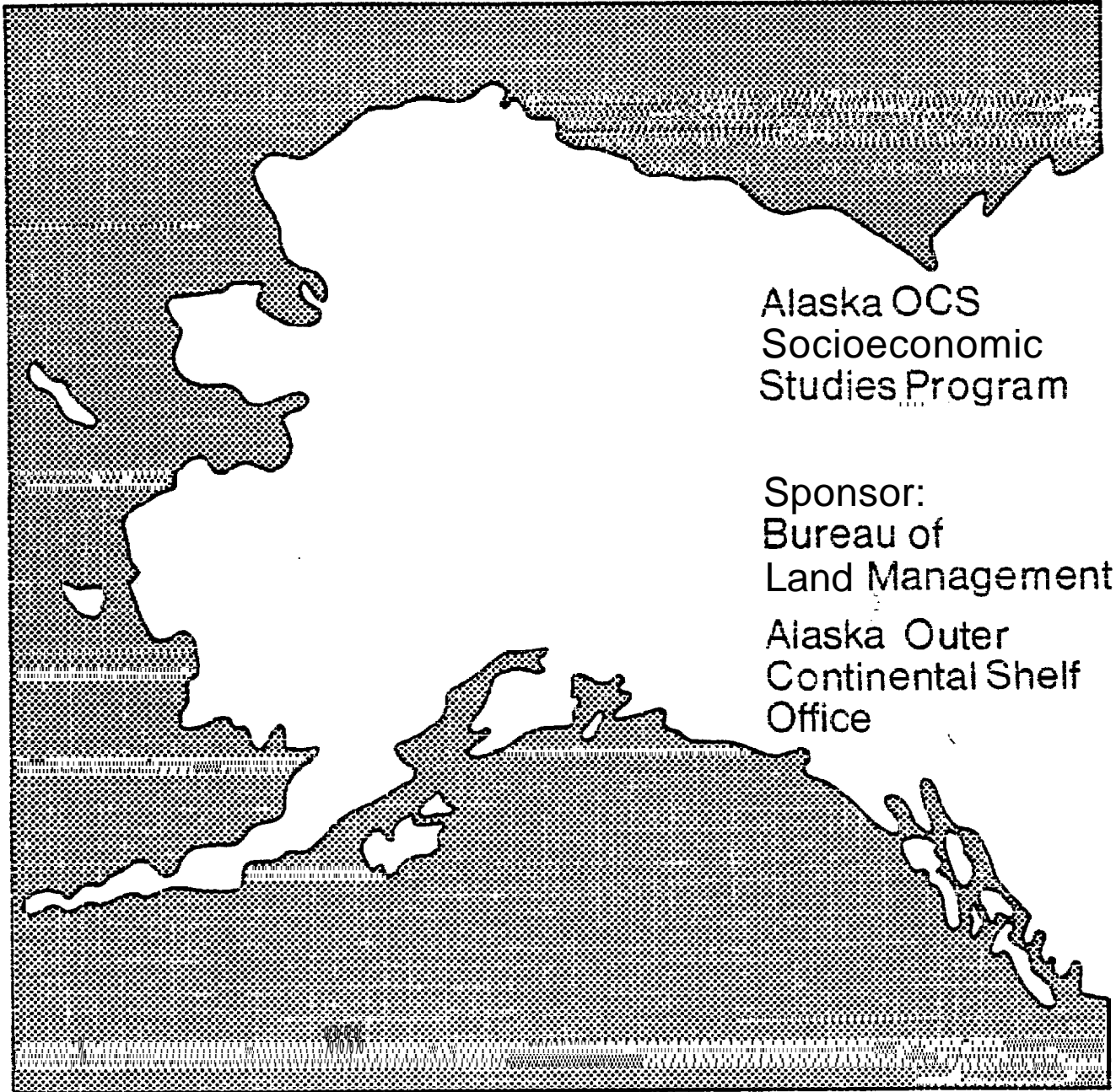


Technical Report  
Number 7



Alaska OCS  
Socioeconomic  
Studies Program

Sponsor:  
Bureau of  
Land Management  
Alaska Outer  
Continental Shelf  
Office

Case Study of Copper Center, Alaska

The United States Department of the Interior was designated by the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act of 1953 to carry out the majority of the Act's provisions for administering **the** mineral leasing and development of off-shore areas of the United States under federal jurisdiction. Within the Department, the Bureau of Land Management (**BLM**) has the responsibility to meet requirements of the National Environmental **Policy** Act of 1969 (NEPA) as well as other legislation and regulations dealing with the effects of off-shore development. In Alaska, unique cultural differences and climatic conditions create a need for developing additional socioeconomic and environmental information to improve OCS decision making at all governmental levels. In fulfillment of its **federal** responsibilities and with **an** awareness of these additional information needs, the BLM has initiated several investigative programs, one of which is the Alaska OCS Socioeconomic Studies Program.

The Alaska OCS Socioeconomic Studies Program is a multi-year research effort which attempts to predict and evaluate the effects of Alaska OCS Petroleum Development upon the physical, social, and economic environments within the state. The analysis addresses the differing effects among various geographic units: the State of Alaska as a whole, the several regions **within** which **oil** and gas development is likely to take place, and within these regions, the various communities.

The **overall** research method is multidisciplinary in nature and is based **on** the preparation of three research components. **In** the first research component, the internal nature, structure, and essential processes of these various geographic units and interactions among them are documented. In the second research component, alternative sets of assumptions regarding the location, nature, and timing of future OCS petroleum development **events** and related activities are prepared. In the third research component, future **oil** and gas development events are translated into quantities and forces acting on the various geographic units. The predicted consequences of these events are evaluated in relation to present goals, values, and expectations.

In general, program products are sequentially arranged in accordance with **BLM's** proposed OCS lease sale schedule, so that information is timely to decision making. In addition to making reports available through the National Technical Information Service, the BLM is providing an information service through the Alaska OCS Office. Inquiries for information should be directed to: Program Coordinator (**COAR**), Socioeconomic Studies Program, Alaska OCS Office, P. O. Box 1159, Anchorage, Alaska **99510**.

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A Case Study of Copper Center, Alaska

Prepared For

Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.

Holly Reckord

January, 1979

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ALASKA OCS SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES PROGRAM  
A CASE STUDY OF COPPER CENTER, ALASKA

Prepared by  
**Holly Reckord**

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6. Abstract!

Copper Center, an Ahtna Indian Village located near the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline in the Copper River Valley, underwent intense social, cultural and economic change during the construction years between 1974 and 1978.

The return of many young villagers who had previously emigrated to Anchorage in search of employment, the sudden economic prosperity in the region, the establishment of the Ahtna Regional Corporation under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and the boom-bust pattern of recent economic trends, have all shaped social changes in the village.

The future social configuration of the village depends on continued economic prosperity which will encourage the return migrants to remain in the community and continue to pressure for social changes commensurate with their values.

This study is part of the Alaska-OSC Studies Program, and may be used to help determine possible impacts of oil development on Alaskan Native Villages.

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Look for the **Wrangell** Mountains,  
Look for the Pipeline,  
Look for the Ahtna,  
That's where you find the **Copper** River.

**Potlatch** song as translated by  
Jim McKinley  
Copper Center, Alaska  
September, 1978

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Subject Matter

This report describes the Indian community of Copper Center, Alaska, during the Trans-Alaska Pipeline construction of 1973-1978. It aims to give a comprehensive description not only of social changes brought about by pipeline construction, but also of the ways Copper Center's society and institutions shaped change and dealt with the distressing pressures placed on the community.

An anthropologist's view of change in Copper Center was sought in hopes of discovering some of the processes of culture change during the period. This study does not merely describe point a, 1973, and point b, 1977. Rather an attempt is made to show how the culture worked as a system, at what point changes were incorporated into the **social** system, and what direction those changes took. This study focused an anthropological microscope on about 100 people, who lived in Copper Center in 1973, and on their returning relatives and tribesmen.

It is **clear** that many forces were pulling at the fabric of Ahtna society and culture. How has Copper Center reacted to those forces? What generalizations can be drawn from the Copper Center experience and applied to other Alaskan communities in the path of oil development? In Alaska there is the possibility that off-shore oil development **will** bring the huge floating derricks, the giant helicopters, and the "roughneck" crews to some of the most **remote** and traditional villages in the state. A greater understanding of the processes of change following impact in these small indigenous

societies is badly needed. The Bureau of Land Management's Outer Continental Shelf Office has funded this study of Copper Center during the pipeline years so that a greater understanding of the oil boom impact on village life will be gained. This study is just part of several studies with the ultimate aim of devising a model of culture change for village Alaska.

## Setting

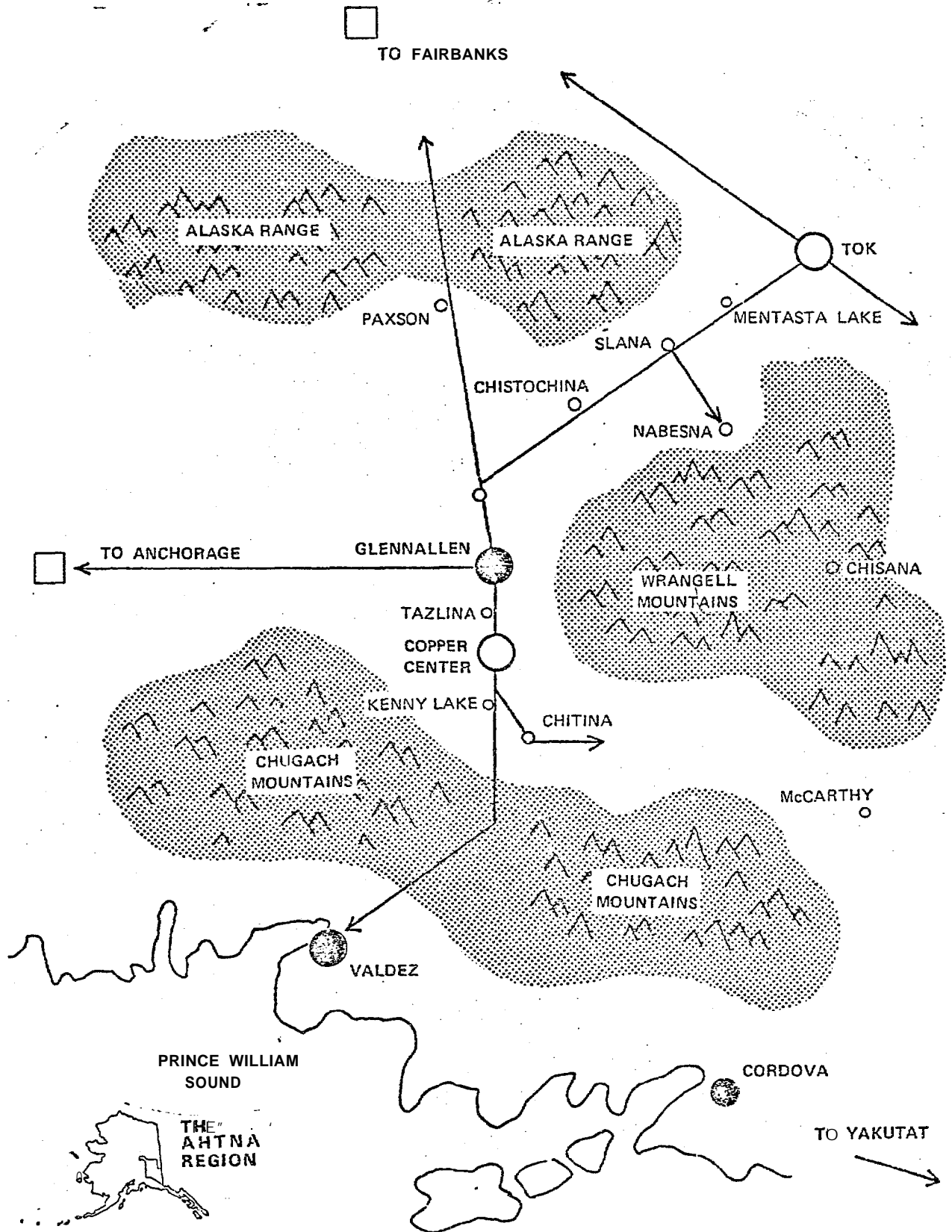
### LOCATION

The village of Copper Center is located in South Central Alaska. Unlike most Alaskan Native (see glossary) villages, Copper Center is located on the Richardson Highway, part of the Alaska Highway System. (See map, p.3 ) By highway the community is 101 miles north of **Valdez**, the southern terminus of the pipeline, and fifteen miles south of **Glennallen**, the largest community in the Copper River Valley. Anchorage is 220 highway **miles** to the west over the **Chugach** Mountains. The straight-edge of the Canadian-American Border is just 118 miles due east but more than 300 miles away by the Alaska Highway.

### THE POPULATION

The 1970 census indicates that Copper Center had 206 residents in 1970 (Logsdon, et. al., 1977, P. 1-4), but due to the constant seasonal fluctuation of the **population**, this figure should not be viewed as stable. Of those 206 people, 113 are listed as "white" and 93 as "non-white," presumably Native (**Ahtna**, Inc., and the Arctic Environmental Data Center, 1973, P. 190). In 1973, the permanent year-round population had not changed

FIG 1: Map of the Copper River Valley (schematically drawn)  
(from Logsdon, et. l., p.1-5)



appreciably, and the researcher estimated that the local population was comprised of approximately 100 Native people, and 100 non-Natives.

According to Dr. Nancy Davis, the 50-50 racial composition of the community is a highly unusual situation in Alaska:

Most Alaskan communities are either clearly predominantly Native in resident composition or predominantly non-Native. Very few are approximately "mixed" 50-50. For example, only 38 communities out of the 248 appearing on the 1970 census are between 25% to 75% Native in resident composition, or alternatively 25% to 75% White. Only 9 communities fall within the narrow range of 40%-60% Native or 40%-60% White. This indicates that one of the characteristics of Alaska is that most communities are either very Native (over 75% Native) or very White (over 75% White). At least 114 communities are 90-100% Native. (Davis, 1976, P. 32)

In light of the above statement, it becomes important to understand not only the physical distribution of the races in Copper Center, but also the behavioral patterns between the races living in the village. When behavioral and locational variables are analyzed, it is clear that the census unit labeled Copper Center by the United States Census Bureau is actually two distinct places. The compositions of these two places are defined by race, but they happen to **share** some essential services such as an elementary school, store, and volunteer fire department.

At the northern half of the Copper Center community between mile 102 and mile 104 live the approximately 100 Native people of "Copper Center Village". (See Glossary) They are the descendants of the indigenous Indian people of the Copper River Valley. Log houses, a few lumber houses, and one or two **mobile** homes are strung along the road at almost equidistant intervals.

A few homeowners continue to burn wood as heating fuel and the blue haze of their stoves settles across the roadway on cold mornings. Other homes are heated with oil and the large drums feeding the oil line lean against the side of the structures. Caches store food and hardware. A cemetery with picket fences marking each grave sits in the woods. The familiar layout and house construction resemble that of Native villages along the Yukon River, the Alaska Highway or any other Athabascan (see Glossary) area in Alaska.

The southern half of the community is the predominantly non-Native zone of "Copper Center." Here are found businesses, trailer courts, and the homes of 100 non-Natives. Most of the homes are prefabricated or mobile homes. There are a few fine log structures as well as some substandard structures.

The word "village" as applied to Copper Center refers to the Native zone alone, a linguistic practice found throughout Alaska. The Native people refer to the segregated character of the community in The Tribal Health report:

Each village is a segregated community, separate and autonomous from its non-native, complement community. For example, there is Copper Center Village and Copper Center (which is 98% non-native) . . . (CRNA. Inc. 1977, P. 14)

While physical layout is an important factor in the definition of a community, behavioral aspects are also important. The amount of interaction between the Native residents of Copper Center living in the "village" or northern zone, and the non-Native residents of Copper Center living in the



southern zone, is restricted to institutional settings such as those found at **school** or the work place, or to encounters in the stores, hospitals, or other public places. **It** is unusual for social interaction between the races **to** take place in homes. Thus in **1973** Copper Center was two distinct and racially segregated communities, and everyday life in Copper Center Village was probably more typical of Alaskan communities than the census statistics might indicate.

Copper Center is an important regional capital for the Ahtna Natives. The 1970 census reported that the Native population for the region was 301 persons, thus indicating fully one third of the Native population of the region **lived** in Copper Center Village. Copper Center Village's **large** Native population caused Ahtna, Inc. (see Glossary) and its attendant organizations to locate there.

The term "Native," which is the designation preferred by most of Alaska's indigenous peoples, is not universally acceptable. Academics, government officials, and local non-Native Alaskans, often object to the term. The **ANCSA**, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, (see Glossary), has used the term "Native" to refer to the indigenous peoples of Alaska, including Eskimo, **Aleut**, as well as Indian.

The general term "Native" has become especially popular among the Native people, themselves, as is evidenced in Native publications, meetings, and conversation. Throughout this report "Native" **will** be used to refer to the indigenous people of Alaska. Also, the designation Ahtna (derived

from the Lower Ahtna dialect word 'Atria 'hwt'aene) will be used to refer to the indigenous people of the Copper River Valley, as well as the people enrolled in the Ahtna Corporation.

### History

The economic history of the Copper River **Valley** since the Yukon gold rush in 1898 (see Glossary) has been characterized by a series of booms. The mining of copper on the **Chitina** River and the building of the Copper River-Northwestern Railway and the Valdez-Fairbanks Highway in the first twenty years of this decade brought permanent changes to the valley. The high price given for furs during the 1920s brought some economic prosperity to the **Ahtna** people, according to their own reports. Depression in the 1930s is reported to have been a time of great **economic** distress for the Native people, whose population had been seriously decimated by a series of epidemic diseases. **World War II** brought the completion of the highway system and **the** construction of **large** airfields. Most periods of economic activity were short lived. The statehood act in 1958 (see Glossary) escalated the number of state employees in the region. Services such as schools, police, and various branches of the justice system were extended into the bush communities. The growth of state government over the last two decades brought some **economic** stability to the valley. In the view of many Natives, the pipeline is only a new variation on the old "boom and bust" theme that has played many times in the short history of the region. During the succession of boom and busts, many of the Ahtna people have learned about the short term nature of economic opportunity in Alaska. The old people warn youth that economic developments such as the pipeline **will** not provide long-term security. For many of the

older people the dependence on traditional Ahtna institutions and sharing among kin, is a far more secure economic strategy than dependence on the western economic system of money and banking. In this way the economic history of the region formed Ahtna attitudes toward full participation in the American way of life.

During each successive boom, some of the stampedeers, soldiers, and boomers have stayed and settled in the valley. They have raised families, established businesses, and become, in their own view, pioneers on the last frontier. Thus the non-Native residents of Copper Center include the descendants of the original federal marshal, gold-hungry Klondikers and forty-milers, Valdez storekeepers, and single women who ventured north to teach the children of the pioneers. More recent migrations have resulted from various homestead acts.

The Native population of the region suffered greatly from epidemic diseases brought by the non-Native settlers. Some estimate that a series of influenza epidemics and tuberculosis nearly halved the Ahtna population between 1896 and 1920, when the population may have been as low as 500. Only through inter-marriage with non-Ahtna people was the indigenous population able to renew itself to 1,100 in 1976. (Alaska Native Foundation, 1976, P. 168)

Since World War II, a steady stream of young Natives left the region for Anchorage in search of work. One Ahtna informant felt that the growing non-Native population had squeezed the unskilled Native worker out of the job

market in the region. The labor exodus reached a peak in the 1960s and early '70s, when well over half of those people enrolled in Ahtna, Inc. lived outside the region. It appeared that if some dramatic event did not occur soon to bring the Native worker home, the resident Native labor pool would run dry. The building of the **Trans-Alaska** Pipeline as well as the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act not only stemmed labor migration from the **Ahtna** region and Copper Center, but also attracted many of the emigrants home.

### The Pipeline Period

The focus of this study is the most recent boom period covering the years 1973 through 1978. During this period, the **Trans-Alaska** Pipeline was built from **Prudhoe** Bay on the Arctic Ocean to **Valdez** on the Gulf of Alaska. The pipeline snaked through the Copper River Valley and bisected the Ahtna region (see Glossary) east and west.

Environmental impact work had been done in 1970 and 1971. In Copper Center these academic and planning pursuits were a hum when compared with the roar of activity in the spring of 1976 when construction reached its peak. The constant flow of traffic, the jumble of people in the stores, and the excavation of the right-of-way had transformed the once quiet village. On June 20, 1977, oil started flowing from the arctic wells, and a month later arrived in **Valdez** where it was loaded into the new baby tanker "**Arco** Juneau." Amidst national news coverage, the cargo was shipped to a refinery outside of Seattle. A few weeks later **Prudhoe** Bay oil was running American automobiles.

The construction of the pipeline near the village as well as the presence of many return migrants complexly affected the social life of Copper Center. For example, the return migrants severely taxed the available housing in the community. Other changes were less obvious and centered around the new values the return migrants brought home with them. Their expectations of village life differed subtly from the expectations of their parents and grandparents. **While** the return of the young and middle-aged worker with his family was universally applauded by the village elders, some of the changes they brought with them were not universally welcomed.

At this writing, the final data is not yet in. In March, 1978, the residents of Copper Center were waiting anxiously to find out how many would be employed during the summer of 1978 on the work program being organized to maintain the pipeline and right of way while the oil flowed. Only then many felt could they plan for the future. The implication was that some might have **to** leave the village and search for work elsewhere. Reports in Tundra Times during November and December of 1978 said that the subsidiary company of **Ahtna, Inc.**, a **Native-**owned corporation formed by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, lost the maintenance contract with the Pipeline Service Company, and that as a result almost all of the 38 Native employees working on maintenance programs lost their jobs. The **Ahtna** Corporation at present is involved in litigation to regain the maintenance contract.

The economic insecurity **felt** by some of Copper Center's Native residents in March of 1978 was having some consequences. There were reports of financial failure and repossessions, of frustrated providers "taking it out on the kids," and of **family** break-ups. By the end of 1978 hopes of employment

security on the pipeline maintenance project had been dashed. This study will not give detail on the period after 1977, but some reference must be made to the most recent developments. The reader must be warned that the course of change brought by the pipeline to Copper Center is still being run. A final tabulation of the social outcomes is yet to be seen.

### Methodology

The conclusions reached in this report are based on a combination of observation done in the field during the years 1971-1978, and a study of the literature existing on the Ahtna, Alaska Natives, and related topics. While both sources are important, the researcher depends largely on the information gathered from the Copper Center people. **Written** documentation is **virtually** non-existent for many of the topics discussed in this report.

### FIELDWORK

From the fall of 1972 through the following year, the researcher **lived** with an elderly woman in the village of Copper Center. Since that intensive period of study, at least four or five months of each year have been spent in Copper Center. The everyday experiences of life there are an integral and important part of the study. During the first year, the researcher learned many of the basics of **Ahtna** culture. At the same time, she tried to shape some of the data collection process along formal lines by holding open-ended interviews, administering questionnaires on defined topics usually having to do with women, and collecting certain lists of information such as kinship terms and

their meanings, clan names, old villages, songs, and residents' past employment and place of residence. A census of households, a genealogy of the village and much of the region was collected.

Over the following years, previously collected information was updated to indicate changes in household and village composition, drinking behavior, church attendance, attitudes, and other topics. The views on many subjects held by the **local** residents were also collected.

### The Anthropological Literature

The literature pertaining to Copper Center is meager, and consists almost totally of government reports, a handful of Russian documents (of incomparable worth), and an increasing number of publications sponsored by the Native Corporation, Ahtna, Inc. (see Glossary) Anthropological work has been done in the area but little had been published by 1973. This situation is slowly being remedied, and in the last four years a number of researchers have published and given papers of relevance to Ahtna topics.

Frederica de **Laguna** and Katherine **McClellen** undertook ethnological research in Copper Center during several summers in the 1950s and 1960s. Dr. de **Laguna** published one paper (de **Laguna**, 1969-70) on the **Ahtna** custom of giving animals metaphorical names, and she refers to the **Ahtna** in other publications (de **Laguna**, 1967). Stephen Strong of McGill University wrote an **M.A.** dissertation on the Northern **Ahtna** living in Mentasta in 1974, after completing approximately eight months of field work (Strong, No Date). Mr. Strong's paper centers on social and historical topics.

John M. Campbell of the University of New Mexico completed two summers of ethnographic research and some archeological survey work which contributed to the preliminary pipeline reports on archeological sites. But the central corpus of archeological work was completed during the pipeline period, on salvage missions. Most of the work was done by William Workman and Jerry Clark (Workman, 1976, Clark, 1974, **Clark, 1976**). Dr. Anne D. **Shinkwin** of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, dug an early historic site at **Chitina** which became the basis of her Ph.D. dissertation (**Shinkwin, 1974**) at the University of Wisconsin. These recent archeological reports have significantly expanded our understanding of **Ahtna prehistory**.

Linguistic work has also ballooned in recent years. James Kari of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, along with some Ahtna people involved in the Ahtna Language program in the schools, have published many academically sound books, pamphlets and educational materials. Mrs. Mildred Buck of **Glennallen** has been especially productive (Buck and Kari, **1975**).

The researcher's own work sponsored by the National Park Service included a survey of Ahtna Historic Sites within the Ahtna Region (Reckord, 1978) and a study of **subsistence** in the proposed **Wrangell** National Park was only recently finished (Reckord, 1977, Reckord, 1978). The researcher's studies of Ahtna women (Reckord, **1975**), of subsistence, and of childhood (**Reckord, 1975**), together with this report, are the **only** anthropological works that have been done on the modern Ahtna. Virtually all previous academic studies focus on the Ahtna past.



Several government-sponsored reports have been done that are of interest to this study. The National Forest Service published a plan for the Copper River Region which includes background data (United States Department of Agriculture, 1977). The National Park Service also published its version of an environmental plan (United States Department of the Interior, No Date), but it is not as useful to the needs of the present study as the Forest Service's publication.

Ahtna, Inc. has contracted for planning documents that will be of use to the corporation for planning purposes. The Ahtna Region (Ahtna, Inc. and the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center, 1973) provides baseline information useful to this study. Because each village in the region is treated separately, the report gives specific data on Copper Center.

The Pipeline Impact reports written by Mrs. Thea Smelter (Smelter, 1976) have proven useful in providing an overall picture. Information from the pipeline period on topics such as school enrollment, number of court cases, etc., are presented in tables. However, little analysis was made of the data presented at that time because the purpose of the regional impact office was to attract funding for needed services, rather than actually analyze the impact in depth.

#### Variables Of Change

It is difficult to isolate individual variables of change originating outside of the community over the last five years. Not all changes are solely attributable to pipeline construction.

Probably of greatest importance to the Ahtna people has been the settlement of the aboriginal land claims. In 1971 the Federal Government passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, ANCSA, (Public Law 92-203) which settled the land claims of all Alaskan Native people. Forty million acres of Alaska land and \$962.5 million was paid to Alaskan Natives. The money will be distributed to the regional corporations through the Alaska Native Fund of the U. S. Treasury over an 11 year period. The land was awarded to the various economic corporations formed by the ANCSA, including 12 regional corporations and more than 200 village corporations.

The regional corporations are profit-making corporations, which aim to earn money using the lands and monetary compensation awarded to them in the Act. No provision is made in the ANCSA to provide non-profit regional corporations [most regions had some non-profit institutions before the Act's passage] that could provide services or play an advocacy role on a regional basis. **Nevertheless**, most of the **pre-existing** non-profit associations have incorporated, and have continued to play an important service role in the regions (see Glossary), working closely with the regional profit-making corporations.

Of the 40 million acres provided in the ANCSA, 22 million acres were designated for selection by village corporations, also incorporated under ANCSA provision. Village corporations could be non-profit (service, welfare, education or advocacy oriented), or profit-making corporations, depending on the wishes of the enrollees.

Using economic corporations as their vehicle, the U.S. Congress settled the aboriginal land claims in Alaska without creating either reservations, "on-going racially defined" groups, or a wardship relationship with present and future generations of Natives. At the same time, it is clear from discussion

in Congressional committee, that Congress hoped to draw the Native people into the developmental process of Alaska. (U.S. Congress, February 8-10, 1968) In the Copper River Valley eight villages (including Cantwell in the Upper **Susitna** Valley) **each** claimed a large enough enrollment to qualify as village corporations. These eight villages were assigned to the Regional Corporation--**Ahtna, Incorporated**--containing 18,488,000 acres. Of these acres, **115,200** belong to Copper Center Village, which has surface rights to the lands although the regional corporation retains the subsurface rights. **Ahtna, Inc.**, works closely with the village corporations and provides technical assistance according to the needs expressed by villagers. Copper Center Village **Corporation--Klutika-ah, Inc.**--has the largest enrollment of any Ahtna village with 284 people (**Ahtna, Inc.** 1973, p. 5). Over **half** of its people did not live in the **Ahtna** region in 1973. The population of the **who** region is the smallest of all the Regional corporations in the state, with 1,038 as of April 1, 1973 (**Ahtna, Inc.**, **1973**, p. 11).

In addition to the above profit-making institutions is the Copper River Native Association, which originally was a voluntary association of Natives living in the Copper River Valley. The Copper River Native Organization, CRNA, is the "non-profit arm" of the **Ahtna** Corporation, **Ahtna, Inc.** It is through this association that welfare and service projects are carried out. Educational programs, housing projects, an aging program, a law advocacy program and other non-profit projects are designed and administered by CRNA, usually through state or federal government funding. **Ahtna, Inc.** works closely with CRNA.

Both Ahtna, Inc., and the Copper River Native Association have located their main offices in, or within walking distance of, Copper Center Village. The village corporation of Copper Center--Klutika-ah, Inc.--also runs a small office in the village proper. Together, these organizations are the largest single employers of Natives in the Valley. While the pipeline service company was aiming for 24 full-time maintenance employees, Ahtna, Inc., and the organizations it sponsors employed 56 people at one point during the summer of 1977. The Native Corporation is expected to employ as many Native people as possible, and the corporation has become an important variable of economic change in the region. The Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act has ramifications beyond economics. Its effect on traditional Native values, political organization, and Native-non-Native relations has become increasingly obvious in recent years. Throughout this report, the presence of the Ahtna Native Corporation will be cited as an important determinant of change.

ANCSA has had other ramifications. In particular, it changed the status of much of the land in the area. It not only provided the utility corridor through which the pipeline passes, but also designated possible park lands, state lands, and federal lands. Homesteading was closed. Suddenly it seemed to many local Native residents that the land they had freely used for their lifetimes had been closed to them. Invisible fences defined by the rules and regulations of ANCSA cut off access to traditional hunting grounds, stands of fire-wood timber, and recreational areas. Non-Natives have been affected in similar ways and ANCSA has changed not only the relations between the main racial groups in the community but also their attitudes toward government.

With the organization of **Ahtna**, Inc., the coming of the pipeline, and the growing population, the presence of government has become more apparent. Between 1973 and 1977, it seemed to some local residents that almost every week some government sponsored program was calling another meeting, announcing another training program, opening a larger office in the region, or beefing up services. Not all of this government activity is attributable to the pipeline.

Finally, there were many smaller changes. Television was introduced in 1973. In **1976** the state-operated school system cut the umbilical cord to the region and initiated a locally-operated school system. The effect of this event has been greater than might be expected as the local residents try to grapple with complex educational issues. Several local newspapers were started during the pipeline period, and cater to the permanent residents.

### Summary

Copper Center Village during the pipeline period offers **social** scientists an opportunity to observe social change resulting from large-scale technological development. In the following chapters the researcher describes how the village works in an historical and modern perspective. During the last two centuries, the Ahtna **people** have had to continually change their way of life following changes in the manner in which they support themselves. They have evolved from a self-supporting subsistence economy to a wage-dependent economy, and have depended on each other as well as their special knowledge of their environment to "make-it" in a society and economy which has usually been hostile to their way of **life**. What changes will the pipeline period bring?

## II. A, SOCIAL HISTORY OF COPPER CENTER

### Aboriginal Period: pre-1800

Two hundred years ago virtually everything the Ahtna people needed for survival came from the land, the rivers that scored the land, and the plants and animals that shared the environment. The Ahtna society organized its people to take maximum advantage of the resources around them, given the limited technology of that time. Few important historic events punctuated the predictable rhythm of Ahtna life, and few were incorporated into the oral literature of the Ahtna people.

Ahtna folktales and remembrances of the past which have been passed on from previous generations are the main source of information available on Ahtna history. Russian and American explorers' reports provide documentation for some understanding of the Ahtna people's past, but this documentation is meager and sometimes prejudiced by the cultural values of the writers. Archeological work holds promise of enhancing present knowledge of Ahtna history. Nevertheless, the following description of aboriginal Ahtna life and culture is only meant to be an informed reconstruction of what could have existed.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The climate of the area was one of extremes. Winter temperatures sometimes fell to -60° F., while in summer the temperatures were likely to reach 90° F., a range of 150° each year surpassed only in some areas of central Siberia and

subarctic Canada. The length of the daylight hours also varied in accordance with the seasons. In **mid-December there were** only a few hours of twilight, and in mid-June, only a few hours of night.

The pattern of climatic extremes was reflected in the social life of the aboriginal **Ahtna**, who worked long hours during summer's light, and **semi-**hibernated during the cold months of winter. In the Ahtna language, the month of January was called C'edzak Saa, or "Riddle moon" because it was a time spent indoors telling stories to pass the time (Alaska Native Language Center, 1978).

The aboriginal territory of the Ahtna extended throughout the Copper River Valley and its drainages. It is not clear whether Ahtna-speaking people lived in parts of the Upper **Susitna (Kari)**. The Ahtna territory was surrounded by the Alaska, **Talkeetna, Chugach, and Wranglell** mountain ranges. Their permanent ice fields, high rugged peaks, narrow passes, and massiveness made them difficult to penetrate. Although the mountains stymied travel, the **Ahtna** had trading and social relations with their Athabascan-speaking neighbors.

The mountain ice fields and winter snow nourished the water system of the region and made the rivers cold, fast, and silty. Villages, fish camps, and houses were located at virtually every major confluence of the Copper River. From the streams the Ahtna took their main source of sustenance, the red salmon. During the winter the water system became a frozen white highway of ice that allowed the efficient transport of supplies and tied together the people of the entire region.

Typical boreal forest (see Glossary) characterized the environment of the Copper River Valley near Copper Center as it does today. Poplars line the Klutina's banks and spruce stands on most of the remaining land. Intermittent muskeg is found in the higher elevations. In the past, many different types of vegetation were utilized during the Ahtna subsistence cycle.

Animals important to the Copper Center Ahtna food quest included moose, caribou, sheep, porcupine, beaver, snowshoe hare, lynx, arctic ground squirrel, black bear, and fowl. Salmon in great numbers were taken in spruce root dip nets from the Klutina River. Smaller species of lake-inhabiting fish were taken in traps. Many species of water fowl could be taken during the molt at lakes or on small ponds. Other anireals were snared for their fur, an item essential for gear and warm clothing.

Distributional and temporal fluctuations in animal and plant populations characterized the boreal forest environment. Native informants in Copper Center say that the gross fluctuations of many of the species were not critical to human survival unless several species reached a low point in their population cycle within the same annual cycle. Modern scientific studies in the fields of biology and anthropology confirm the Copper Center people's observations on this point (Nelson, 1973, P. 276).

In this subarctic environment lived the aboriginal Ahtna. What technology, social structures, and conceptual knowledge and beliefs did they command in order to survive? The following pages discuss some of the most important items in the cultural inventory of the aboriginal Ahtna.



## THE ABORIGINAL AHTNA

An aboriginal village was often quite small. Sometimes a single house, constructed of upright logs, moss, and spruce bark, housed 25 people. Other villages, such as **Tarał** (see Glossary) appear from the remains, to have been larger, housing up to 100 or 200 people. Inside the house was found a central fireplace. The smoke escaped through a hole in the roof. Small compartments lined the walls and women and children **slept** inside them during the night and lounged and worked on top during the day. An attached sweatbath housed the men of the community and apparently doubled as a men's house.

Various outbuildings, including underground caches, menstrual huts, "honeymoon" houses, and racks for drying and preparing meat and skins stood in the yard. Fish camps **usually were** located within walking distance of the village, and hunting territories were often several days walk in the higher elevations of the surrounding mountains. **Well-worn** paths led from one village to the next. Sometimes a summer house or sweatbath was located on a nearby hill where breezes kept down the mosquitoes. The exact location of villages near the **Klutina** River during the 19th Century is difficult to determine. One village is reported to have been five or seven miles downstream from the **Klutina's** mouth. A second village, probably from the mid-19th century, is located across the Copper River from the first village. Smaller, one-house villages, could have been located across the Copper River from modern Copper Center, at the outlet of **Klutina** Lake, and three miles north of the **Klutina's** mouth. A recently located site near the "Church on the Hill" in modern Copper Center at **mile** 101 probably dates to **pre-Russian** times, but further study is needed before pinpointing the date of that site. The modern

Ahtna often talk of these villages as "Copper Center," probably because of their proximate locations and because some families descend from the residents of those older communities.

The Ahtna used local bone, antler, wood, and stone for making implements and decorative items. Copper was the signal material of the prehistoric inventory. The Ahtna and their neighbors highly valued the nuggets that were collected in the headwaters of the Nizina River and fashioned into points, knives and jewelry.

The Ahtna took animals when the animals were migrating or congregating in large numbers. The Copper Center people could take many black bears during the first warm breezes of spring, when the bears sat sunning themselves and digging roots on the cut banks overlooking the rivers. Salmon were caught as they spawned in the streams in late spring and summer. Caribou were taken during annual migrations. Sometimes sheep could be speared in quantity on the mountains, where they congregated in late summer. Snowshoe hare populations run through seven-year cycles of plenty and scarcity. The Ahtna snared many hare during the high point in the cycle. In Autumn arctic ground squirrels, fattened for a winter of hibernation, were taken in quantity in the mountains above the tree line. Grayling were trapped in the small creeks in the spring and fall. Waterfowl were caught during the spring molt.

At other times long fences and snares were used to give the hunter or fisherman more control over the environment. Informants report that fences as long as twenty miles were maintained in order to funnel moose into snares or caribou into lakes where they could be speared from skin boats. The notion that the aboriginal Ahtnas wandered aimlessly trying to find game is

erroneous. They predictably followed an annual routine that was based on a sophisticated knowledge of local animal behavior. By taking game in large numbers and storing the take in large underground caches for later use, the **Ahtna** were able to maintain a limited hedge against starvation.

Many of the traditional **Ahtna** social structures organized people into task groupings for the purpose of harvesting wild resources. Household, clan and village are the basic units of Ahtna society.

At marriage, a young person was required to marry outside of the **matriclan** (see Glossary) preferably into the clan of one's father. Because marriage carried many obligations of subsistence resources sharing, marriage often established economic alliances between two clans that were long-standing and strong. The knots of marriage between clans knit a strong pattern into Ahtna social life. The **matriline** was the basic design for a tribal-wide network of obligation. Marriages tied together villages up and down the Copper River. In times of hardship entire households visited their in-laws and found help, security, and safety.

Most sharing occurred on a day to day basis within households. But the elaborate **potlatch** ceremony ritualized the sharing customs of the Ahtna people. **Potlatches** were held to commemorate a dead person's **life**, or to honor a living person who performed a heroic task. Dancing, eating, gifting, and speech-making occurred during the ceremony. The deceased's in-laws distributed gifts to the deceased's **clanmates** and others who have helped him or her during their life. Size varied, but an important person could attract people from throughout the **Ahtna** region. Those who came long distances also

were honored with special speeches and gifts. The **potlatch** season was usually held in the fall when food supplies were at a maximum peak. **Potlatches** often were put off during bad years until enough gifts and food could be gathered to bring pride to the deceased's clan. During the **potlatch**, old debts were paid off and new ones were made. The political and economic relationships between clans were discussed and ties were cemented through sharing.

After marriage, a young man sometimes moved to the village of his wife. Usually, the village was located nearby, perhaps at the next river's mouth or across the Copper River. At this new village, a young man would likely find many adult men of his own clan who had married into the village. A woman, on the other hand, usually remained in her natal village throughout her lifetime, near her close female relatives such as her sisters, her mother, and her mother's sisters.

Sometimes, after an initial period of bride service, the groom returned to his natal village with his wife. **Female** informants report that this **alternative** was unpopular among young women because it placed brides in the homes of their mothers-in-law. Yet **male** informants claim that young men might prefer returning to their home village where power and prestige could more easily be gained.

The Ahtna social system supplied a multiplicity of choices in many areas including the residence example given here. In the view of anthropologists, Northern Athabaskan societies in general are characterized by their "flexibility". Anthropologists have posited that flexibility in household

and village composition is a useful adaptation for hunting and gathering societies that have **little** control over their environment. It gives the society the option to redistribute its population in ways that are advantageous for their survival.

The sexual division of labor was a prevalent organizational principle in **Ahtna** society. Task groupings, which were formed to harvest the resources, were usually composed of people of one sex. Women cut fish, gathered roots and berries, carried burdens, and fashioned birch bark baskets and utensils. Men speared caribou, snared moose, scouted and worked stone, antler, and minerals into tools. Thus, within the household, people of one sex often united in task groupings to harvest subsistence resources.

A person's political position in **Ahtna** society was defined by a combination of factors, including ability, **matrilineal** kin ties, and sex. Various male roles can be identified. The dené is described as a kind of chief. The ciile' are "working men," dependent upon a particular dené. Very few 'elnaa, or slaves, were taken from Eskimo tribes on Prince William Sound. The kaskaé, or judge, and the shaman (see Glossary) earned their positions by displaying wisdom or healing skills.

At the apex of the society in each village stood the dené, who falls into a classification anthropologists label "big-man." He, as the economic head of the community, **told** village residents what to do on the subsistence quest. For example, the dené might tell one man to take his **family** hunting to the east in the **Wrangells**, and tell another to go west to the **Chugach**. He would organize trading parties to the coast. To become a dené, one need not be

born into a dené's family, although that might help. Personal attributes made the dené: an ability to organize the villagers and provide them with security. It was often helpful for a dené to have a certain configuration of relatives, such as a number of prolific sisters producing sons to support their mother's brother. Having several strong brothers might also be an advantage in the competition for denéships. Below the dené stood a group of independent men, who were not important enough to be called dené. These family men sometimes lived in a big dené's village, or in small, independent communities on the tributaries to the Copper River. While they did not have a large entourage of workers to call upon and control, they did not have to serve at all times the larger dené. Some independents were able leaders, but only of small villages and households. Informants stress that independents "took care of themselves." (Actually, it is unclear if the independent men were found in aboriginal society or grew more common as a result of the fur trade, when individual family groups became more viable as a social unit and drew support from one or two man trap lines and related subsistence pursuits. )

The drones of the society were called cille' or "workers." These were the young, unmarried men who worked for the dené. They lived in the dené's household, usually sleeping in the sweatbath with other village men. They were required to follow every instruction of the dené. They gave up all they earned and harvested to the dené, who redistributed the game to the rest of the community. These men could not marry and establish their own households without the permission of the dené. The cille' were permitted to marry usually when they were in their thirties.

The position of kaskaē is often described as a "judge." Often a dené occupied the role of kaskaē as well, although he could be an elderly wise man who had been a dené. (Informants stress that he need never have been a dené.) The kaskaē was seen as a "thinker," a man who could analyze and arbitrate disputes. It was also his function to speak for the village. When visitors came to the community, the house of the kaskaē flew a standard made of a fur pelt. Visitors knew immediately that this was the kaskaē's house and they approached it first. The kaskaē would give visitors a welcoming speech on behalf of the entire community. This position, it is stressed by modern elders, was not an economic position but a position of intellectual merit.

Women rarely gained political or economic positions on a par with men and it was generally through men that women gained status in the society. For example, the daughters, mothers, and wives of important denés, were shown deference, given special gifts, and usually became leaders in female-dominated activities such as fishing, berry-picking, or keeping track of time. Rich denés were allowed to have several wives, and traditional stories about famous denés relate that several marriages forged between a single man and several women of different clans was used to gain political peace. Yet other tales tell of bickering and disputes between jealous wives. Nevertheless, the general impression associated with strong denés is that women gained some sort of economic and political power concomitant with their husbands'. As they aged, these women organized many activities in the village.

According to the Ahtna, 'elnaa, or slaves, were rarely captured during raids on the neighboring Eskimo people of Prince William Sound. In the Ahtna society, slavery entailed the adoption of foreigners into the tribe. While they were required to serve the needs of the dene, it is said that war captives sometimes married into the tribe and eventually gained status as a free person, although not one such marriage is documented in informants' genealogies.

Widows and orphans were sometimes called by the same term as slaves, 'elnaa, and Dr. de Laguna suggests that the general word 'drudge' might be a better translation of the term. Widows and their families often lived miserable lives, especially if males of the deceased husband's clan blamed the widow for her husband's death. All widows were expected to give away their possessions when their husbands died and to live a life of poverty with their children. The family of one **older** woman, whose mother had been widowed when her children were **still** small, had been expected to earn their family's keep by performing the most unpleasant tasks of village life. The children in the family carried water, cleaned, and worked constantly. After a period of several years, a widow might remarry the brother or **clanmate** of her deceased husband. Only then was she reintroduced to society. Some widows, especially **older women** without surviving children and few strong kin ties, never regained their former position in society. Unwanted widows might be taken home by her own clan, but it was unusual for a single woman to advance economically. Traditional stories abound of young widows who committed suicide rather than face the life promised their kind.



## The Russian Period: 1790-1865

Knowledge of the Russian Period is sketchy. In general, the Russians and the Alaskan Natives who worked for them had little direct contact with most Ahtna people. Only a few parties traveled in the Copper River Region and they were met with resistance from the Native people. The Serebrennikoff party of 1843 was killed near the **Slana** River, seventy-five miles north of modern Copper Center. This event, considered justifiable by the Russians themselves (Report of the Committee of the Russian American Company, 1863, P. 93), discouraged further encroachment by the Russians in Ahtna territory (Board of Directors of the Russian American Company, 1851, no. 1206). References are made in Russian sources to a one-room trading post on the Copper River, probably near **Tara**, and even this outpost closed after the **Serebrennikoff** affair. Nevertheless, the Ahtna continued to participate to a limited extent in the Russian fur-trade by undertaking long trading expeditions in early spring to Russian trading posts on Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet.

The social organization that guided the Ahtna subsistence quest also was called upon to organize trapping and the trip to deliver furs to the trading post at Nuchek in Prince William Sound. The Russian Period dene "ran" the fur trade, divided the trapping grounds, dictated the composition of **annual** trading parties, and in one reported case kept a store where independent men and women, as well as lesser dene could obtain goods through barter. He also continued many of his prehistoric functions involving subsistence, because, while some foodstuffs entered the **valley** during the Russian Period, the people continued to live off the land almost totally. Each spring **while** the ice remained hard, the

ten to twenty person trading expedition followed the Copper River through Mood Canyon to its mouth. Often, women and children accompanied the expedition. Long sleds, piled with furs, were pulled by the ciile', ("working men" ) and the women. Others carried packs, as did dogs. Because all those who had trapped during the previous winter could not possibly go to the trading posts, the dené served as an arbiter and middleman. The Russians preferred to dicker over the price of furs with a single "chief" or "doyon." Thus, even smaller denés often stood aside while the most important dené with the largest stack of furs did the bidding. Those who were left home in the valley depended totally on their leaders' integrity, ability to organize men and equipment for the trip, and ability to strike a good bargain with the Russians and return home with the highly prized goods .

It is doubtful that Central Copper River was greatly changed by the fur-trade during the Russian Period. Those villages located near the **Ahtna** borders with the Eyak to the south or the **Tanaina** to the west felt reverberations of greater magnitude, as illustrated by the high populations reported in Tarał, the relatively intensive settlement, and the reported rise of powerful denés at Tarał and Tyone Lake.

Perhaps the inability of the **Ahtna** to supply the great number of furs the Russians expected was due to the demands of the subsistence lifestyle. The taking of furs fit neatly into the annual cycle because furs were harvested during the coldest months when most subsistence activity had traditionally been set aside. Yet it is doubtful that great energy could

be put into the fur trade. The food quest was still the most important activity to the local people. The goods that returned to the valley on the backs of the traders and their dogs were not edible; rather, they were status goods, such as tea, beads, and ribbons.

Technological changes accompanying Western contact were of consequence to Ahtna society. In particular, the importation of iron implements and guns from Canada irreversibly altered the Native lifestyle by changing their relationship to the environment. The importance of the introduction of iron was recognized clearly by the Natives: the Ahtna term for "white man" is C'etsitnaey which means "iron men."

The Ahtna hunter accepted the new technology but he retained many of the successful tools and methods of the past. Snares and fences continued to be constructed in traditional locations; many Natives living today remember seeing long moose fences when they were children. Caribou continued to be speared from skin boats as before, because the kickback from a rifle threw the hunter into the water.

Most other trading goods were used to reinforce the existing status distinctions of Native society. Beads are probably the most well known of the ornamentation goods that became popular, but other items such as bright wool shirts, pins, hats, Russian tea glasses, and brass kettles became status indicators. Traditional stories describe the wife of the Taral chief, serving tea in china cups. A woman with roots in the Tyone Lake country proudly told of a rich dene' who was her forebear's husband,

drinking his tea from a glass mug in a silver holder, in true Russian style. It should be noted that these stories relate to the rich villages of powerful denés at the valley's **exits**. Life in the Central Copper River was probably not fancy. Status distinctions there were indicated by less valuable items such as beads and clothing.

It is most difficult to gauge and describe the changes that took place in the value system of the Native people during the Russian Period. Not only is no archeological record left behind, but also the modern Ahtna informant is reluctant to discuss aspects of the traditional value system. Apparently, most non-Natives ridicule these beliefs and the missionary work of recent years has convinced some that discussion of the traditional beliefs might be sinful.

The most obvious change in the value system of the aboriginal Ahtna during the Russian Period was the introduction of Christianity in the form of the Russian Orthodox religion. The religion was not embraced in toto in the Copper River area because priests did not actively proselytize among the mass of the Ahtna people. Rather, they focused on members of trading parties to the coast. At the Russian trading posts, priests routinely baptized all who came to the outposts. They also gave elementary instruction and encouraged the new converts to return home and baptize others. Lay priests belonging to what the Russians considered the "civilized tribes" because they were within the Russian sphere, also tried to convert those who came into their territory. The religious tenets trickled into the valley against the flow of the furs. There is some debate over the question of a church

being located in Tarał. It is possible that a church was built by the Native **people** themselves. The possible existence of a church in itself, does not necessarily indicate the physical presence of a priest in the valley.

The traditional Ahtna shaman, or "sleep doctor," continued in his role as a combination healer and priest. The reading of dreams is reported to extend into the 20th century. Elderly informants tell of running many miles to the village of a particularly important shaman to summon him to the bedside of a sick relative at a trapping or hunting encampment. **According to** Lieutenant **Henry** Allen (Allen, 1885.) the shaman at **Tarał** was enamored of writing, and wrote messages on **birchbark** in a script which Allen felt was imitative of Russian but meaningless. Native informants hold that the script had meaning and that it was a powerful part of the shaman's magic. They also say that only a shaman could read it. Could it be that the shaman had incorporated some of the more impressive components of the Orthodox priest's "magic"? Such a pick-and-choose style of "borrowing" Russian traits would be in character with the overall style and shape of contact during the Russian Period. More often than not, new traits were laid beside the existing prehistoric culture. Russian components added to the cultural system, rather than supplanting the old way of doing things.

In summary, the society, technology, and belief system of the Ahtna did not change qualitatively overnight during the Russian Period. The new wealth, the trading, and the industry of the period is looked upon by the modern Ahtna as a golden age in their culture. Most certainly, it was the golden age of their den&. Natives built on their traditional society and tech-

nology, taking from the Russians what they found to be most useful, emphasizing those aspects of Russian contact which best allowed them to incorporate the new technology and knowledge into their traditional way of life. The introduction of new technological innovations was somewhat softened by the great distance and cost of shipping goods from Europe to Alaska, as well as up the Copper River from the coast using boats, backs, and dogs.

During the end of the Russian Period and the beginning of the American Period, the **Ahtna dene'** system reached its peak of activity and productivity. The traditional social distinctions were reinforced by trade. The control of the fur trade by a small group of men indicates that a "big-man" system was operating for at least a short period near the end of the 19th century.

Soon after 1850, Russian interest in Alaska began to **wain**, as Tsars attempted to **hold onto their thrones** by liberalizing Imperial policies. The monopolistic Russian-American Company became a prime candidate for policy change, and first came under scrutiny immediately before its charter was due to be renewed in 1861. Because the Russians were fighting with the English in the Crimea, they advanced Alaska as an enticement to the **Americans**, whom they wished to become an ally. Thus the Russians rid their country of the unpopular colony, while at the same time gaining an ally who **would** also buffer their eastern coasts from the **growing** British colony of Canada. Thus global power politics changed the nationality of the Alaska Natives and few knew that the switch in allegiances had been made.

## The American Period

In 1867 the Russians sold Alaska to America. The Ahtna continued to trade on the Gulf of Alaska or Cook Inlet, and tradition holds that American goods were superior to the Russian goods. Lieutenant Henry Allen led the first official American expedition to the Copper River Valley in 1874, and his reports (Allen, 1900, and Allen, 1875) are the best sources of information about the Ahtna for this period. Allen was impressed by the meagerness of supplies he found in the Ahtna food caches, and by the obvious social predominance of the dene', who did no work but received many presents. Ahtna stories remember Allen's party as well. The Ahtna too marvel at the Americans' lack of supplies (it was Allen's design to live off the land) and the surprising willingness of Allen, who was the obvious leader, to carry his own equipment and undertake work similar to those of lower rank.

Near Taral, Allen's party had met a prospector named John **Bremner**, who had wintered the previous year of 1884 in the Copper River Valley. Bremner was on the verge of starvation and gladly accompanied the American party on the rest of their epic journey, which would take them down the Yukon River. **Bremner's** presence at Taral indicates that a few lone prospectors had already entered the isolated region. Unfortunately, few individual prospectors documented what they learned during such trips because they wished to guard valuable information from their competitors. **Bremner's** poorly written testament about his Copper Valley winter is valuable because it illustrates prevalent attitudes held by many of the poorly educated prospectors. **Bremner** displays little respect for his Ahtna neighbors.

The Gold Rush of 1898 brought an onslaught of change to the people of the Central Copper River because of the arrival of non-Natives in the valley. The newcomers settled, built trading posts, graded roads, worked mines, and widened trails. They took over places that the Native people had always used in the past. The extent of the influx is illustrated by the huge numbers of stampedeers who wintered at Klutina Lake during the winter of 1898. An estimated 3,000 people spent winter on the lake's shore, where food was scarce, and almost half of them died of scurvy. More conservative reports estimate the Klutina Lake population at about 1,000.

The Ahtna supplied game meat to the people living at Copper Center. Apparently, the Natives bartered moose meat for store-bought goods. Shad Reid writes that his partner "Ickes, traded some rice and coffee to Indians for a piece of fresh moose meat." (Reid, August 14, 1898) While tradition tells that the local Ahtna were overwhelmed by the prospectors' numbers and infuriated by their claiming of Native trapping cabins at Klutina Lake, they also took advantage of the opportunity to supply the miners in return for trade goods.

Copper Center was the central focus of the 1898 stampede to the Klondike, because it was considered a good half-way point to the gold fields. Two years before, the Copper Center Lodge had been established. It was nothing extravagant; only a large sourdough tent. But by 1897 and '98 it was a place on the map, and mail could be picked up there. (Steinmetz, 1898) Thus Copper Center bears the distinction of hosting the oldest lodge in interior Alaska, according to a state historical marker placed on the log facade of the present-day structure.



The mineral potential of the region continued to attract many prospectors to the mountains surrounding Copper Center. By the winter of 1899, trading posts had been established in many parts of the Copper River Valley. But it was the completion of the Chitina-Fairbanks Road link and the connection of the Copper River-Northwestern Railroad between **Kennicotte, Chitina** and Cordova in about **1909** which transformed the economic life of the valley more than any other single factor. Trading posts and stores were built, **especially** where lodges were found. The communities that swelled around the lodges attracted the Native people as well. Most of the early non-Native communities are associated with a "village," inhabited by Native people with traditional ties to the lands and fisheries nearby.

The establishment of trading posts within the valley heralded a major change in the subsistence lifestyle and the society that organized the subsistence quest. The transportation network precipitated further changes. For the first time, the Native people could move quickly around the entire region in any season, could trade and barter for goods within the region, and could find cash employment in the larger communities.

The older informants in Copper Center Village came originally from villages located throughout the Ahtna territory. Those from **Chitina** and Copper Center tell how a new economic strategy was designed that combined trapping, wage labor, and subsistence activity. One **Chitina** man said that several Native men worked part of each year on the Copper River-Northwestern Railroad, and then quit in the fall to ride the train up the **Chitina** River to good hunting grounds between **Chitina** and McCarthy. A Copper Center Native says he worked

as a young man on a Chinese construction crew outside of Valdez, where he shot squirrels and guarded the food supplies. After the construction season closed, he returned home to Copper Center to hunt and trap.

Market hunting and fishing were important economic activities for the Native people. Because most mines were located in the far reaches of the high mountains, market hunting also meant that the hunter had to leave home. Other Natives remained on home soil and hunted sheep, caribou, goat, and moose, which they bartered at the Copper Center trading post. The game was then sold by the pound to shoppers, both Native and non-Native. Apparently, little money was exchanged. The trading post operator maintained a running tab, which helped the Native people bank against hard times, but also tied them in a patron-client relationship to the trader. For this reason, the trading post operator took over many of the economic functions of the 19th Century dené. The position of dené became obsolete once the trader lived permanently in the community. The need to organize the production of furs, the subsistence quest, the trading party, and the redistribution of trading goods as well as subsistence resources no longer existed. The men acknowledged to have been the last "real" denés died in the first two decades of this century, and their moccasins have remained unfilled.

The position of dené was not the only traditional role that became obsolete during this period. Americans settling in the area took over the economic and social roles of not only the trader, but also the roles of the judge (kaskaé), the nurse and doctor (sleep-doctor), and the teacher

(matril ineal relatives. ) It was a difficult time for the Natives, because their entire society was under attack from outside forces encroaching on the once isolated region. Disease was rampant, and many died of diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza during the first twenty years following the Gold Rush. The introduction of alcohol was a further plague to the Natives.

Of central importance was the undermining of sharing and interdependence within the Native community. Younger men found that by earning cash, or directly dealing with the trader, they could circumvent the authority of the traditional elders who had held the reins of the social order only ten years before by correlating the hunt and leading the trading party. Women also trapped and **sold craftwork** at the **local** trading posts. By selling traditional craftwork, women could gain a security of her own. The ties **of** interdependence that were so important to the traditional society were weakened at all points.

One of the most significant changes in the social system involved the family. For the first time the large house in which twenty-five people might live, was abandoned in favor of smaller nuclear or extended family units. Smaller houses were built near a trading post, but much of each winter was spent at the upland hunting and trapping camps in single-family residences. Sometimes brothers or a father and son combination joined forces. The emphasis on fur-trapping had brought out the male-male relationships.

Also important was the way in which the furs were handled. Informants are adamant that each man or woman handled his or her own furs. Where once much

of the harvest had gone to the dene', now each man could visit his local trader and deal directly with him. As one man said, "Every man was his own boss, own dene'. That's a problem. That's the way today, too."

The nature of the village also changed. The villages became larger and were oriented to the trading post, which, while serving many functions, became a picture window on the non-Native culture. Frequently, several villages amalgamated. That is the case for Copper Center, which was formed when three late 19th Century villages located near modern-day Copper Center and Klutina Lake eventually became one. The Natives mimicked the log construction of the non-Natives and built small, one-room, log residences, which often only housed the nuclear family or the closest relatives of the woman household head's matriline.

The Americans brought the Protestant religion but no extensive missionizing was reported until 1956, except in Chitina. Many of the Natives became more closely allied with the Russian Orthodox Church because the better transportation system allowed more communication between the Ahtna and the Coastal Indians. Lay preachers, or "readers" circulated through the Ahtna villages. Young men who were so inclined could gain religious instruction during trips to Cordova, often associated with labor migration. The young men brought back to their villages knowledge of the Orthodox dogma and even baptized some of the village members. After the rail link was made, it was easier for the Orthodox priest to enter the region. Priests apparently visited Copper Center into the 1950s (de Laguna, 1978, P. 6),

More important than religion to the region, were the individualism and enterprise brought by the American Frontiersmen. The very presence of many working men who owned the elaborate inventory of trade goods so **highly** valued by the Native must have affected the Ahtna self-image. In fact, a genre of the Ahtna's own stories pokes fun **at** the **Ahtna** ignorance of Western technology during the Russian and **early** American Periods. The overwhelming response among older informants, when asked to recollect their childhood impressions of the non-Natives, was to dwell on things that the non-Natives brought with them, rather than what non-Natives did. The non-Natives brought light bulbs, music halls, and movies to **Chitina**, according to one woman's recollection. A Copper Center man remembers the automobiles, horses, telephones, and trains. Others mention flour, sugar, candy, tea, coffee, beans, and other food products.

The once self-sufficient Native suddenly found that the most-valued things had to be gotten from the newcomers. In order to obtain these goods, the only recourse was to work for wages, or give the non-Native things that would be useful to him. Thus the Copper Center Native went after the pelts of the fur-bearers, took the meat and fish the non-Native favored, and built and sewed goods the non-Native needed. Natives became guides and **ferry**men to the outsiders. Natives carried burdens by dog sled, snowshoe, and pack horse. Each Ahtna became more of an individual, a reflection of the individuals he sought to supply and serve for wages.

Even today, the elders bemoan the loss of self-esteem during this period. In the traditional society, economic freedom was important to social status.

Denés and independent men and women ranked ahead of those who could be commanded by superiors. Slaves, widows, and dependent working men had little real social status. One informant said it was demeaning in the first years of this century to always have to work for others. He said it was still worse that the people one worked for were not dene, with whom association might bring a rise in one's own status. They were not even Natives. Some of the more traditional elders continue to say it is demeaning to work for others. One elderly leader of Copper Center society today said, "Look at X, he is the **only man** who works for himself. He is the only man who is any good." X trapped seriously.

Summing up the early period of American contact, it appears that between 1898 and 1920 American culture was firmly established in the Copper River area. Trading posts and traders were strong agents of change, and the presence of these new institutions transformed Native society and culture. Technology also contributed to the rapid change within society. The Copper River-Northwestern Railroad made obsolete the annual trek down the river's ice to the coast. The trader replaced the dene, the professional nurse replaced the female's relatives during childbirth, the doctor replaced the shaman as healer. Money, which can be saved with no fear of spoilage (except inflation), and credit, which tied the Native to a single trader, replaced the traditions of sharing, making alliances, and **potlatching--** all of which had patterned and strengthened ties among the Native people as a hedge against ebbs in the resource cycles.

The **annual** cycle was greatly changed as the Natives sought western goods. Either work for cash was undertaken, or resources that brought in money

(furs, market meat and fish) were emphasized. At the same time, subsistence remained an important pursuit. Women continued to fish. (The introduction of the fishwheel around 1910 had already improved the efficiency of the fishermen.) Game continued to be hunted. A strategy that combined the possibilities of subsistence and participation in the Western economy evolved.

In 1919, the Spanish influenza hit the Ahtna with a force that almost destroyed them. Some people estimated that **half** the tribe died at this time. Most of the dead were among the people who had lived in the more isolated parts of the region, where medical **help** was not available. The epidemic caused the demise of many of the remaining, small, traditional villages in the north and near **Tazlina** Lake. The survivors moved into the larger villages such as Copper Center. **It** was also at this time that many of the **older** leaders died, and with them died much of the traditional knowledge. The younger **people** who remained would live a lifestyle different from that of their parents.

Trapping took on immense importance during the 1920s. Fur prices were skyrocketing and every year the **Ahtna** trapper gained more credit at the end of the winter. One woman referring to this period said, "You got to be living by **the** fur, they got to be trapping," in reference to the fact that much of the bustle of the first two decades of this century had died down. Growth had stabilized, and the American press moaned that conservation policies of Teddy Roosevelt had stymied economic growth. While trapping was good in the 1920s, few construction jobs were available, and market hunting (see Glossary) was less profitable because many of the miners had left.

Small family groups spent much of each winter on trap lines and the traditional winter period of togetherness and story telling had virtually disappeared. The population had difficulty recovering from the influenza's depletion of its numbers, and people ignored the traditional ceremonies that had previously marked the yearly rounds. **Potlatching** declined. Many who died during this period were **potlatched** only recently, during the present economic and cultural renaissance in the community.

The federal government made its first attempt to regulate subsistence usage in 1927. (Strong, undated) Game laws were imposed, and enforced by the federal marshal. But only a few people were arrested for game law violations during the last years of the 1920s, and generally it was difficult to enforce the laws on such a wide-spread population. During the 1920s, store bought food was becoming increasingly popular as trapping brought some relief from poverty. Slab bacon, corned beef, ham, sweet canned fruit, and **bannock** are often mentioned as staples. **It** appeared that a successful strategy incorporating subsistence as well as economic pursuits had been forged. But very soon the American economy was to prove undependable, not unlike the cycling populations of caribou and Arctic hare in the surrounding landscape. The Native had made a commitment to a new economic order only to have that order become disorder during the Depression.

The crash of the New York stock market and the Depression of the **1930s** brought hardship to the Copper Center people, some of whom decided never to trap again after the year 1929. In that year, one informant said that a red fox pelt brought in \$75 per pelt. Such high prices encouraged the Natives



to return the following winter to trap, with the expectations that fantastic rewards would be reaped. When they returned from a hard winter of isolation, they were greeted with the sad news that their hard won bounty was worthless, and that an entire winter's work was wasted. A high quality fox pelt brought \$19 at the most.

Although the Depression discouraged some from trapping, others continued to trap through the 1930s because they were not skilled for other work. Besides, little work was available in the region. Some gold mining provided seasonal employment, and the Copper River-Northwestern Railroad continued to run, but neither of these employers were close to Copper Center. Some Natives were forced to leave the region. One man moved to **Cantwell**, where he found employment on the Alaska railroad. Another moved to Anchorage and he also worked on the Alaska railroad. Neither of them ever married.

The final year of the 1920s illustrated how tightly connected the Natives had become to the Western economic system. They were deeply affected by the Depression because they were **fully** incorporated into the cash economy. Yet at the same time they maintained a dependence on subsistence pursuits. During the next decade, when the American system failed, many Natives **re-**turned to the land that had been their source of sustenance in the past.

Small groups settled on a more or less permanent basis at **Tazlina** Lake, **Klutina** Lake, and other trapping outposts. In the community of Copper Center, there were hard times. Many of the present elders say that they became alcoholics then. Odd-jobs were taken from time to time.

With **World War II**, prosperity returned to Copper Center. Many Native men found employment building roads and clearing brush. **Women** worked as waitress and maids in the service industry that grew up to serve the highway travelers. **With** the boom came social problems such as prostitution, rape, and alcoholism. For the first time since the Gold Rush, a large group of "outsiders" entered the valley. The United States Army had a large contingent stationed in **Glennallen**, which was given the task of building a road and airfield.

The war encouraged quick action. One event of this period has colored the Copper Center residents' perception of non-Natives and government activity. Villagers living on the banks of Dry Creek, near present day **Gulkana** Airfield, were ordered to abandon their homes. They were told that it would be too dangerous for them to continue living in that location. Thirty days later, the officials returned to find the Natives ensconced in their homes. It was late winter, but the villagers were forced from their homes at **gun** point. They went to **Tazlina** Village where a brother of the village **matriline** lived, and eventually moved to Copper Center. **Within** a week of the move from their homes two of the villagers died. One was the venerated father of a family, and the other was a week old infant. The descendants of the Dry Creek Villagers form a central **matrilineal** core of modern Copper Center Village. They now attribute the deaths to the shock of the unjustifiable move. As a further insult, the old village lands and cemetery were used as a picnic wayside and camping area by the Bureau of Land Management until **1976**. They were then returned to a Copper Center family as a Native allotment. (see Glossary)

Other tragedies are also remembered. A young man belonging to the same Dry Creek matriline was murdered by a serviceman stationed in Glennallen. The soldier was convicted of the crime and served several years in jail. One woman said that a young Native woman was raped by non-Native soldiers who came to her house at the invitation of her brothers. The relations between soldiers and Natives were not good, at least from Native recollection. Some of the elderly women in Copper Center Village fear soldiers to this day, lock automobile doors when they see them, and tell their daughters not to go out with them.

With the completion of the Alaska Highway system to Anchorage, a new era in Copper Center Village history began. Instead of being oriented toward Fairbanks, Valdez, and Cordova, the people increasingly turned to Anchorage as an economic center and source of jobs. It also meant that people from Anchorage could drive into the region. The area near Copper Center Village became one of the most accessible places in the interior. More and more non-Natives have settled in the Copper Center Village environs.

In the late 1940s and '50s, pressure was placed on the Native people by government agents to send their children to school, and by 1955 people were threatened with prosecution for keeping their children out of school. Those places where schools were located, such as Copper Center, attracted people who had been following traplines in the bush during winter months, but had been forced to quit trapping and move to places where children could attend school, or to continue trapping and send their children to boarding school. The latter alternative was not acceptable to many Copper

Center Village parents, and very few children from the village were sent to boarding schools. Throughout the history of American contact, the local teachers identified precocious students or seemingly neglected children, and encouraged the parents to send them to BIA schools elsewhere. Most parents objected because their children came home strangers to their own culture. One man said, in a tone of disgust, "Those people don't know anything." He meant the BIA students' lack of knowledge about Ahtna things. On the other hand, many of the boarding school graduates possess skills that make them successful in the society beyond the villages.

The increased emphasis on formal schooling after mid-century substantially changed Native life. Subsistence and trapping were both activities that had to be cut back if children were to attend school. The nuclear family, or the families of a group of brothers, had previously trapped together in isolated places during the winter. Now these families returned to the larger villages to live year-round. It was probably during the 1950s that the modern village was finally solidified. Matrilineal kinship continued to operate as an organizing principle, particularly in household location within the village boundaries, and in the sharing of traditional wild foods. Subsistence laws as well as truancy laws had circumscribed the choices open to the Native people. Rather than sit in the village without any job, many migrated. In the 1950s, full scale labor migration began.

Local mission efforts became active in the mid-1950s when Vince Joy built the Church on the Hill in Copper Center at mile 101. The mission, as it is known locally, expanded over the years and added various services in-

cluding a religious radio station, a hospital, a bible college, and several churches. Many of the older Natives in Copper Center Village say that they were saved by **Vince Joy** and that they stopped drinking alcohol because of his mission's work.

The emphasis on education has had more recent impact, when the new generation of Natives who had been raised to read, **to** write, to speak English, and to vote, joined together to push for a land settlement. In Copper Center Village, the Alaskan Native Brotherhood (**ANB**), founded in 1954 (de **Laguna, 1978**), has attracted many members, and some of the leaders of the thrust for passage of **ANCSA** came from Copper Center Village. Political activity in the 1960s changed the Native view of non-Natives. For example it is the better educated young Natives, politicized by the ANB and the **ANCSA**, who question the activities of the missionaries in their village. Frederica de **Laguna** (de **Laguna, 1978**) says that in the 1950s and 1960s some Natives were beginning to ask why non-Natives did not attend the Native church or Bible Camp. In the 1970s young Natives, part of a politicized faction in the village, asked why no Natives were employed in non-menial positions at the mission in **Glennallen**. They said the missionaries were segregationists.

Along with the passage of **ANCSA** in 1971, a new value was placed on Native culture. Many of the young **people** realized that something of incomparable worth had been lost when the Native people had turned their orientation toward the American economy. A few young people started to listen more appreciatively **to** the stories from the past told by their elders. Some

felt a need to salvage what they could. A conscious effort was made to renew some of the old ceremonies. The most popular has been the **potlatch**, which had been disused during the 1930s and 1940s. Native dancing and singing became popular, and new interest in "Native" foods has arisen. A young woman who in 1973 spat out derogatory remarks about salmon as she tried desperately to fit into the non-Native world, was heard to say in 1977 that the best and most delicious food is smoked salmon fingers. Since 1975, the **Ahtna** language has been taught in the schools; the few young **people** fortunate enough to speak the language are the teachers.

With renewed cultural pride has also come a desire to live in Copper Center Village. The attractions of city life are fading before the many new attractions (some pipeline-related) in the rural homeland. Many of the migrants are returning to Copper Center Village and other **Ahtna** communities. **While** some express less commitment to Native **life** than others, some desperately want to stay in the region after the initial pipeline work is finished. How will these wishes be compromised by economic reality? What **social** changes will another decade bring to the small **Ahtna** community of Copper Center Village?



### III. COPPER CENTER IN 1973

In 1973, many features of the society of Copper Center Village -- the re-distributional network, the buying of services, the funneling of money into the village through the elderly, and the continuing importance of subsistence resource use -- were a positive adaptive response to economic variables in the wider society which gave **little** opportunity to **Ahtna** Natives. Because village society worked for many villagers, when it supported people in need through traditional sharing and redistributional networks, some people would invest money earned on the pipeline in traditional ways such as **potlatching**. Others, who were unfamiliar with village life, or locked out of traditional roles for a variety of reasons, invested their pipeline earnings in less traditional ways, such as private land acquisition. This chapter describes Copper Center Village in 1973. By using this description as a base, the diverse responses, by villagers and their returning Anchorage kin, to pipeline developments can be better understood.

#### Amenities

No business is located in the Native village of Copper Center. The store and post office are at mile 102, equidistant between the two racially defined residential zones. The service stations, bar, clothing store, liquor store, laundromat, lodge, restaurants, and other businesses are all located in the non-Native residential cluster at mile **101**. Most of the residents' **daily** needs can be met by the businesses located in the community. The 1970 Census lists the total number of housing units in Copper Center Village and non-Native community **at** 74, of which 47 were owner-occupied, 21 were renter-



occupied, and 5 were vacant. (Ahtna, Inc. 1973.) One house was classed as a seasonal residence. The information given about owner-occupied housing is especially relevant to the Native population, which usually own their own homes. In 1970, most of the owner-occupied housing units were given an estimated value of less than \$10,000. The sample is inaccurate because the value of only 25 out of a total of **47** owner-occupied structures is given, and the researcher suspects that only the value of homes in the Native village is given. Many of the Native owned homes are substandard. The Native **people** of Copper Center Village complain about the condition of their homes and feel the Bureau of Indian Affairs has passed them by, while building new homes in three other **Ahtna** villages.

The researcher's data shows 36 Ahtna homes in the community. (See P. 57) With **only** one or two exceptions, the log homes are old and small, and worth less than \$20,000 in 1973. The exceptions include two double-width mobile homes and one **large, new log** home. In 1973, five structures, four constructed of log and one of plywood, were not occupied, and belonged either to people who had died in recent years (2) or to people who had moved to Anchorage (3). In 1973, **only** one or two of the houses were part-time living or sleeping quarters for residents whose main living area is in another building.

In 1971, **wells** were dug in 29 homes and plumbing installed in 27 homes after the Public Health Service offered to install them. A few people turned down the flush toilet offer, preferring traditional modes of waste disposal, although virtually everyone did have **wells** installed. The quality of water varied, and twenty homes **had wells** which pump water that appears to be

TABLE 1: A Census of Housing in Copper Center Village in 1973

CONSTRUCTION TYPE	NUMBER IN NATIVE COMMUNITY
LOG CONSTRUCTION:	
1 room	5
2 or more rooms	17
seasonal fish camp	1
PLYWOOD CONSTRUCTION:	
1 room	5
2 or more rooms	3
QUONSET HUT	1
TRAILER/MOBILE HOME:	
travel trailer	2
single-width	0
double-width	2
TOTAL	36

unpotable due to excess iron content. (Government inspectors insist the water is fit to drink in every case.) Nevertheless, about half the village residents continue to carry drinking water from public supplies in Glennallen, clear streams, or friends' homes.

The researcher's 1973 statistics indicate that the occupancy rate for that year in the Native village differs little from the occupancy rate for the entire community in 1970. (See P. 57) The low occupancy rate in the Native village reflects the high number of single-person households in 1973. Ten out of 16 households with an occupancy rate of 1 person per room or less were single-person households. Thus the low occupancy rate does not indicate the existence of large houses so much as the existence of numerous small household units. For those household units consisting of four or more individuals, the occupancy rate is 2.65, that is, more than 2 people per room. It should be noted, however, that close family life is an important feature of Ahtna society. As one woman said, "We wouldn't be a family if we slept in lots of different rooms like white people." Thus social values as well as economic variables might help determine household sizes and room occupancy rates.

The homes in the Native village are oriented to the Richardson Highway. Yet, almost half of the Native village was without private automobiles in 1973. Out of a sample of 29 occupied dwellings, 14 were without motor vehicles;

TABLE 2: Number of Persons per Room: Copper Center Village, 1973  
 (Compiled from researcher's data)

DENSITY	# IN VILLAGE
1 person/room or less	16 (57% of 28)
1.01-1.50 persons/room	7 (25% of 28)
1.51 persons/room or more	5 ( 5% of 28)
TOTAL	28
<b>UNKNOWN</b>	2
SEASONAL/UNOCCUPIED	6
TOTAL # OF STRUCTURES	36

TABLE 3: Number of Persons per Room: Copper Center Native and Non-Native, 1973  
 (Compiled from U. S. Census)

DENSITY	# IN COMMUNITY
1 person/room or less	49 (72% of 68)
1.01-1.50 persons/room	8 (11% of 68)
1.51 persons/room or more	11 (16% of 68)
TOTAL	68

15 had motor vehicles, although many of the vehicles were old and unreliable. Unemployed men drove people to the store, collected water, or ferried residents to the **Glennallen** Hospital for a set fee. Two or three people supplemented their incomes in this way. By hiring young, unemployed people to ferry them places and to do odd jobs, the older people kept much of their Social Security money in the community, where it could be redistributed. When the money from pipeline employment began entering the community, these complementary roles were affected.

#### Other Communities and Their Relationship to **Copper** Center

More than half of the Ahtna people **live** in Anchorage, where they have migrated in search of employment. Only rarely do residents move to Alaskan communities other than Anchorage or places outside of Alaska. Such unusual moves are generally the result of marriage with Natives from other regions or from outside of Alaska. For example, several Ahtna people, including two Copper Center Village women, have married non-Alaskan Indians whom they met in **BIA** boarding schools. Some young Ahtna men have joined the armed services, and they too live outside of Alaska. In 1973, one Copper Center Village man was in the army and stationed in the lower 48. Most migrants from Copper Center Village visit the region several times each year for **potlatches** and hunting and fishing. Others visit only rarely but host relatives who visit Anchorage. Many Copper Center residents travel **to** Anchorage bimonthly or quarterly to stock up on groceries and other supplies. A few Anchorage families, in which both spouses work, send children to the village during summer vacation from school.

## GLENNALLEN

**Glennallen** is the de facto capital of the Copper River Valley, due to its central location in the highway system. State and federal agencies, the Central Alaskan Missions, the utilities, and a variety of businesses are located there. Copper Center residents travel often to Glennallen to carry out banking or business with the government and to visit the stores. Most of the goods sold in both **Glennallen** and Copper Center came to Alaska via Anchorage, which is the service center for the Copper River Valley.

## STATE OF ALASKA

The state of Alaska had many facilities located in **Glennallen** in 1973. At that time the state operated the school system. Teachers were hired by the state (and often came from outside of the region), and curriculum was designed in state offices. The Department of Fish and Game, the State Troopers, the local magistrate, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the State Employment Office, all had offices in **Glennallen** in 1973. The Highway Department was located at **Tazlina, 10 miles** north of Copper Center, although most of the road construction was directed by the **Valdez** Office. A social worker who administered government programs at this time, lived in **Cordova**. An agricultural extension homemaker visited the community about twice each year to give demonstrations and to answer questions, usually about the preservation of wild foods and garden vegetables.

The state troopers were viewed by many people, old and young alike, as adversaries who constantly interfered in Native **life**. Problems **occurring** within the village boundaries were rarely brought to the trooper's attention. People

preferred to take care of problems by informal means--including such actions as ostracism, removal of a child from its home, and the sanction of marital separations. People resented having to obtain licenses for hunting, fishing, and driving. In 1974, someone (most people assume a group of young Ahtna men) painted a sexual epithet on the highway between the zones. The words were directed at a trooper who some people felt was harassing the village youth, both Native and non-Native. Similar feelings of hostility were directed at virtually every government official entering the community, from planners to police.

#### THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government was present in force in **Glennallen**. The Bureau of Land Management maintained a regional office and fire station. The Federal Aviation Administration maintained **Gulkana** Airfield, about four miles north of the intersection of Glenn and Richardson Highways. A Bureau of Indian Affairs liaison man visited the village several times each year. Most benefits available to individuals--such as Social Security, Aid to Dependent Children, and Public Health Service care--were administered by a social worker in **Valdez**. The Post Mistress and postal **clerk** often assisted people in filling out government forms. They helped the illiterate use money orders by filling out the orders, addressing envelopes, and even reading the **bills** aloud. In 1973, the Copper Center post office was tiny, and local people took it for granted that the Post Mistress or clerk would help them with such matters.

Even with help from the post office workers, there were people who did not collect benefits for which they qualified because they **could** not understand the maze of regulations about making claims. Problems, such as lack of birth certificates and marriage licenses, also confused the process of applying for government benefits. One storekeeper said that many people who had **no** visible means of support did not offer him food stamps. He was surprised. On the other hand, he said, some homesteaders who had seasonal construction jobs often used food stamps in **the** off-season, despite annual incomes approaching \$20,000. The arrival of two paralegal workers in the community in 1974 would solve many of the claims problems evident in 1973. The problems Native people had in collecting benefits is only one indication of generally poor relations existing between Natives and the governmental bodies impinging on their lives.

Many people in the community perceive as adversaries the State and Federal regulating agencies--such as the Department of Fish and Game and the **Bureau** of Land Management. Many laws have been imposed on the Native people against their will, and their allegiance to the state is not as strong as it is among non-Natives. One elderly Native pointed out that Native people do not fly the American **flag** because it is "other peoples' flag." Subsistence laws, especially, are a bone of contention and a topic of constant discussion among the Native residents. Their argument is as follows: Before the "white man", the Native needed no curbs on the number of fish taken, the amount of wood cut, or the number of caribou slaughtered. Only since whites have moved in has there been a problem, and subsequent regulation.

In 1973, many federal and state agencies sought the opinions of the Copper Center villagers in meetings and forums which were part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act land selection process, and part of the pipeline planning



process. Every month village meetings were **held**, at which planners **polled** village opinion and instructors explained **the** implications of the settlement act. **Ahtna**, Inc., employees attempted **to** draw out from the villagers their opinions and wishes for the future. By the end of the year, villagers were tired of meetings, and it became increasingly difficult to get them to attend. Many felt that there were no obvious results, and "too much talk." The interest displayed during the first months of 1973 was lost by the end of the year. Later planners from the Forest Service, Park Service, and Pipeline Impact Offices found an over-interviewed village population in late 1973 and 1974.

#### THE CENTRAL ALASKAN MISSION

The Central Alaskan Mission is run by a fundamentalist Protestant sect which prefers to be **labeled** "Christians," rather than to identify itself with any particular denomination. Most of the people associated with the mission come from Pennsylvania, where much-of the financial support for their activities also originates. Local people refer to the missionaries, their buildings, and lands, simply as "the mission."

The mission has had a significant impact on the Native community and on the political and social characteristics of public institutions. **It** has affected opinion throughout the region, where non-Native opinion is generally conservative. One missionary family lived in Copper Center, in a parsonage located behind the original mission church in the non-Native zone. But this particular family worked **at the mission** radio station and did not actively do mission work in Copper Center Village where a second, Native church is

located. **Glennallen** missionaries, who commute to the village for Native church services, were assigned each year to the **Copper** Center "Native Chapel." Missionaries actively participated in public discussion **of** political and social issues in 1973. They often attended meetings on the changing land classifications, the pipeline impact, and the schools. Most Natives and non-Natives believed that the missionaries voted in a **block** and were therefore an important factor in the decision-making process in the valley. In fact, some people felt in 1973 that the missionaries were more strongly organized as a political force than the Native people. **The** Natives sometimes neglected to vote, or did not fully understand the issues because of difficulties with English and lack of education. Many business **people** were wary of the mission because it stands on a **large** piece of non-taxable land in **Glennallen**, and they suspected that the mission might support a political reorganization of the valley to allow local **land** taxation.

While the mission was sometimes viewed as contriv<sup>er</sup>sia<sup>l</sup>, virtually everyone was glad to utilize the services the mission offered. Their service projects, in particular Faith Hospital, did much to deflect any **overt** criticism that local residents might have. The Tribal Health Report states that Faith Hospital has the lowest rates in all of Alaska (CRNA, 1977, P. 4). The hospital's one doctor has lived in the community for at least a decade and knows almost **all** the permanent residents. Native patients with low incomes are paid for by the Public Health Service. Natives with higher incomes must pay according to need. In 1973, most Copper Center Natives took advantage of the hospital's out-patient facilities. Two Copper Center villagers were employed there on a part-time basis.

## OTHER AHTNA VILLAGES

The relationship of Copper Center Village to other Native communities is **close**, although the ties of kinship and association are generally not as close between villages as within the village itself. Visitors coming to Copper Center from other villages are treated hospitably, sometimes in a ritualistic manner, depending on the length of time that has elapsed since the last visit, the kin relationships between the visitors and host, the degree of traditionalism and age of the individuals involved, and any important events that have occurred since previous visits.

The researcher sometimes drove elderly Copper Center residents to **Chistochina, Gulkana, Tazlina, or Chitina** for day visits. The visitors were greeted in an almost ceremonial fashion. In several cases the hosts welcomed the guests **with potlatch** blankets and the special foods most highly valued in the region. **In** one case, the giving of blankets was justified because the Copper Center visitor had never before been inside the new home of the hostess. In all cases of **inter-village** visiting, food is offered to the visitor, who is expected to take what is offered or offend the hosts.

Young people participate in inter-village visiting more frequently than the elderly. The bars of **Glennallen** and other areas are often sites of **inter-village** meetings. The ritual gifting would be unusual among young people, but **commensalism** and the buying of drinks or food and coffee is expected. Since such meetings often take place in public places rather than individual homes, the concept of host and visitor is irrelevant, and each individual buys drinks and food for others present.

The Ahtna villages are in no way interchangeable. Individuals from one village usually do not just move into a village where they or their spouse have no primary kin ties or **natal** claims. Individuals gain access to villages through birth or marriage and it is highly unusual for people to live in a village where such connections are not immediately apparent. Thus each individual has a clear cut tie to one particular village and this tie is easily recognized by fellow villagers.

The traditional ties apply to Anchorage residents as well. Anchorage people return to "their own village" each year to hunt and fish or to visit. Anchorage people with ancestral ties to **Chitina** return there to fish, while those with ties in Copper Center return to that locale. It would be highly unusual for an Anchorage resident, born in **Chistochina** and married to a Gakona woman, to return to Copper Center during the hunting seasons. As one woman said in Copper Center, "Each people has their own place and should stay there."

#### NON-AHTNA NATIVES

Rarely, is the relationship between **Ahtna** villages, including Copper Center, and **non-Ahtna** villages in Alaska formalized. However, non-Natives are treated as special guests at the **potlatch**. Invitations are sometimes sent in the mail, or telephone calls made to the person thought to be an important leader. **Fellow Athabaskan** speakers are accorded the greatest courtesy, and it is considered a great honor to the deceased and his or her clan if **people** travel to attend a funeral **potlatch** in their honor. Speeches are given about the past relations between the **Ahtna** and the visiting **Athabascans**. For example, a

marriage was forged three generations ago between an Ahtna woman and a **Tanana** man, and this union was mentioned in speeches when the Tanana people attended a **potlatch**. **Athabascan** peoples display a clan system that is similar to the **Ahtna** system, and people can trace kinship relations between themselves and any **Athabascan** person living in the Alaskan sub-arctic and Canada. **Non-Athabascan** Natives are sometimes feared by the elderly, **who continue** to remember stories of past hostilities between the **Ahtna** and the **Aleut**, Eskimo, and **Tlingit** peoples.

Young **Ahtnas** do not enter into the same kinds of semi-ritual behavior as their parents do when meeting people from other tribes. But interaction with **non-Ahtna** Natives frequently occur on trips to the cities--in training sessions sponsored by the BIA or other government organizations, and in school. Ahtna young people often echo their parents' negative feelings toward **non-Athabascan** Natives. There are sometimes fights among the young of different Native groups especially if alcohol is present. Later, when word of an incident circulates among the elderly in Copper Center, the attacker is assumed to be "**Aleut**"; the term "**Aleut**" has become synonymous with enemy in the vocabulary of the more traditional people.

On the other hand, some young people in Copper Center and Anchorage are more sophisticated in their attitudes toward **non-Ahtna** Natives. Politically weaned on the Alaska Native Brotherhood and their push toward the **ANCSA** passage, these young people have expressed pan-Indian views distinct from their parents' views. Experiences in Anchorage where young people have met other Natives, or in recent political activity, have **led** to some changed perspectives.

## The Village Standard of Living

Economic statistics for 1970 show that the Native **people** of the region had a lower per capita standard of living than did the non-Native population. The gulf between the incomes of the two **racial** sectors is staggering: according to one study, per capita income level of Natives in the valley in 1970 was only \$1,427. **The per capita income** of the non-Native population in 1970 was almost three and a half times greater, at \$4,268. (United States Department of Agriculture, 1977, P. 111-23) The **non-Native per capita income** compares favorably **with** the average per capita income throughout Alaska, of \$3,765. Statistically, 37% of the Native population lives in households with incomes below the poverty level.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A lack of skills is responsible for the poor earning potential in the Native community. According to several sources, the average level attained in school for the Native population of the region is about the eighth grade. (Ahtna, Inc., 1973, P. 191) In 1973, many of the elderly were functionally illiterate.

The Copper Center Elementary School was located in the Native village in 1973. A husband (non-Native) and wife (Native) team taught in the small school which drew approximately 35 students from a ten-mile radius of Copper Center. The **school** and teachers were popular in the village, and when the teachers transferred to **Gakona** in 1974, people regretted their leaving. Conversely, the high school in **Glennallen** was not perceived in positive terms. The change from the small, familiar village grade school to the larger, regional high school, where

Natives were outnumbered about 3 to 1, was usually difficult for Native students. The Tribal Health Report says that a CRNA finance study completed in 1974 found "that nine out of twelve local Native students drop out of school before the 12th grade." (CRNA, Inc. 1977, P. 15)

In 1973, there were few jobs available for unskilled Natives. Those jobs that were available were low-paying. Local Natives believe that the influx of non-Natives who seek seasonal employment has taken away many of the traditional positions which were occupied by Native workers in the past.

#### LABOR MIGRATION

In 1973, many of the young people who had grown up in the village of Copper Center had emigrated to Anchorage in hopes of finding employment. In fact, it was estimated by one Ahtna, Inc., official in 1973 that more than half of the people enrolled in Ahtna, Inc., lived in Anchorage. The demographic implications of the migration show clearly in the census material collected in Copper Center Village by the researcher in 1973. (See P.69 )

A large contingent of elderly form the backbone of the community. The most striking feature of the population curve is the absence of people in their late teens, twenties and early thirties, and the relatively large population of people between 35 and 44years old.

The population of the entire community in the late teens and early twenties is small, probably due to out-migration (see P.69 ). But the community appears to have a large number of 25- to 34-year-old residents, even though the Native

AGE	COPPER CENTER: NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE 1970 (from the U.S. census)		COPPER CENTER: NATIVE ONLY 1973 (from the researcher's data)	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
+65	(12)*****	***** (5)	(6)*****	**** (4)
55-64	(1)*****	***** (10)	(4)*****	*** (3)
45-54	(11)*****	* * * * * ***** (11 )	(2)*****	**** (5)
35-44	(17)*****	* * * * * * * * (9)	(9)*****	***** (7)
25-34	(20)*****	***** (18)	(5)*****	** (2)
20-24	(7)*****	** (2)	(2)*****	** (2)
15-19	(T)*****	** (2)	(3)***	
10-14	(12)*****	***** (7)	(6)*****	***** (5)
5-9	(9)*****	***** (10)	(6)*****	***** (6)
0-4	(14)*****	***** ***** ** (13)	(6)*****	*** (4)
TOTAL BY SEX	119	87	49	38
TOTAL BY YEAR	206		87	

TABLE 4: Age and Sex of Copper Center Population in 1970 and Copper Center Village population in 1973.



population remains **low** for this age group as **well** as the previously mentioned younger age groups. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the non-Native Copper Center community has a **large** work force of younger people.

One possible explanation of these statistics could verify the Native analysis of the employment picture. Skilled, semi-skilled and professional people are attracted to the area to work. Thus, while the unskilled Native worker leaves his homeland to find employment in the cities, other young people move into the region to take jobs that require skills the Native worker does **not** have. The curve could also indicate that the young non-Natives in Copper Center leave the area to acquire a trade or attend college, and on their return home, are **able** to find employment. Finally, the graph could also indicate the presence of a large number of seasonal, unmarried workers.

The researcher's 1973 migration statistics affirmed the trend. (See P. 71 ) The number of households in the village with parents of children over the age of 18 were analyzed to determine how many had lost children to the cities. In eleven, or 38% **of** the Copper Center Village households, there are parents whose adult children now reside outside of the region. Among the 15 households in Copper Center Village with parents of adult children, 73% had one or more children **living** outside the region. These statistics indicate that most people who grew up in Copper Center Village during the last three decades have **emigrated**.

#### Specific Description of Employment Opportunities in Copper Center

In the business community of Copper Center, Natives were employed in very few positions in 1973. Most of the jobs paid little and required no skills. The Copper Center Lodge traditionally employed Natives as waitresses, maids, cooks,

**TABLE 5: Native Households Affected by Emigration of Young People  
Copper Center, 1973**

STATUS OF <b>GROWN</b> CHILDREN AND HOUSEHOLDS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
Households without parents of grown children	14
Households with parents of grown children	15
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>29</b>
Households with parents of grown children living outside of Copper River Valley (including <b>Cantwell</b> )	12

and for odd jobs. The Lodge-village relations are tinged with the flavor of patron and client. For example, when a woman decided she no longer wanted to waitress, she often sent her sister or someone who had worked in the lodge previously to take her place. While the lodge was a steady source of jobs for the villagers, the village was a steady source of labor for the lodge. Over the years, a small group of women rotated in the positions available and were paid the minimum wage and Social Security benefits. During the summer season or when a construction crew was living at the lodge, up to four Native women might be working full or part time. In the winter, only two workers would be needed. The Bayless and Roberts Trucking Company also hired a few young Native men to care for truck tires. Other than these two businesses, the researcher knows of no other businesses (including the post office) that employed Natives.

The highest paying jobs were those that resulted from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which set up the Native corporations, such as Ahtna, Inc. or the Copper River Native Association. The director of RurALCAP lived in Copper Center in 1973, as did a secretary for Ahtna, Inc. A part-time planner's assistant earned \$100 per month to work with the Ahtna, Inc., planners from the University of Alaska. Trapping and odd jobs (including cooking and cleaning in the grade school) were the only other ways to earn money without leaving Copper Center.

Copper Center Natives also took other jobs that were within commuting distance of the village. One of the traditional sources of employment was the Alaska Highway Department, from which a number of elderly residents are now retired. Most of the work is seasonal highway maintenance, although construction work is sometimes available. Native women are also employed as waitresses and maids in service-oriented businesses in Glennallen. As has already been mentioned, the Central Alaskan Missions hired Copper Center residents as janitors and laundresses at

**TABLE 6:** Type of Employment by Households in Copper Center, 1973  
 (From researcher's data)

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN COPPER CENTER VILLAGE
No family member employed and/or no retirement income	7
At least one family member seasonally employed	4
Retired, social security or welfare for elderly	13
At least one year-round employed member	5
TOTAL	29

Faith Hospital. Most of the positions in the mission are filled by missionaries who come from outside the community. The bank, the State troopers, the BLM, and the FAA sometimes hired young women in secretarial positions, but none of the women from Copper Center were employed there in 1973. The Bureau of Land **Management** also hires Native people as firefighters, but this source of employment is unreliable except during dry summers.

The employment picture for Natives living in Copper Center in 1973 was dismal. Statistics collected by the researcher in 1973 show that only 5 out of 29 occupied households in 1973 had one or more family members **with** a year-round job; in 4 others, the only worker in the household was seasonally employed. Some households with retired, elderly, and Social Security pensioners, **also** had members working part time or on craftwork. Seven households had no working member at **all**; of these, five had young children and were eligible for welfare. Eight young and middle-aged men living in the community were unemployed and their only source of income was odd jobs around the community. Two of these men were known to qualify for disability payments, but in general this group had an extremely **low** standard of living. As many as half of the households in Copper Center probably earned less than \$4,000 during 1973.

#### ECONOMIC REDISTRIBUTION

Because the standard of living was so low redistribution of existing funds was important to the community. The elderly who received pensions and other benefits thus achieved a special position in the village. Young, unemployed persons often asked the elderly for home maintenance tasks or even outright

loans. One woman said she put her **money** in the bank so that she could tell people wishing to borrow money that she had none **at** her house. Nevertheless this same woman often loaned money to relatives in need. Despite kin ties, the elderly usually paid for work done at their homes. This was not unusual from the **Ahtna** frame of reference; traditionally, the mark of an important person, a **dené**, was that he was able to pay, especially relatives, for services rendered.

For instance, one man in his seventies received \$10,320 a year in retirement, Social Security and Alaska Old Age Bonus. As a **single** person who owned his own home, this man could easily support himself and also redistribute much of his income by **potlatching, commensal** sharing (see Glossary), and hiring others to perform chores for him. He could hire young men to cut wood for him, a neighbor to tend his **sweatbath**, a relative to fix his house. **By** paying well for these services, he could achieve a position **of** status in the community. He **could** become closely allied with one or two families whom he helps in distressing periods, including drinking bouts, periods of unemployment, or illness. About five other single retired men also occupied positions similar to this man. They too were identified with groups of close kin who were not strong financially and were **helped** during periods of extreme stress.

Elderly women did not earn as much as many of the retired men because of the structure of benefits as well as the nature of most women's employment history. Nevertheless, many of the women did collect **Social** Security benefits, welfare, and the Alaska Old Age Bonus which in 1973 usually totaled between

\$300 and \$400 a month. In addition, many continued extensive subsistence activities such as red salmon fishing. Some of the women hired people to work **for** them. Yet, they were more **likely** than men to take kin into their homes, raise grandchildren, or **allow** unmarried children **to** live with them. Thus, some women became important leaders, and acquired respect and **status** through traditional modes **of** sharing **in** the home as **well** as in public settings such as the **potlatch**.

In addition to this redistribution of the elders' income, other methods of sharing the wealth **of** the village evolved. Destitute kin, for example, were incorporated into households. This was especially true if the kinsman could bring a **small** amount of money with him, as was the case for a grandchild who qualified for welfare benefits.

Thus **in** 1973, most Copper Center residents perceived it was in their best interests to maintain village traditions of sharing and cooperation. It is on the **level** of the village unit that they related to a rather hostile economic environment, which offered few jobs **to** the villagers of working age. It is through redistributing their incomes that individuals were able to gain status and respect in the village. The elderly also felt it was best to stem migration by providing alternate ways **for** young people to support one's family, however meager the standard of **living** might be. The position of the elderly was to change significantly during the pipeline period.

## Subsistence

One factor allowing the Copper Center Natives to remain in their village with so small a reliance on cash income was their reliance on subsistence resources. In this sphere, the Ahtna were experts. In chapter II, it was stressed that the strategy for survival for the Ahtna living in the Copper River area has been to combine the use of subsistence resources and wage labor. The overall importance of subsistence resources should not be minimized. The taking of 500 salmon, the snaring of 100 hare, the collection of 10 gallons of cranberries, and the cutting of 10 cords of wood were substantial subsistence takes, which could not be considered unusual for a Copper Center resident. Moose and other game animals were highly valued foods. In 1973, the advanced age of many male residents precluded their hunting. When a moose was taken, it was shared in the village, and virtually every part, from the skin to the rib bones, was utilized by residents.

## Society

### KINSHIP

Kinship continues to be an important determinant of behavior in Copper Center society. Nevertheless, many of the traditional patterns of kinship behavior have been eroded since Western contact. Traditional customs of respect, that dictated certain in-laws could not look at one another or talk, traditional roles such as the didactic role of the mother's brother toward his sister's son, and marriage rules that defined a preferred marriage



partner from one's father's clan, have been chipped away, so that many young people now profess not to be aware of such rules and customs.

An analysis of behavior and interaction indicates that many principles of **matrilineal** kinship (see Glossary) and **uxorilocal** residence (see Glossary) continue to operate in modern Ahtna society, at least in Copper Center. In times of stress, mothers become important helpers. **Clanmates** continue to support the bereaved during a funeral potlatch, and the father's or spouse's kin continue to honor the dead. Where one lives in the village is determined by kinship. Whom one shares fish with or asks for dinner, are related to one's kinship. Everyone in the village can define some lineal (see Glossary) or **affinal** (see Glossary) relationship with everyone **else** living in the village, and these relationships justify and explain interaction on a daily basis.

Many of the Native people in Copper Center are aware of the kin-based characteristic of their village. One Native man pointed out that the village was made up of "a group of sisters," whom he proceeded to **list**. He went on to say that most of the other **people** living in Copper Center Village were married or related to this particular group of sisters, and their clan-mates of a single generation.

Despite the many changes of recent years, the village composition remains highly structured according to the idiom of thematriline and **uxorilocal** residence. In **1973**, there were only a few people (usually the offspring of racially or tribally mixed marriages) who could not trace their descent from either the clan of the core group of sisters, or to a clan that is

permitted to marry those of the core group. During the study period, the researcher on several occasions observed older residents criticizing the few couples who did not have kin links to the village. Life is also difficult for Natives in the village who are not descended from the Ahtna or those with non-Native ancestors. These people did not have their full complement of kin to give them support or defend their position to others.

The 1973 data shows that 9 out of 29 households did not have primary **kin-**relationships (see Glossary) to the **matrilineal** core group of sisters and their **close** cousins who dominate the village. **Of** these 9 households, four included all women household heads who were not Ahtna or who had non-Native ancestry. Four men in the village also had non-Native ancestry, but their households were **linked** to the village **matriline** through primary kin bonds or through their wife's primary kin. It appeared that several of the households without primary kin relationships to the **matrilineal** core group were "refugees" from ghost villages who had come to live in Copper Center because they had nowhere else to live.

Today, village composition is **still** largely determined by kinship. It is **un-****clear** what effect the years of pipeline construction will have on these kinship ties. An important factor **will** be whether the young--especially those with good jobs--will consider **matrilineal** ties important criteria for deciding where they will **live**. Furthermore, if the traditional bonds are weakened, **how will** the solidarity of the village be affected? At what point will kinship considerations become secondary to economic and commuting considerations?

Racial ancestry is a significant variable for determining behavior for two reasons. First, an individual with non-Native parents has **half** of the universe of relatives that one might call upon in times of stress, to provide living space, etc. In every case of intermarriage recorded before 1970, a non-Native man married an Ahtna woman. In such cases, the offspring would retain **matri-**lineal rights, but important **affinal** relationships (with behavioral obligations) are absent. Thus the multiple relationships of an Ahtna person with all Ahtna grandparents is more diverse than for someone with non-Native grandparents.

Secondly, many of the **people** with some non-Native ancestors did not grow up in the village. Until recently it was extremely rare for any non-Native to live in the village. In the past, the children of racially mixed marriages grew up on isolated trading posts, at mission schools, where any indoctrination into Native life was ignored and sometimes belittled, or in urban areas. Those with non-Native ancestry are often aware of their ignorance of village life and Ahtna customs. Thus, they are more **likely** to choose a place to live without following the traditional strictures that are grounded in the kinship system.

Other examples of behavior illustrate the relevance of the **matriline** in modern village life. Adoption of non-kin is a case in point. The Ahtna expressed **con-**cern about the practice of legal adoption of children, a custom which was unheard of before about 1950. The thought of removing a child from its parents and then placing him with another family who is ignorant of his genealogy troubles the traditional Ahtna. They worry that a child may grow up and unknowingly marry within his own clan, a form of incest strictly forbidden. In the 1950s, a few unmarried Ahtna women did give up their babies at the recommendation of social workers. One woman said it was like the baby was "dead," and she felt **i**t was

a tragic event. Today, unmarried village women rarely give up their babies for adoption. When a woman has a child by a man other than her husband, the father of the **child** is generally known in the community. Children born to unmarried women also know their fathers. In one case, an adoption was taken to court because a child was **legally** adopted by his father's people (his **affinal** relatives). **The** child was awarded to the **affinal** relatives, but many **people** in the village turned to arguments involving kinship and the rights of the **matriline** when justifying arguments that the child should remain in the home **of** his maternal grandmother.

By 1973, many young people had begun to disregard the important kinship regulations. "Wrong" marriages (those between **clanmates** and **closely** allied clans) were increasing. Native residents often said they **felt** "sorry for the children" of such marriages because it was thought that they **would** have a difficult time finding a spouse, and because their ability to interact with their relatives would be ambiguous. Children born to unions of **clanmates** have overlapping **affinal** and lineal kin groups.

On the other hand, even the youngest people in the community were often aware of the importance of the **matriline**. This is illustrated in the subtle variations **the** Ahtna have devised for kinship terms in English. Slightly altered terms, such as "grand-aunt" and "really-cousin" have been invented so that important meanings **will** not be lost when speaking English. Other terms are applied in a way that differs from common American application. For example, grandma and grandpa are applied to many old people, not just to one's father's or mother's parents.

Native people are sensitive about the way non-Natives view their kinship customs and rules for marriage. They believe, often correctly, that non-Natives do not appreciate the complicated rules of their **matrilineal** system. Many times the researcher was told it was a waste of time to study **Ahtna** kinship because "they just marry each other," implying that incestuous relations were common. Such ideas are totally erroneous.

In 1973, **people** under the age of 40 usually used English terms when **referring to** kin. In English, they can no longer adequately distinguish the subtle differences in meaning which the **Ahtna terminological** system distinguishes. The most difficult distinctions are those between **matrilineal** kin and affines. The system is streamlined in English usage and probably diluted. It **will** be necessary to observe in the future how the young people's use of English terms and their familiarity with American kinship affect their kinship behavior within the village. While the **matriline** has some continued relevance to behavior, people often have a difficult time teaching it to the young, who are subject to **non-Ahtna acculturative** forces in schools, from the media, and other sources. Vice versa, the young often have a difficult time producing and applying the knowledge of traditional kinship behavior. This is especially apparent in the ceremonial setting of the potlatch, when the young must turn to the elders for confirmation that they are behaving correctly. The elders frequently correct mistakes made by the young during the **potlatch** ceremony.

## CLAN

Clan affiliation continues to determine many modes of behavior and patterns of interaction. Especially among the elders, who form a large segment of the village population, clan affiliation partially determines who one chooses to visit, the way in which visitors are entertained, whom one votes for on the

village council, or whom one lives next door to. Ahtna clans are similar to clans in other Athabascan cultures, and the Ahtna elders can extend their clan system to other Athabascan people in Alaska and Canada. At one 1973 potlatch, people from Minto on the Yukon attended. By equating clans people can determine if the visitor falls into the category of affine or lineal kin and behave appropriately. The researcher witnessed similar computations on many occasions when the local residents met Upper Tanana or Tanaina speaking people.

In 1973, many of the young people expressed a lack of understanding of the clan system. Some even professed not to know their clan affiliation, although their reticence might have been due to shyness in discussing such matters with non-Natives. When pressed, many could give their clan names, but they knew little else about the system. The young people did not consciously use clan affiliation as a determinant for their behavior and the clan system could not be produced in novel situations. Young people depended on adults to tell them what to do, especially in ceremonial settings. For example, one widow in mourning was not allowed to take a sweatbath after her husband's death until the men of her husband's clan built her a sweatbath and formally released her from her mourning period. Unfortunately, for the elderly widows, many times young men of their husband's clan do not know their responsibilities along these lines. A group of brothers built a sweatbath for one Copper Center widow. They later remarked how surprised they were when the widow gave them potlatch blankets after the first sweatbath. Even though these young brothers express a real interest in tradition, like many young Ahtna, they are not cognizant of traditional customs.

Nevertheless, the subtle differences in everyday behavior expected by the clan are learned and passed on from one generation to the next within the village. For example, most young people turn to mother's relatives rather than father's, when in need. Those who are brought up outside the village have more difficulty than the village youth in reproducing such behavior. For example, the village youth learn that **clanmates** or "cousins" are often close friends. The customary joking between young women and middle-aged men who stand in marriageable positions according to clan affiliations, is also quite easily reproduced among the younger generation. But many of the formal and ceremonial functions of the clan system are dissolving in the face of change.

The **potlatch** is one of the ceremonial functions that takes place in Copper Center and illustrates the changing function of clan. In the past, one's clan affiliation determined his political affiliation and as such formed the political building blocks of the society. One's clan decided patronage, determined marriages, and defined one's strength in any argument with people of other clans. Traditionally, the **potlatch** was the arena in which clan strength could be measured before the entire tribe. The number of blankets given in a person's honor indicated the total strength of the clan responsible for the **potlatch**.

For many of the young people, who must rely on their elders' direction at the **potlatch**, the significance of the ceremony lies more in the totality of the people present, in the coming together of the **Ahtna** people as a unit. Until the formation of the Native corporation, the **potlatch** was the only function at which the entire tribe joined together.

## HOUSEHOLDS

In 1973 Ahtna household composition was highly predictable. Out of a sample of approximately 70% of the individuals living in the Valley (Cantwell is not included in the data of the 1973 study), 55% were found to be living in independent, nuclear families. The household compositions of the remaining 45 percent were equally predictable, and deviation from the nuclear family household could be explained as part of a natural cycle of addition and attrition of family members due to death, birth, or marriage.

It is useful to formulate a **typology** of household types. In this case the word household refers to those people who inhabit a single building as an integrated economic and social unit. For the researcher's purposes, the basic criterion for distinguishing household types is the structure of genealogical or family relationships existing among household members. Six household types are defined below:

- 1. Independent nuclear family household: one or two parents and their children.
- 2. Single-person household: one person living alone.
- 3. Extended family household: three generations -- including one or more grandparents, their children and **grandchildren**.
- 4. Conjugal pair household: a married couple.
- 5. Grandparent-grandchild family household: Although structurally this household spans three generations, only two generations are present, the grandparents and the grandchild.
- 6. Joint family household: a group of siblings, their spouses and children.



The different household types represent progressive stages in the life of the **Ahtna** household. People **living** in independent, nuclear-family households are younger than those people **living** in other households. Persons **living** in single person households are the elderly. **In** between these two household types fall the others in progressive steps. Children are born to independent nuclear **family** households. Extended family households are sometimes natal homes as **well**, especially for children of unwed mothers, who often leave home later to establish their own independent nuclear family households and leave behind grandparent-grandchild households. Finally, when the last child or grandchild leaves home, a conjugal-pair or single person household remains, the last household type in the developmental cycle of the modern **Ahtna** household.

The complex composition of compound family household structures such as the extended family, grandparent-grandchild family, and joint family households underline the importance of female-female relations in determining household structure, and more generally, the continuing importance of the **matriline** in determining household structures. It appears that attempts for adults to join a woman's household are blocked, **unless** those entering the family are daughters or daughters' children. The composition of the extended family and the **grandparent-grandchild** households are linked across generations through female kin. Sons of a household over the age of about 20 are **only** rarely found living in their mother's household. Often they establish single person households in travel trailers, cabins, and tiny houses near their matrilineal kin until they marry and move to their wife's village, compound, or home.

It is apparent from in-depth interviews as well as from the data presented that certain household types are favored **over** others. Three household types are

TABLE 7: Household Types in Copper Center Village in 1973

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	% OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF POPULATION LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD TYPE	AVERAGE AGE OF ALL INDIVIDUALS IN HOUSEHOLD TYPE
Independent nuclear family household	32%*	46%	23
Single person household	36%	12%	64
Extended family household	10%	24%	25
Conjugal pair household	7%	5%	56
Grandparent-grandchild household	7%	7%	45
Joint family household	7%	6%	40

\*Sample of 29 village households and 87 individuals

continually referred to as ideal: the independent nuclear family household, the single-person household, and the conjugal pair household. Being able to care for oneself is a valued characteristic in Copper Center. Extended family and grandparent-grandchild households are generally viewed as exceptions or compromises rising from extenuating social and economic circumstances. The joint family household is not considered acceptable when siblings of different sexes (a brother and sister) are living in the same home. No households in Copper Center combined two married siblings and their families under one roof. Generally, it is the case of a single sibling, usually **ill** or in economic straits, who attaches himself to another independent nuclear family. Despite the apparent predictability of the domestic cycle, it is important to determine the relationship each household type has to economic variables. This relationship is especially important in respect to pipeline impact when it is predicted that the economic opportunities in the community will change.

While the data is inconclusive, it does appear that a tenuous relationship exists between economic variables and household type, especially when the extended family is focused on. The three extended families in the sample display a **low** standard of living, have between 6 and 8 residents, and do not have access to Social Security and retirement benefits because the household head is under 62 or never worked at wage labor. People who spent most of their adult life trapping **fall** into this category. In these three families, it **could** be a positive economic strategy to take in **matrilinea**l kin who will help the household to qualify for welfare benefits,

The joint family household is the household type used by people of the lowest income. **It** is only acceptable to the residents because it allows for the pooling

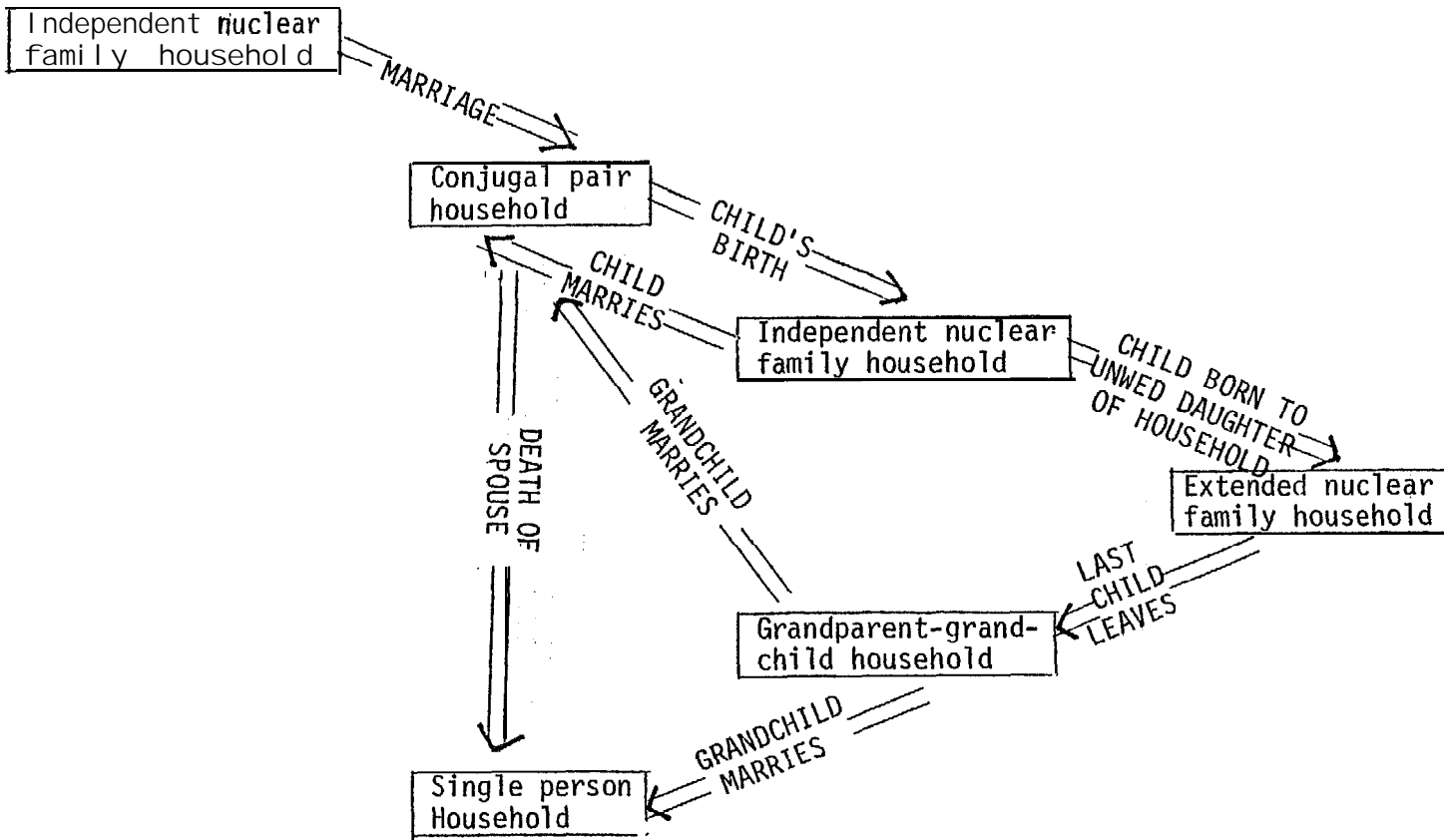


FIGURE 2: The Domestic Cycle in Copper Center, 1973

of resources. Since only 3 instances of joint family households were documented in **the** entire region, **it** is safe **to** assume **this** is a household type established **only** in the most unusual circumstances.

The nuclear family household is the type most preferred by Copper Center residents. Parents pressure children **to** live in this type of household after marriage. One older woman said, "You got to get your own place. You can't stay with your mama anymore." This essential theme was repeated by many **informants**. The nuclear **family** household, the single person household, and the conjugal pair household all conform to this rule. The other three household types do not. From this perspective, 22 of 29 households conform to the preferred household forms. Less than a third of the people fall outside the accepted ideal as it was expressed to the researcher. Nevertheless, even those households which do not live up to the modern ideal forms, are predictable and conform to **matrilineal** kinship ideology and to the exigencies of caring for children whose parents are unable to keep them.

In respect to household composition, the Natives of Copper Center were able to successfully maintain valued household forms despite low per capita income. The question to be asked during the pipeline period is to what extent pipeline construction and the return of young migrants will encourage the compound household forms, and forms which are presently considered unacceptable to the community.

TABLE 8: Income According to Household Type in Copper Center, 1973

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	INCOME*			SPECIAL INCOME TYPE**	
	HIGH OVER \$12,000	MIDDLE \$11,999- 5,000	LOW UNDER \$5,000	WELFARE RECIPIENT PRESENT	RETIREMENT/ SOC. SECURITY PRESENT
Nuclear family household	1	6	3	3	1
Single person household		4	6	1	6
Extended family household		1	2	3	1
Conjugal pair household		2			1
Grandparent-grand- child household		2			2
Joint family household			2	1	1
TOTAL	1	15	13	8	12

\* Sample of 29 village households and 87 individuals

\*\* Overlapping occurs between households having retirement income and welfare income.

## FAMILY CLUSTERS

In 1973, clusters of houses stood around shared drive-ways. People within the clusters interacted on a daily basis and the clusters formed a meaningful unit in the village. The composition of the clusters appeared to be predictable according to clan affiliation, genealogical relationships, and place of ancestral origin. Breaks from this norm occurred in cases in which single men, or men married to **non-Ahtna** women, were incorporated into clusters. In these cases, **living** location was traced through the male head of the household.

Two main clans predominated in the village, Udzisyu, or "caribou," and Tsisyu, "paint." Around women of these two **clans** revolved most of the housing clusters. Two sisters, or a single elderly clan matriarch, stood at the center of each housing cluster. Located around their homes were the houses of younger sisters, their daughter's families, their deceased mother's brother, their single sons, and their single brothers. Three women in their 40s also established small **two-house** clusters around their homes. These women represent clans that are not populous in the village. These clans were introduced into the village because the wife was without affiliation to any modern Ahtna village. As representatives of "foreign" clans, these women often found themselves alone in the clan scheme. These women and their families, while not barred from the village outright, had to establish a new cluster of housing for their clans.

The household clusters functioned as subsistence units. Fishing, controlled by the female clan matriarch, and the sharing of wild foods between families in a cluster was expected, as was the sharing of non-subsistence resources such as automobiles, hardware, equipment, and services. Daily visiting was

constant. Children of the cluster played together and had fairly free access to the other homes in the cluster. Household clusters were a small **closeknit** unit of the total village. **In** some ways, they were traditional villages within the larger modern village. It was within these familial clusters that most **close** interaction took place in the village. **In** the future, the question will be whether the young returning from Anchorage will locate according to the traditional rules or will they demand space ignoring kinship determinants?

#### PEER GROUPS

The male youth peer group is an obvious social group in the village to even the most casual observer. Members of this group, more than others in the village, seem to be caught between traditional and modern forces. Within the village, productive employment and the ability to support oneself is **highly** valued. A man is not considered marriageable until he reaches some degree **of** self support. At the same time the young, unskilled villagers find it impossible to find employment and they have difficulty in finding suitable women to marry. Most racially mixed marriages before 1973 involved Native women and non-Native men. **Ahtna** men have **only** recently started to marry non-Native women because there are few available Native women. Thus the scenario might read as follows: A young man comes of age in his natal village, and finds he can find no job in that village, nor is he encouraged to establish a separate household. He is **told** that at marriage he can move to his **wife's** 'village. He can't get married, however, until he can support himself. This is the catch-22 for the village youth. After several years of "hanging-out" in the village, drifting from his mother's home to summer substandard housing, and the homes of single



male relatives, he finally moves to Anchorage. He is forced out because of his lack of economic position and the absence of any meaningful role vis-a-vis the other residents of the village.

In 1973, it was observed that the basic problem for these young men was their inability to find employment near Copper Center or in Anchorage. A group of about six to eight unemployed youth would congregate daily, talk, and smoke. They rarely drank. The function of the group varied. They passed time together, supported one another when there were troubles at home, and entertained one another. Even if a young man **could** find employment in the village and establish his own household, he found that he was plagued by the youth who had nowhere else to go. They moved into his home, hung out in his yard, and sapped the independence of the young man, who was attempting to establish a household. Many of these young men were associated with natal homes receiving welfare. In 1973, their presence as an **adult** male endangered welfare payments. This could explain the construction of substandard structures near the natal home. In many ways they continued to live in the natal home. They sometimes ate there, listened to the radio, and even slept there on cold nights. Legally, however, they resided elsewhere.

In some ways the youth peer group is a barometer of many of **Copper** Center's social problems. The youth appear unhappy with the status quo, because they have no position in it. They have no social niche. If the pipeline should radically change their economic position, will this group pressure for change? **Will** they even be able to take advantage of pipeline jobs; they are not skilled and have no experience. The young men are an important group to watch during the pipeline period.

## POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The political organization of the community appears to be democratically organized. In reality, however, there are people whose word carries more clout than others. They are the traditional power brokers of the community, the **core-clans'** matriarchs, and the elderly men with speaking ability and a close relationship to the core clan. Two formal bodies functioned in the village in 1973, the village council and the new **Klutika-ah** Corporation, (see Glossary) the village corporation organized as part of the land claims.

The village council is the traditional governing body of the village which originated in the 1930s when the village was first identified and given partial reservation status. It has mediated disputes, dealt with village maintenance and social problems, and spoken for the village **to** outsiders. The members of the village council were elected and some members had retained their positions for a decade.

On top **of** the existing village council structure has been added the village corporation, **Klutika-ah, Inc.** This organization is an **economic** entity that **will hold** land, make investments, and handle the money earned by the village during the land claims. In 1973, this organization was only **in** the planning stage. The residents were then in the process of land selection, planning and defining goals.

The membership of the village corporation and the village council sometimes overlapped, but the rosters indicated that the council was a more traditional body. The council president was a man from the traditional core clan. He was

the brother of a woman who had produced many daughters for the clan, and was thus classified as "mother's **brother**"--an important kinship role--to many residents in the community. He justified telling others what to do, including the elderly of his own clan, by his position as council president and his position in the kinship framework. In the settlement of one dispute, he brought up both factors, but the elderly female matriarch, won out in the end. In many similar disputes of this period, the young tested the limits of their power, and the old held on to the power they had. Several young people with political aspirations in the village said that the elders were out of touch and didn't understand anything. The priorities of the two age groups were in conflict.

The new village corporation provides a more hospitable stage for the young people. It gives them employment. It demands a level of skills in literacy which the young monopolize. It could eventually take over many of the functions of the village council and the events of the pipeline are a good time to test that hypothesis. One of the most formative influences on the village corporation has been the contacts it has made with the world outside Copper Center. Virtually any government official entering the village during 1973 approached the corporation officers rather than the village council members. The government officials either preferred to **deal** with the village corporations, or they were unaware of the existence of other governmental (as opposed to economic) institutions.

During the pipeline period, the residents of Copper Center **would** have many opportunities to deal with outside government, private, and media representatives. During 1973 and before the **pipeline** period, the issues of the village corporation

centered around topics of interest to the elderly, around subsistence, and around land rights. During the pipeline period, the voice of the young grew stronger and issues of interest to them dominated. Employment and economic development overshadowed subsistence issues. Thus, in 1973, two types of political organizations existed in Copper Center. One had the only purpose of being a political body, the other was an **economic** entity created by the land claims. Both had the potential to "speak for the people" as the modern day equivalent of the kaskae.

In 1973, as in 1978, no regional governmental body existed in the Copper River Valley. In 1973, non-Native residents of long-standing usually agreed that the land claims was a good thing and hoped it would help the Natives escape what many saw to be an unequal economic trap. (Most also felt the size of the settlement was too generous.) It occurred to only a few non-Natives that the land **claims** would affect their own economic and political standing, by organizing Native institutions which would compete with organizations and businesses predominated by non-Natives.

The weak political structure represented in the newly formed corporations would be nourished by the pipeline oil. For the Native, local political structures will be there to deal with impact problems. For visiting business and government officials these structures will encourage easy communication with the Native population.

## Values

One of the most difficult topics of study is the value system of the villagers. The values and attitudes of the people differ for every category: the old, the young, the rural, and the urban all reflect different values. One man who was over seventy and very traditional in outlook discussed the value of work, in 1973:

Around here everybody work for White men. No rich. No work for selves anymore! Now everyone is ciile', working man. That's **almost** like 'elna, slave. Only Ben Neely (Gulkana store keeper) work for the Indian. Never see a White man work for Indians. That office work pretty good. Get good money for nothing. Indians laugh at a man working on the railroad **all the** time. . . . Someone who works for somebody else is not a dené, no matter how many thousands of dollars he got.

This man went on to say that it is the generosity of a man, his ability to get people to produce, and then his ability to redistribute that product in a fair way, that is important-. Giving is more important than acquiring.

Young people who were employed received mixed messages from their parents. The researcher certainly received mixed messages from her elderly friends in the community. Pressure was also placed on the worker to be generous. One family was conspicuous because they preferred to acquire material possessions. They were criticized often by the more traditional villagers. Other people whose standard of living was higher than fellow villagers were also criticized. One man who earned a monthly income that could only be considered solidly middle class, lived as if he were poor. He could not be distinguished from neighbors with much **lower** incomes.

Another man complained, "There are too many bosses nowadays. Everyone is **their** own boss." He referred to the demise of traditional sharing, and the desire of many to sever the traditional kin ties and take off on their own. The introduction of money often starts the dissolution of traditional alliances. When people have money in the bank they no **longer** depend heavily on their neighbors to **help** them through troubled times. The pensioners move into their own homes and successfully discourage less fortunate people from moving in with them. The trend away from the traditional extended households already has been accomplished. But the elderly value the village ties and utilize them in a functional way. They are in need of services, drivers, cooks, and laborers to help them maintain their homes, get groceries and other things. Will the younger people with access to money and the ability to maintain their own homes, drive themselves, and fill out government forms, etc., find the family cluster and the village confining? Will it constrict their goals? Will they return to the village to stay, or just **for** a part-time fling during the pipeline? Many variables will contribute to their ultimate decisions.

How many times has the researcher heard from government officials, non-Native Copper Center residents and others that the Natives are not Indians anymore, but that they "are just like us" (non-Natives.) This report has shown that in fact Native culture remains distinct. One of the most popular social topics bandied about in the political arena, is that of the family. Among the **Athabaskan** peoples of Alaska is found another **level** of the family, the village. For those who have never intimately known village life, it is difficult to explain the nuances, the attractions, and the security that a family-based community can bring to an individual. With modernization rampant in Alaska,

does the village concept have any relevance today? If it is to die, the indications of what will replace it will certainly come during the pipeline period. If in fact, the village residents deem that the village, and by village the writer refers to kin-based communities, is worth saving, what pressure points must be dressed in order to keep the life's blood from gushing out of the body of the village? Will the children of the village return only to inflict the final wounds, and resurrect a new place with little reference to the village of the past?

#### IV. THE PIPELINE AS AN AGENT OF IMPACT: GENERAL OVERVIEW

##### Building the Pipeline

During the pipeline period between 1974 and 1977, the small village of Copper Center and the entire Copper River region witnessed wrenching change. The influx of pipelines, job-seekers, and hangers-on doubled the region's population. Government services and utilities scrambled to handle the overload. The state troopers stationed in **Glennallen** more than quadrupled their ranks. Traffic jams were reported at the grocery stores. Every bar was open and doing a booming business. It was an exciting time, when the national news media focused their video tape cameras on a project of major interest to oil-thirsty Americans, whose imaginations were working overtime at the images projected on their television screens about high-paying jobs and adventure on "American's last frontier."

The pipeline breaks through the Alaska Range at Isabel Pass and parallels the Richardson Highway to **Valdez**. At Copper Center, the pipeline lies west of the community about a half to three-quarters of a **mile**, and crosses the **Klutina** River upstream from the bridge. Thus at Copper Center the pipeline lies closer to the Native village than to any other village **along** the pipeline corridor.

Construction of the **Trans-Alaska** pipeline near Copper Center actually began during the summer of 1974 when the first laborers, electricians, carpenters, and drivers moved into the Copper Center Lodge located in the non-Native zone. Approximately 45 people lived at the lodge that summer, three of whom were **Ahtna** who did not belong to Copper Center.



In Glennallen Camp 10 miles north of Copper Center Village, two 56-man barracks were finished by August 1974, and in October a second group of barracks was completed and the first workers moved into the camp. According to Dick Armstrong, director of **Glennallen** Camp in 1977, many of the workers were local people. All of the Teamsters were locally hired, and most lived at home. By November of 1974, 150 **people** lived at **Glennallen** Camp.

**Tonsina** Camp, located about 36 miles south of the Copper Center, housed a comparable number of workers in November.

During the same summer, **Tonsina** Trans-Alaska Engineering surveyed the pipeline right-of-way, a job which demanded a good deal of clearing. This firm hired both local Natives and non-Natives, because previous **experience** on highway work had prepared many local people for survey work.

Thus during the **summer** of 1974, a noticeable increase in pipeline related activity had already occurred. There was an "estimated 20% increase in Richardson Highway traffic during the late summer and fall months of 1974" (Smelter, October, 1975). Giant flatbed trucks, each loaded with a tryad of pipe raced north along the highway. The traffic worried many Copper Center residents, because many houses stand close to the roadway, the Copper Center grade school playground is located perilously close to the highway, and **people** walk along the road during the short, dark days of winter. Every seven minutes, one truck was allowed to leave the pipe storage yard in **Valdez** on a northward journey. The pipe hauling continued through the winter, and even as late as early 1976 pipe was being taken north.

TABLE 9: Average Populations of Glennallen Camp\*  
 (Data received from Dick Armstrong, March, 1978)

MONTH	1974	1975	YEAR 1976	1977	1978
January		93	271	194	48
February		200	880	161	
March		321	1,109	272	
April		436	1,102	386	
May		671	942	<b>120</b>	
June		739	825	<b>137</b>	
<b>July</b>		850	727	185	
August		961	759	290	
September		983	737	276	
October		1,102	674	157	
November	150-	987	351	89	
December	197	425	150	67	

\*Armstrong estimates that an average of 50 workers lived off camp during the period covered above.

After a January lull at the beginning of 1975, the **Glennallen** Camp population grew by at least 100 people per month until it reached a peak population of 1,102 residents in October. **Tonsina** Camp underwent similar population growth. The workers **lay** the pipeline's gravel bed, finished camp construction, and prepared access roads. In April, 1975, the actual laying of the pipe began and continued through the summer and into fall.

Another winter low was hit in January of 1976, when cold weather discouraged construction work. The **final** push toward completion started in February when 600 new workers arrived at **Glennallen** Camp during one month. In early spring, probably March, the project's peak work force of 1,232 (Dick Armstrong, 1978) lived in **Glennallen** Camp, and approximately 1,400 residents lived in **Tonsina** Camp. Altogether, more than 2,600 pipeline employees lived in camps near Copper Center. The 1973 population of the entire region, estimated to be 1,136 by one writer (Smelter, October, 1975), was more than tripled by the addition of people living in camps alone. Even more **people** had come **to** the region since 1973, but did not **live** in the **camps**.

Thus, during the years of 1975 and 1976, many of the **social** and economic institutions in the region felt the "pipeline crunch" as many locals came to **call** the impact phenomenon. Only in mid-summer of 1976 did people notice that it was becoming "quiet again." The lines at the store were shrinking, traffic was less hectic, a telephone user **could** dial long-distance without hours of frustrating busy signals, and there were some rooms available at the lodges again. By the end of the 1976 summer, the pipeline in Copper Center and the valley was basically completed. A few finishing touches remained to be done, mostly north of **Tonsina** at Squirrel Creek.

During 1977 various crews checked the pipeline, and surveyors tied it into the survey. Reforestation projects were begun. **When** the oil started to flow from Prudhoe Bay, a few people were hired to monitor the pipe as the oil moved through it. Security guards were also stationed along the **right-of-way** because there was some concern about sabotage. The pipeline presence decreased **until** March, 1978, when only 42 permanent employees worked out of **Glennallen** Camp. No longer did anyone live **in** the camp.

### The "Pipeline" Economy

The effect of this activity on the economy of the region was far-reaching, and statistics available for the area underscore the magnitude of the impact. During January, **1974**, 55% of the 1,406 non-agricultural jobs in the **Copper River-Wrangell Mountain** region (including Cordova and **Valdez**) were government positions. At the same time, only 3% of the non-agricultural jobs were attributable to construction. But by December of 1974, when work on the pipeline was beginning to **roll**, the ratios for these two sectors **of** non-agricultural employment changed, so that only 30% of the 3,166 jobs in this district were government jobs, but fully 36% were attributable to the construction sector of the economy (**ISEGR**, No Date, **Socio-econ**, P. 9).

The impact the pipeline had on employment in Copper Center Village is reflected in the data obtained by Dr. Larry **Naylor** of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks from Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. Sixty-four cases of separate Native hirings (among 54 individuals) are included under "Copper Center," for the dates September, 1973 through March, 1976. Unfortunately, complete data has not been received from **Alyeska**.

## CAMP LIFE

- The camp consisted of pre-fabricated structures, which were connected so that one could walk from one's **living** quarters to the **common** rooms, including the dining hall, game rooms, movie house, and store without having to go out into sub-zero temperatures. Most residents shared a room and bathrooms were shared by several residents. Rooms were cleaned by "bull cooks" working for the companies running the camps. **All** food and linen were provided, and cold-weather clothing was subsidized by the pipeline company.

At first local **people** were expected to live in the camps, but camp life became emotionally exhausting and some eventually moved back to their own homes, although this meant they **would** have to commute long distances. At the beginning of the pipeline construction, **local** people could not draw subsistence when living at home. It soon became apparent that pipelines wishing to live alone, paid their local **roomates** to live at home. Therefore, in **1976**, the pipeline company started paying a subsistence of a **little** over \$40 per day to those local people who lived at home. (Dick Armstrong, 1978) In the camps, the mixture of people of different races and cultures was sometimes explosive. The presence of men and women in the same dormitory was **also** an unusual social experiment. This living situation was in part responsible for failure among some of the workers. Young "hippies" or "long-hairs," blacks, and young Ahtna men, were allegedly taunted by the camp-seasoned pipelines from local 798 of the pipefitters union, out of Oklahoma City. It is reported that the "**798-ers**" as they became known in the region, wielded great power over the pipeline project: laborers and

drivers could be replaced, but "798ers" had to be placated because without them the pipeline could not be built. If a "798er" took exception to someone because his hair was long or his political persuasion was different from his own, he often reported that the worker smoked marijuana or had liquor. Both offenses were problems in the camps and grounds for firing. In many cases, living together became more difficult than working together. Women perceived their experiences in the camps very differently than did men. Most women found it difficult to gain the acceptance of fellow workers. Women said they often took on older, fatherly sponsors who protected them from the sexual advances of other men. On the other hand some women were flattered by the attention, and enjoyed camp life.

#### WORKING CONDITIONS ON THE PIPELINE

People bragged about the amount of work they did not do, although they were expected to be available to work long hours with no time off. Most people worked seven days a **wekk**, 10 hours a day. This rigorous schedule **would** continue for eight weeks before a ten-day rest period, or "R and R". Local people stayed at home or went to Anchorage. Some tried to avoid "R and R", preferring to work as much as possible when the work was available, and then travel or relax after lay-offs in the late fall and winter. Few of the **pipe-**lines from outside of Alaska stayed in Copper Center during rest periods. Their way was paid to Anchorage or the place where they had been originally

hired, such as Dallas or Oklahoma City. Then they would have to report back to Anchorage to be rehired. Also, because of the demand placed on tourist facilities, there were few rooms available in the Valley.

Conditions on the job were perceived differently, depending on the race and sex of the worker. Walter **Charley**, who coordinated Native hire on the project in the area and through Ahtna, **Inc.**, told the researcher that there were **many** racial problems between Natives and non-Natives. Southerners, in Mr. **Charley's** estimation, brought their culturally-determined opinions on race with them. An incident at **Tonsina** Camp involving a **black** man and white workers ended only when state troopers were called in. **Several** arrests were made.

Harassment was also a problem for female workers. Mr. **Charley** says that there was **little** that could be done if a woman construction worker complained that she was being **harrassed** because of her sex. One foreman was accused of teasing a young woman. **Mr. Charley** reported the treatment to **Alyeska**. **But** Mr. **Charley** was told that the foreman was "related to somebody" and there was nothing that could be done. Other women said that the tone of a foreman's reception usually foretold if they would succeed or fail on a crew.

On the other hand, if a woman were employed in traditional jobs for women, such as secretarial and housekeeping positions, they were not harassed. Mr. **Charley** corroborated women's reports on this subject. **He** observed that

women laborers were "given more problems" than were secretaries. Armstrong reported that women were employed as bull cooks, Teamsters, housekeepers, laborers, and secretaries. All of these positions, especially the positions of housekeeper and secretary, were the lowest paid positions on the work force.

## HIRING

Hiring practices are sometimes blamed for blocking Natives from employment. **Walter Charley**, who was born in Copper Center but belonged to the **Chitina** Corporation, was the manpower resource counselor for **Alyeska**. He urged the pipeline union officials and others to hire Natives. **While** some hiring could be handled directly by **Ahtna, Inc.**, and **Ahtna** Construction, other hiring had to go through the unions. The hiring regulations **were** complicated but could sometimes be circumvented. When Mr. **Charley** heard about a job in the area, he would send an **Ahtna** job-seeker into Anchorage to wait in the union hiring hall, and if the person legally entitled to the job did not show, then the union could legally request the **Ahtna** job-seeker. Because Mr. **Charley** had to pressure union officials, some responsibility **fell** on Mr. **Charley** to find jobs for Ahtna Natives. According to Lyle **Von Borgen**, of **Alyeska** Service Company, **Alyeska** was relieved to have some of the responsibility lie with Mr. **Charley** and Ahtna, Inc. Mr. Von Borgen said that the fact that **Ahtna, Inc.**, could do some of their own hiring, as a subcontractor, took some of the pressure off of **Alyeska** in their dealings with Ahtna villages.



Mr. **Charley** said that many of the local Natives did not maintain their union memberships, which cost \$250 per year, after being laid off during slack periods, and they were penalized when they attempted to find work during the following season. Mr. **Charley** said that in the view of many Natives dues were "too expensive" and "they (Natives) need something **else** a lot more." In fact, many union benefits, such as health and dental care and educational loans, are sometimes, but not always, supplied by Federal Government programs. Union procedures were also misunderstood or ignored by Native people. For example, one man did not sign up with the union when he was laid off his job, even though he had worked continuously through an entire work season. Instead of being placed on the top of the "A-list," with highest priority on the list of union members to be called first in the next season, he was placed at the bottom of the "C-list." Mr. **Charley** had to spend many hours getting this man a top priority listing that should have been spent getting a previously unemployed person employed, he said. Mr. **Charley** said that this kind of problem arose **all** the time, and he spent many hours teaching the people the union system. On the other hand, there were Natives who were dedicated union members, and who were able to maneuver among the rules and regulations quite well. Some actively supported the strike in the summer of 1977 against the **Ahtna-Chugach** and Voss Construction Company, which won the maintenance contract for the pipeline.

Mr. **Charley** also believes that there was discrimination in hiring among the unions. The pipefitters union was notoriously intransigent when it came to hiring blacks, Natives, women, and other minorities. No Ahtna person was hired as an apprentice pipefitter. The laborer's union, according to Mr. **Charley** and others, "sent guys out the back door," or hired illegally by not following the call-up lists and not announcing jobs.

The government labor relations board was called in on one case by Mr. Charley; the arbitration has not yet been settled. The operators union, on the other hand, hired many Natives. Mr. Charley said that this could be because there was a large number of skilled operators on the Ahtna rolls (another spin-off from highway employment.)

Hiring was a problem for some Ahtna, and keeping a job was a problem for others. Mr. Charley said that when employment was at its peak, turnover was also high, especially among young Natives. Mr. Charley is quoted in one impact statement as follows:

There have been lots of lay-offs this week. Still more to come. If ten people get off the bus when hiring, it seems there is only one Native. So when ten men get on the bus to leave camp, nine should be non-Native and maybe one Native. (Smelter, 1975, P. 9)

Mr. Charley was referring to the fact that although Natives were hired, they were generally the first fired or laid off. Mrs. Smelter said, "While Alyeska has upheld its promise of Native hire by hiring one Native out of every ten people hired, it has sidestepped this effort by laying off more than 10 percent Natives when a lay-off comes." (Smelter, 1975, P. 9)

The characteristics of individual workers also seemed to have affected their ability to hold a job. Some Native workers were consistently employed throughout the pipeline period. Others were laid off repeatedly. Mr. Charley implied that those who persisted sometimes succeeded. He said that turnover among Native employees had dropped off by March of

1978 because "it **is** a lot harder to get a job and **people** want to hang on to the ones they have." (Charley, 1978)

According to Mrs. Smelter and informants, local people did not believe they were **given** any special consideration in hiring. In Mrs. Smelter's impact report she states, "71% of those surveyed felt that local hire was not practiced here in the **valley** nor in Alaska." That high figure could stem partially from survey techniques. Since the questionnaire was distributed in the stores, it was more likely that **people** not employed on the pipeline would be questioned than people employed on the pipeline. Nevertheless, many people felt that the pipeline had little effect on their standard of living.

According to Mr. **Charley**, many Native people were eventually hired on the project; most of the hiring problems arose at the beginning when employers balked at the Native hire program and Native people did not have experience in finding employment. As the project proceeded, increasing numbers of **local** people, Native and non-Native, were hired.

#### THE NATIVE CORPORATION AND PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

The Ahtna Native Corporation and the village corporation have been involved in several business ventures connected with pipeline construction. In June, 1974, Ahtna, Inc., signed an agreement with Alyeska Service Company, which gave Ahtna, Inc., preferred treatment with respect to any contracts involving **Ahtna** land. At the same time, Ahtna, Inc. declared a joint venture with the construction firm of Rogers and **Babler**. **Ahtna-Rogers**

and **Babler**, or "AR&B" provided **Alyeska** with \$13 million dollars worth of construction work on the pipeline. They were involved in site preparation, the building of **Glennallen** Camp, the supplying of crushed rock and slurry, the construction of access roads and the pad for the pipeline, and reforestation along the route. Ahtna also undertook surveying of the route and clearing in a co-venture with **Tonsina-Trans** Alaska Engineering Company.

In the summer annual meeting held in **Gulkana** in 1976, Ahtna, Inc., announced that a dividend would be paid to each stockholder in the corporation. Although the dividend payment was small (around \$12) some publicity surrounded the event because Ahtna, Inc., was the first of the 13 regional corporations to pay any dividend to stockholders. In that meeting, then president Robert Marshall and then executive director Dean Olson attributed financial success of Ahtna, Inc. to the presence of the pipeline in the region.

**Ahtna**, Inc., is planning post-pipeline construction projects. **With** its partner, Tonsina-Trans Alaska Engineering **Ahtna**, Inc. is negotiating for the contract to do the **cadastral** surveys on the **land** in the region for the federal government. They **also** have formed a partnership with the electrical contractors, Fischbach and Moore, and formed a company called Ahtna, Chugach, and Voss to undertake maintenance work on the pipeline. This company became Meridian Construction Company in the winter of 1977-78. Finally Ahtna, Inc., has joined with the village corporations to form the Ahtna Development Corporation, which is specifically concerned with development and the formation of a broader economic base with the region. In 1976,

ADC built a 30-unit motel in Glennallen. Included in the building is a restaurant, bar, and gift shop. Thus, **Ahtna, Inc.** is closely tied to the development of the pipeline and to development throughout Alaska. The vigorous economic growth of the corporation will have repercussions in the region and villages.

During pipeline construction The **Alyeska Pipeline Service Company** negotiated with **Ahtna, Inc.** as a **quasi-political** entity. As a power to be reckoned with, **Ahtna, Inc.** could place some pressure on **Alyeska** to hire Native people, to have pipeline trucks slow down through the village, to advise Native people about their rights regarding the pipeline, and to provide a recognized voice of Native opinion. In this way **Ahtna** became an ombudsman for the local people in their dealings with the pipeline company. No local government was as effective as **Ahtna, Inc.** in dealing with the company. This is because there is no local government on the borough level. (see Glossary) This particular configuration of power, which gave Native interests a unitary voice, but gave local non-Native interests no authorized spokesman, **holds** many implications for the form that impact would have there. The local Natives were sometimes more able than the local non-Natives to organize and present their interests in a uniform block to the **pipeline** company and others, including government officials. This situation also had implications for the relations between the races in the valley.

## Community Services During the Pipeline Period

Some services were greatly improved during the pipeline period, while others could not keep pace with the new demands. Many services, such as scheduled airline flights not previously available in the area, were introduced during the pipeline period. **It** is not clear how many of these new services will remain after the construction boom dies down.

### TELEPHONE

The telephone system was unable to handle the increased demand. Thea **Smelcer** quotes John Friberg, General Manager of the Copper Valley Telephone Cooperative in 1975, as saying that "ninety percent of the load during the day is due to pipeline activity." (Smelcer, 1975, P. 23) The camps were the main source of the telephone overload during the pipeline period, but there was **also** an increased demand for telephone service in private homes and businesses throughout the valley. The telephone company increased their installations by 33% to businesses and 32% to private residences between September, 1973 and September, 1974. Nevertheless, there were still 300 people on the year-long waiting **list** for phones.

### ELECTRICAL SERVICE

The number of new installations made by the Copper Valley Electric Association reflected the rise in the number of residences served rather than the installation of electricity in homes that previously were without it. Almost **all** of the Native and non-Native homes in Copper Center had

electricity in 1973. Only a few did not have hook-ups and they were generally sub-standard, seasonally-occupied dwellings. In October of 1975 there were about 85 homes and businesses on the waiting list, and the wait for installations was about two months. (Smelter, 1975, P. 29) Electrical installation problems caused more of an inconvenience to those people who were new to the region.

## BANKING

The volume of the **Glennallen** Bank's business doubled between 1974 and 1975. Before work on the pipeline started, the small **Glennallen** branch of the National Bank of Alaska, the region's only bank, handled the local people's affairs in a personal way: The tellers were familiar with most of the regular customers and called them by name. As the bank's business grew, however, the personal service disappeared. New tellers were hired and customers waited sometimes as long as an hour to make a transaction. The older residents of Copper Center Village **felt** alienated by the impersonal service. On the other hand, the increased revenues deposited in the bank allowed significant **expansion** of the bank structure. A new building was opened in early 1976. The old building was donated to the **Glennallen** Public Library Committee, **and** stands near Moose Creek.

Most Native people banked at the Credit Union located in the Ahtna Office Building. Procedures for obtaining loans, financial advice, and other help was dispensed in a personal way by a person who was familiar with all of the Copper Center members.

TABLE 10: Copper Valley Electric Association---  
New Installations in the Glennallen Region

(Compiled by Smelcer, 1975)

DATE	NEW IN- INSTALLATIONS	PER CENT INCREASE	SERVICES IN PLACE	PER CENT INCREASE
Jan. -Sept. , 1973	34	NA	632	NA
Jan. -Sept. , 1974	43	29%	689	90%
Jan. -Sept. , 1975	<b>135</b>	216%	805	17%

TABLE ?1: Price Inventory: Copper River Valley\*

(Compiled by Smelcer, 1975)

DATE	PRICE OF MARKET BASKET OF FOOD*
December 10, 1974	\$23.76
February 10, 1975	23.02
March 10, 1975	23.30
<b>April 10, 1975</b>	<b>23.11</b>
May 10, 1975	21.64
June 10, 1975	22.77

\*A variety of popular foods found in the two largest grocery stores, one located in **Glennallen** and the other in Copper Center.



## STORES

Before the pipeline period, many people predicted that prices would rise in the local stores when pipeline money entered the local economy. In fact, this prediction did not come to pass. Mrs. Smelter writes:

In the consumer areas of groceries, clothing, sundries, lumber, and hardware, prices have gone down and availability and quality have gone up. With the increased population, activity, and demand, the local business people have been able to deal in larger quantity and have become more competitive in prices (Smelter, 1975, P. 22).

Mrs. Smelter's data for the Copper River Cash Store and Price's Supermarket in Glennallen confirms the researcher's impressions. (See P.117) Most people in Copper Center Village were aware that the prices for food had dropped. It was even more apparent that the quality and availability of fresh foods had risen. Dairy and vegetable cases were installed in the Copper River Cash Store in Copper Center.

The grocery or "Cash Store," came under new ownership in 1973. The new owner said that he moved his family to Alaska on a long-term commitment and did not want to cater to the pipeline people at the expense of **antagonizing** his local long-term customers. He said he had not changed his charging policy, except to refuse credit to people who were drunk. He inherited his regular credit customers from the former owner, he said. In general, many of the local customers were pleased to have a local store with prices that were competitive with Anchorage, a varied and high quality stock, and individualized service.

At the beginning of the pipeline period a small electronics store with tape decks, small televisions, radios, and appliances was placed in one corner of the Copper River Cash Store. This business drew many pipeliners. In the summer of 1976, the electronics store moved to **Tazlina** but burned down only a month later. While the electronics shop was located in the Copper River Cash Store, it was one of the major places where the **local** people, not employed on the pipeline, came into contact with the "pipelines."

Clothing, hardware, and lumber also dropped in price during **this** time. The stock also was larger and more varied in most of the area's stores. In many ways those businesses such as hardware, groceries, and clothing catering to local people were able to expand. It remains to be seen if any of them will be able to meet payments on loans taken out during the pipeline period. In March 1978 several **Glennallen** businesses were failing.

Some businesses catered more **to pipeliners** than others. Bars and liquor stores were expanded to meet pipelines' demands. Restaurants and hotels raised prices. Sometimes the increased volume of business strained **family-**run businesses because non-family members had to be hired to make up rooms, cook, and waitress. With the availability of jobs in the region, the wages paid had to be competitive with the pipeline, an impossible requirement for many local businesses.

Before the pipeline, many of the Copper **Valley** bars were **closed** part of each year, and others had only a few regular customers except on weekends,

when Alaskans tend to go out. But during the pipeline period, every bar (at least 4) in **Glennallen** was running, the Copper Center Bar at mile 101 was open, and a new bar six miles south of the **Klutina** Crossing opened. The liquor store continued to operate out of a small room built onto a personal residence in non-Native Copper Center. Pipelines visited this store.

### Copper Center

A large percentage of businesses in Copper Center changed hands immediately preceding the pipeline and during the beginning of the construction period. (See Below) Almost every business was either for sale, or for lease for the duration of the pipeline:

◦ Gas station: Standard	Changed management
● Gas station: Texaco	Owner took over management
● Restaurant: Milepost"	Changed management several times
● Sporting goods store	Opened and closed
● <b>Bayless</b> and Roberts Trucking and Hauling	Merit bankrupt and later reopened
. Oil Distributor	Unchanged
● Bar	Sold/new management
◦ Trailer Park	Unknown
● Copper Center Lodge	Unchanged
● Liquor Store/Clothing Store	Sold/newmanagement
● Snowmobile dealership	Unchanged
● Store: Cash Store	<b>Sold/</b> new management and expansion



on the pipeline or baby-sitting. The trucking company had also supplied employment to a couple of young men who changed tires in the shop. The greatest change in employment opportunities for Natives and even some non-Natives was not in the local business community, but on the pipeline itself and in jobs that were somehow associated with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

## HOUSING

The housing sector in both the Native and non-Native zones was severely strained by the pipeline developments. Rents soared. A small two story log-cabin without plumbing rented for \$400. Trailers were brought into the community and since there was **no** zoning they **could** be placed anywhere. A number of old cabins were refurbished either where they originally stood or in new locations where the new owners had dragged them. Cabins and houses that had not been used for a long time, some of which were **falling** down, were refurbished (**sometimes** in lieu of rent) and families moved into them.

Finally, a number of new homes were built in Copper Center by non-Natives, usually on lots on recently subdivided land. (see **P.123**) In Copper Center, subdivisions were carved out of **pieces** of land just north of the village at "Silver Springs" around mile 105, west of the highway. Many of the homes were expensive frame structures, and some are prefabricated. In Silver Springs, a large number of the homes belong to school teachers, fish and game professionals, and other professionals not necessarily dependent on the pipeline for their wages.

TABLE 12: The Subdivision of Land Parcels in the Copper River Valley  
 (Compiled by Smelter, 1975)

TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF PARCELS	NUMBER OF SUBDIVISIONS
1971-1973	7	80
1974	3	13
Feb.-Aug. , 1975	10	283

TABLE 13: Enrollment Figures for Copper Center School  
 (Compiled by Smelter, 1975)

	1974-1975	1975-1976
Opening enrollment	44	61
1st quarter	40	65
2nd quarter	41	73
3rd quarter	38	75
4th quarter	40	76

For many **valley** residents financing was a major deterrent to building homes. Peter **Crandell** of the **Glennallen** Bank told Mrs. Smelter that "few local buyers are, or **will** be building houses since it is very difficult to get long-term loans for building houses in this area. The great majority of new land owners are buying large mobile homes" (Smelter, **1975**) and not building homes. The Silver Springs subdivision and its unusually high number of stable professionals should change the composition of the Copper Center Community in subtle ways, especially in the school. It is difficult to gauge the **impact of** subdividing, which made land available to new and long-time residents. Subdividing made it possible for men who came to the area to find **living** places for their families, who would be sent for after "everything was ready." In a small bush community with no land available for building or for sale, the situation probably would have been altered.

The prices for rent and for land rose precipitously during the years between 1974 and 1975. For example, land selling for \$1,000 per acre at the beginning of 1974 **sold** for \$3,000 per acre in October of 1975. Trailer spaces renting for \$75 per month including utilities in **pre-pipeline** days, rose to \$125 per month and more, including only water in October, 1975 (Smelter, 1975, P. 22). Few Natives in the village **could** take advantage of the inflated market. Only two cabins in the village were rented to **non-Ahtna** people, and about four were rented to return Native migrants.

In March of 1978, there were many indications that the demand for housing had subsided. Some of the cabins were closed up again, and the religious radio station in **Glennallen** **listed** many lots and trailers at "post-pipeline prices."

In Copper Center, the Native and non-Native population continued to be above the pre-pipeline level, but the population of the trailer parks in the non-Native zone had thinned out considerably, and several trailers or houses were available to rent.

## EDUCATION

The rise in population put stress on the local schools. Copper Center Elementary School enrollment doubled during 1974 and 1975. In order to handle the increased number of students, two mobile classrooms were added, bringing the number of classrooms to five.

Copper Center School is in the Native zone of the community. In the past the school enrollment reflected the 40% Native and 60% non-Native racial make-up of the community. Even though many of the new students were the children to Native return migrants, most people estimate that the racial breakdown changed during the pipeline period, so that about 25% of the students were Natives and 75%, non-Native. Bilingual and Native cultural programs had been initiated in 1973, so Native language instructors and aides had entered the classroom.

Teachers in the Copper Center School found that the children of return migrants (Natives) and pipeline newcomers, particularly in the older grades (7th and 8th) had the worst behavioral problems in the school. Since grades were combined, older children and younger children often attended the same classrooms, and this caused some fighting when mature city-raised children



teased younger children. In 1978, the 8th grade was sent to **Glennallen** High School, in attempt to remedy the situation. In **Fall**, 1978, the teachers felt that the worst troublemakers in the student body had left with their families after pipeline employment had fallen off, and that the learning situation had improved. Teachers stress that the children of Native return migrants as **well** as the children of "pipelines," alike brought new problems to their school community.

The changing racial picture caused by the flood of new students created most unrest in **Glennallen's** high school. In 1973, stories were told about racial problems at the school, but the number of incidents were far short of the pipeline period, when even bombs and bomb threats were reported in the **school** and on the **school** bus. (**Smeicer**, 1975, P. 15) Most people assumed that problems arose between the pipelines' children and the Natives, but in fact the picture of social discord was more complex. There were many problems between the pipeliners and the **local** non-Natives as well. Local young people often expressed feelings of resentment toward the **pipe-**liners' children. In many ways they reflected the resentment toward outsiders expressed by their parents at home and by other adults, which has already been discussed in several contexts (the inconvenience at the stores and banks, and the changes in lifestyle). At the same time, the rising power of the Native people as a political group brought out resentment against Natives among local **non-Natives**.

The newcomers and the Native students also clashed in **Glennallen** High School. Many of the new students **hailed** from the South. One Native man, whose grandchildren attended the **Glennallen** School, called the **school** "Little

Mississippi, " because of the growing racism that pervaded it. Several other Native parents in Copper Center said they had taken their high-school-aged children out of Glennallen High School because they felt it was becoming "dangerous" there, and they could not get their children to go to school. They said their children were studying at home. The boys did not drop out and get jobs, but for Native girls employment could have been a factor in leaving school. In one case, a 15-year old girl, dropped out and baby-sat every day for children whose parents worked on the pipeline or at Ahtna, Inc.

During the pipeline period, the school system, itself, underwent serious changes. In 1975 the State Operated School System, SOS, gave up its jurisdiction in the valley, and locally elected school boards started to oversee school operations in the Copper Center Elementary School and in Glennallen High School. In Glennallen, school board actions have been controversial because the polarized segments of the community use the board as a soapbox for often divergent opinions. Ultra-conservative non-Natives on the board took leadership roles. The one Native on the board was outnumbered by non-Native members. Members associated with the Central Alaskan Missions also occupied board positions. Each board member scrutinized curriculum, hiring practices, and even the off-duty lives of teachers. Innovative Native-oriented programs, unpopular with most non-Native parents, were criticized. The school board, like the schools, was one institutional setting in the valley where growing racial tensions were aired.

On a more general level anti-intellectualism grew among Alaskans, and the Native people reflected the attitudinal changes of the general population.

Residents continually pointed to the high wages earned by pipeline employees. They compared these wages with that of professionals in the state. Teachers, police, college professors, and doctors, earned less than a 798er. A person's worth became equated with his income. The value of education dropped in the opinions of many Alaskans.

## MEDIA

The number of media sources available in the valley rose during the pipeline period. In 1973, the mission-run radio station was the only source of information and news in the region, unless one subscribed to news magazines or newspapers, and residents were frequently unfamiliar with current events. For example, one woman interviewed in Copper Center in 1973 did not know the name of the President of the United States. To the newcomers accustomed to the media blitz of modern America, this situation was unacceptable, and an increasing number of Anchorage newspapers were sold in the grocery stores, sometimes on the same day of publication. The Anchorage papers were available only in **Glennallen**. In Copper Center, two papers were available. **The Valdez Vanguard**, a weekly, sold for 25 cents, and many people bought this paper which included stories and letters about and from the Copper River Valley. A second mimeographed sheet, **The Copper Valley News**, was published biweekly in Kenny Lake and sold for 25 cents in the stores throughout the region or was sent through the mails. Although unprofessional, the News has become an important forum for ideas and issues in the region. During the recent "school board troubles," signed articles, letters, and rebuttals, appeared in almost every issue. Thus this paper is serving an important

function in the region, which is **not** served directly by any other **representative** of the print media. Finally, the Ahtna Corporation publishes a **small** newsletter. During the pipeline period, this publication became increasingly professional-looking.

The mission radio station KCAM, is controversial. Among young people, it is often the butt of jokes because of its conservative programming. Many hours of programming are devoted to evangelical preaching and music that is considered to be acceptable **to** the conservative, religious values of the missionaries. Nevertheless, many **people listen** to the morning and evening news, some of the old-time radio shows such as "**Lem** and Abner," and the valley favorite "Caribou Clatter," a reading of messages to people "without two-way communication." Announcements of public meetings, birthdays, births, and deaths, as **well** as items for sale are also made. In the last few years, many listeners have turned to other forms of the electronic media, in particular tape decks and television, which was introduced to the valley in 1974. Affluence from recent employment has funded such **acquisitions**.

Television programs are transmitted through a series of transmitters from Station KFAR in Fairbanks. The station rarely has news or programming that pertains directly to the Copper River Valley. The local people did not pay their voluntary dues and the translators were not maintained. For much of the pipeline period the reception was "snowy," and just barely visible or understandable. Dick Armstrong says that the situation was remedied by **Alyska**, which **fixed** some of the translators. (Armstrong, 1978)

At first, Natives rarely watched television. Within three years most of the households had televisions. By 1978, virtually every Native Copper Center household had one. Among the Natives, those shows, which are perceived to have "Native content," are most popular, such as Emergency and the Lone Ranger, which both have Indian characters.

A book store in Copper Center and magazine racks in the grocery stores in Copper Center and **Glennallen**, were also established during the pipeline period. These outlets, as well as the rise of television and other media have made the people of the **valley** media consumers for the first time. It is possible that growth of the media in the valley and the widening of the media resources available to valley residents could affect the perceptions they have of themselves. During the years of the pipeline construction, the residents of Copper Center and the **valley** were spotlighted. Not only did stories run about the pipeline, but the people read, heard, and viewed these stories for the first time. They saw pictures of the pipeline on the network news shows, in Time and Newsweek Magazines, and read story after story in the Anchorage papers. Such exposure created an appetite among the local people for news and a new realization of their place in the world.

Some of the increased demand for media comes from Natives who are moving back to the region after emigrating **to** Anchorage in search of work. They have a new sophistication about the media and its potential. These new perspectives are reflected especially in the concern many young Natives express about the influence of the mission radio station, which they often view as insensitive to Native viewpoints. This adversary relationship came to a head in 1975 when a local group (both Natives and non-Natives), with the help of an **Ahtna**, Inc.

lawyer filed a formal complaint with the FCC about the station's slanted news coverage and irresponsible programming. In particular, the group objected to the station presenting opinion (an ultra-conservative editorial program called Liberty Lobby) as fact. This short feature was inserted between sections of the news at 6 o'clock. The segment that angered the Native young people, asserted that all Indian leaders were communist dupes. The agitation by this group heightened the consciousness of Natives and non-Natives alike. It also encouraged KCAM to reevaluate its programming. New programs aimed specifically at the Native people were included in the schedule, including a news program produced in Fairbanks by and for the Native people and a program about the Ahtna language produced in Glennallen by the Ahtna Bilingual program. The Native sermon, heard in the Ahtna language every Sunday afternoon, also continued. Nevertheless, the Natives say that they would like to run their own radio station in competition with KCAM but it would be difficult to make such an endeavor self-supporting from the limited economic base in the valley. KCAM is supported in part by donations from religious groups outside of Alaska, and most people, even those who are most antagonistic to the political and religious philosophy of the station, say they are glad it exists.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation services expanded during building of the pipeline. Of particular importance was the introduction of scheduled airline service between Anchorage, Gulkana, Valdez, Tok, Delta and Fairbanks by Polar Airlines. During the height of the pipeline construction, three to five flights took passengers from Gulkana airfield near Copper Center to Anchorage, and two

flights took passengers to Fairbanks, stopping in Isabel Pass (on demand) and Delta Junction. Near the end of the construction boom, another charter company out of Kennecott initiated a McCarthy-Copper Center-Anchorage flight every Friday evening, and a return flight on Sunday afternoons. For the first time an attempt was made to provide some sort of regular service into and out of Copper Center itself on a weekly basis.

In addition, a national car rental firm ran a rental service at the Gulkana field, during the pipeline period. While this might have brought in some revenue, the existence of rental cars was not particularly important to the local people, and the service has been discontinued. It was purely a pipeline phenomenon.

Bus service in the valley predates the pipeline, but it has usually been sporadic. Schedules are posted in a few public buildings, but few people seem to use the service and not many can inform visitors where or how to catch a bus.

Almost everyone has his own automobile, and the car is the dominant form of transportation. The increase in traffic on the highways during the pipeline construction was a major inconvenience to residents. The truck traffic caused many potholes in the roadway, and the highway department did not want to make any major repairs until the pipeline was finished. Thus, not only were there more drivers on the roads, but the roads themselves were in bad condition. In addition, the number of licenses issued jumped significantly between 1974 and 1975 (Smelter, 1975, P. 21), thus indicating that there

were more drivers living in the valley. On the other hand, many people found it comforting during extremely cold periods to know that there would be traffic on the road and that help could be obtained during a break-down.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL INSTITUTIONS

The number of arrests for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated more than quadrupled between 1975, but then dropped back again in 1976.

(see P. 135) The 1974 surge in OMVIs could have been a result of police enforcement. In 1970 there was only one state trooper stationed in Glennallen, but by March of 1978, this number had reached 21. During 1973, there were four troopers. The growth in the department and the addition of high ranking officers and under-cover agents, was a direct attempt by the troopers to deal with the expected negative effects of the pipeline between 1974 and the present. There were 9 troopers stationed in Glennallen in 1974 and 17 in 1975. Mrs. Smelter and others contend that this is one reason for the increase in arrests. She says: "Predictably, the amount of arrests and citations have increased along with the expansion of the trooper force. Rather than an increase in crime and criminal activity, the 100% increase in cases through the Magistrate's office appears to be due to the increased amount of troopers and support people." (Smelter, 1975, P. 20)

Politics among the police was also a possible cause of the rise in arrests. Many local people felt that the trooper forces should be increased for the pipeline period, and a vigorous arrest record that would result in an impressive array of statistics is one well-known way to convince "higher-ups" in the force, as well as state legislators, that more officers, cars, and



equipment are needed at a station. People throughout the valley felt that this was one reason the traffic arrests jumped during 1975. As the pipeline work is finished, it becomes increasingly obvious that the station is overmanned. People are now complaining of traffic surveillance, and arrests for minor infractions of the speed limit. They say that the troopers are trying to avoid being transferred or laid off. It is possible, however, that since 1975 was the year of the oil embargo and the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit, traffic violations might have increased somewhat, independently of any pipeline-related causes. The OMV1 statistics reflect a rise in all traffic violations. (See P. 135) The cases brought through the **Glennallen** court system show a glut of traffic cases and an apparent drop in other types of cases (The court was in the process of sending many cases to Anchorage, so the statistics are misleading. )

The court system had an increase in the number of cases overall. There is one full-time magistrate in the region, Sheldon **Sprecker**, and one visiting magistrate from **Valdez**, John **Boshart**. In addition to the magistrates, a full-time judicial services officer was added in 1975, which might explain the rise between 1974 and 75 in civil processes. Mr. **Sprecker** also says that the addition of a social worker in 1975 brought certain types of offenses, especially those involving children, to the attention of the court. (**Sprecker, 1978**) Yet the statistics do not reflect this fact, and the '76 and '77 figures are needed to confirm Mr. **Sprecker's** statement. While there was a rise in the number of cases going through the **Glennallen** court system, the rise in crimes other than traffic violations is not clear cut. Subtracting traffic offenses from the total for each year, the number of cases

TABLE 14: Operating a Motor Vehicle while Intoxicated: Glennallen  
 (Compiled from Smelter, 1975, and Sprecker, 1978)

DATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF ARRESTS
1972	20
1973	23
<b>1974</b>	32
<b>1975</b>	136
1976	48

TABLE 15: Cases through the Glennallen Court System  
 (Compiled from Smelter, 1975)

TYPE OF CASE	TIME PERIOD		
	Jan. -Dec. 1973	Jan. -Dec. <b>1974</b>	Jan. -Dec. 1975
<b>Felony</b>	8	35	32
Misdemeanor	14	185	208
Traffic	167	374	1,197
civil	21	53	33
Juvenile	2	17	6
Fish and Game	8	29	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>1,489</b>

rose from 153 in 1973, to 319 in 1974. In 1975 the number of cases dropped to 291. Most of the increase between 1973 and 1975 occurred during the initial phase of construction.

According to Mr. Sprecker, more than half of all offenses in the period were associated with alcohol. The obvious association between joy-riding, disorderly conduct, and reckless driving can be seen in the statistics, but also crimes such as burglary, contempt of court, and malicious destruction of personal property were apparently associated with alcohol.

### Health Services

Health services were also affected by the larger number of people in the region. Faith Hospital, located in Glennallen, is run by the Central Alaskan Missions. The one full-time physician, Dr. Pineo, is a long-time resident of the valley. The hospital has five rooms, a nursery, an operating room, and a small clinic, and it was the only source of medical care in the entire region. The hospital's rise in cases is traceable to the pipeline. Dick Armstrong of Alyeska says that people were sent to Faith Hospital to get the physical exams required for pipeline workers. Although in Mr. Armstrong's view, the pipeline pumped money into the economy and brought up the level of services, there has been little change in the quality of services at the hospital. In fact, in September 1978, staff members said they were near exhaustion from trying to meet the increased demand. The waits to see a doctor were sometimes long.

In 1977, the Copper River Native Association won a **health** grant and opened Copper Center clinic. It is staffed by a trained R.N. who is Ahtna and who recently returned to the valley. She is especially interested in community health programs, and is assisted by a trained health aide from Copper Center. The Tribal **Health** Report expresses the hope that the cooperation between the various facilities (village, **Glennallen** Hospital, and the BIA facilities in Anchorage and Seattle) can be integrated to obtain better health care.

In this Chapter the pipeline as an agent of change has been described, and its effects on government and other service institutions have been noted. Many services were improved while the pipeline was under construction.

**Whether** or not these **will** be maintained at the higher level remains to be seen. Already some slip in the level of services is detectable. Troopers have been transferred from the **Glennallen** Station, airline schedules have been cut back, the car rental facility has closed, and the extra doctor has left. But many of the improvements designed to meet pipeline demand will remain, including: the improved telephone service, the upgraded highway, the number of homes available for rent, and the number of goods available in the store. These new amenities found in the valley will encourage some people to live in the region.

The experiences that many of the **local people** had during this period will be remembered. Perhaps some have learned about the rules and regulations of union employment. Young people have had a chance to see some of the skilled crafts open to them. Perhaps some of the negative experiences will be turned

into a positive learning tool that will enable the local Native to control similar development projects in the future.

v. COPPER CENTER DURING THE PIPELINE PERIOD: 1974-1977

The influx of new people and money during the pipeline period brought many changes in the society of Copper Center Village. Without a greater time perspective, it is still impossible to determine how many of the pipeline induced changes are permanent, but the values and behavioral patterns of the Native population diversified and altered, at least temporary, in response to the new economic environment.

While the pressures for change were induced by the building of the pipeline the existing political and social structures, as well as new institutions resulting from the Alaska Native Settlement Act, were formative factors in the direction social change took in the village. This Chapter describes how the village society responded during the economic boom.

Economic Management

Since one major impact on the village was caused by the influx of money during the pipeline period, it is important to understand to some extent the economic management of the individuals, the families, and the village. The introduction of Money often destroys traditional systems of reciprocity, which function to redistribute perishable wealth between those with a temporary plenty and those without.

When perishable wealth (such as salmon) can be translated into permanent wealth (money) or when wage employment supplants traditional subsistence endeavors, many reciprocal ties become meaningless obligations, which are

viewed as burdens by wage-earners, who wish to advance their own and their family's material well-being.

#### INDIVIDUAL MONEY MANAGEMENT

It appears that for some people, particularly young men, the management of money has been a problem and they, as well as their parents worry about what is perceived as "wasting money." Some of the people who lived in the camps where all needs were supplied became "moochers" and took advantage of friends and family living outside of the camps. But in Native households, a young man returning from the pipeline was usually loaded down with gifts for his family. For example, one young man told the researcher that it was the proudest day in his life to bring home ten bags of groceries to his mother. But a month later he was broke. He had bought a snowmobile and lent it to a fellow villager, who had crashed and "totaled" the machine. His mother told the researcher she was upset about the money she had seen fall through her son's hands. She said that he had never had previous working experience. She felt that since he was barely 20 years old, he had been fortunate to obtain employment, and she was disappointed when, after his second paycheck, he had left work and returned home. The mother also felt that her son would be "spoiled for work," because he earned his money too easily. The pay on the pipeline was unusually high, presenting a unique opportunity for Alaskans, but her son did not save his money so that he **could build** a house or learn a skill that would be of use to him in the future. She felt that her son was not alone among the village youth in becoming "spoiled" by the pipeline employment.

In 1977 a young woman, who had worked as a **bullcook** (maid) in pipeline camps echoed the older woman's statement that young people's perceptions of their economic worth would be inflated by their pipeline experiences. The young woman did not have a high school education, nor did she have a steady work record, but she obtained a post-pipeline job in a Native corporation as a program evaluator for \$10,000 a year, a low salary in Alaska. On the basis of wages she had earned on the pipeline, she felt she should be paid between \$15,000 and \$20,000. She quit the job.

Middle-aged workers did not spend their earnings as young workers did. People between thirty and fifty invested **in** material possessions in an attempt to raise their standard of living. The reason for the different approach to money management between the two age groups might stem from **factors beyond the individual's control**. The middle-aged worker is more able to obtain financing or a mortgage, and probably has a family with whom to share his new-found wealth.

Thus the young, first-time worker, came out of the pipeline experience with little to show, because of his lack of experience with money and his inability to manage it, his attempts to gain some amount of esteem in the village by redistributing his earnings, and his inability to obtain financing for larger investments.



It is commonly believed that absence of goals contributes to the young Natives' inability to manage money and prepare for the future in more general ways. In fact, there is data that this could not be the case for Ahtna young people. The 1971 findings of Dr. Faye **Crandell** of the Central Alaska Bible College are synopsized in the following paragraph:

A recent study made by a professor at the local Bible college adds **support** to the observation that **many** students are not "thinking" about the future. The author of the study, Dr. Faye **Crandell**, found that a representative sample of non-Native students appeared to show a trend 'away from future orientation.' This finding was contrary to the expectations that middle-class students would be observed to be future and academically oriented. Native students, on the other hand, appeared to be shifting toward a future orientation. (ISEGR, 1977, p. 40)

Dr. **Crandell**'s findings support the researcher's impressions. Since the implementation of the Settlement Act five years ago, the Native perception of themselves has changed significantly, as they become aware that they belong to a powerful political and social group. The events of the early 1970s raised young peoples' expectations. The author of the Department of Agriculture report continues:

The observations made by informants and the study by **Crandell** present a fascinating documentation of the effects of the forces for change. . . Of course, we are on speculative ground. However the shift toward a present rather than future orientation in the case of white students can be compared with recent and perhaps temporary economic gains made by their parents. The native student shift toward a future orientation fits equally well with the promise of future benefits to be derived from the Native Claims Settlement. (ISEGR, P. 40)

The attitudes of the elderly differs from the youths . Many of the older **people** are oriented to the present, because, as they see their lives drawing to a close, they doubt that they **will** live to gain tangible benefits from the Native Land Claims Settlement Act. This attitude is expressed by a group of elderly men who have agitated to "get their money" from the Native corporations.

Last summer the researcher accompanied two of these men when they talked to "Senator Ted Steven's representatives, who pointed out that the only way the elderly could obtain land **claims** money **would** be to dissolve the corporation. The two men expressed support of this idea, an attitude markedly changed from that expressed during the **pre-pipeline** period. Many elderly believe that the young people are being overpaid on the pipeline, and that they are squandering their earnings. With the new job opportunities, young people don't really need the land claims, elderly Natives feel. Their dissatisfaction stems from an increasing realization among older **people** that they will gain **little** from future economic development sponsored by the Native corporation.

#### HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

In traditional **Ahtna** society, the customs surrounding reciprocity pervaded the entire society. In simple societies, reciprocity takes many forms, but is characterized by a free-flowing exchange of goods and services that are not exactly counted up, but which add up over many years' time, of lifetimes, as people who are cared for as children grow up to help those who become old. In the traditionally oriented household in Copper Center, reciprocity continues to be an informal exchange of goods and services, but money has been incorporated

into the system. A young man gives his mother a certain amount of money from his paycheck that he determines will be of use to her. She shops and cooks, and often fishes and gathers food to contribute to the overall maintenance of the household. On the other hand, she buys gas when he drives her to Glennallen, usually by paying \$5 for a ride.

#### COMMUNITY ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

The **potlatch** is one of the most visible forms of community economic management among many of the Native societies in Alaska. The **potlatch** defines and underscores social institutions (in particular the clan), it redistributes wealth throughout the community, and it reinforces the shared customs and values of Ahtna society. Many students of **potlatching** societies have pointed out that there are many customs in the potlatch which serve to underline the varying statuses of the individual participants. Traditionally, beads and other rare items were thrown into the river in purposefully wasteful displays so that a chief could prove to **all** who watched that he was a rich and powerful leader. Even today a person who has recently given a **potlatch** must not visit **others'** homes or eat **at** others' tables to demonstrate that he still has money, food, and blankets to spare.

During the pipeline period, **potlatching** became more prevalent. The reasons for this are ambiguous: It is unclear if the higher number of **potlatches** held was due to a higher number of deaths or to an increase in money coming into the community. Another key variable is the increased realization that the **potlatch** is an important cultural ceremony, which underscores Ahtna unity. Probably, the high death rate, economics, and politics are **all** responsible in part for the reported increase in **potlatching** during 1974-1977.

The village elderly said that individual **potlatches** seemed to be more elaborate than in previous years and they related the growth **to** pipeline money. Sometimes \$10,000 worth of gifts were distributed to the participants. In the past, when the Natives were poor, **potlatching** had been modest. One man said that he had only been **able** to buy \$60 worth **of** "handkerchief blankets" for his mother's funeral **potlatch** in the early 1960s. In his words, **potlatching** "was up," during the pipeline period.

A greater number of **potlatches** were held during the early pipeline period, especially during the summers of 1975 and 1976, when as one man said, "There is a **potlatch** every week." People used their new wealth to catch up on "owed **potlatches**" given for people who had died as long as fifty years ago. After all the owed **potlatches** were finished, the pace of potlatching fell off in 1977.

**Potlatches** are organized by the older and more traditionally oriented Natives. A **small** group of men within the village sit at the front of the hall during the dancing. They initiate the dancing, beat the drums, and give speeches. Women organize great feasts of food and encourage people to donate blankets to the gifting ceremony which occurs on the last day. Everyone in the host **clan** donates money for food and gifts, usually blankets and guns. The amount that each person gives is usually read aloud just prior to the gifting ceremony. Sometimes, the **list** of donors and donations are listed on charts and tacked to the **wall** of the community hall. Thus it is easy to see what each individual has paid into the **community clan** pot.

Young **people**, as well as their elders contribute to the pile of gifts on the floor, and the money in the envelopes. Thus even though the **potlatch** may be

for someone who died thirty years prior to a donor's birth, the young Ahtna is **still** obligated to honor the dead.

Pipeline employment as well as other new employment in the region, is certainly contributing to the ability of the community to hold large and elaborate **potlatches**. But the new money does not account for the renaissance of **potlatching** and the culturally chauvinistic attitudes displayed by many people. Natives in Copper Center **are** increasingly drawn to their unique heritage. Even those people who live in Anchorage, and whose parents live in Anchorage (as is the case for many **Chitina** people who hold potlatches in Copper Center because **Chitina** does not have a community hall) return to Copper Center to **potlatch** and bury the dead. People who lived their entire lives in Anchorage, who attended high school in the city, and then worked there, are returned to the **valley** at death.

Thus in Copper Center the management of money is not only the concern of **individuals** and families, but also applies to the entire village. **Potlatching** is probably the most dramatic form of village sharing and redistribution that is found in Copper Center. Redistribution in more informal ways by paying for services, sharing subsistence resources, and **commensality** are also important modes of redistribution.

#### THE STANDARD OF LIVING

The standard of living improved significantly in the village during the pipeline period. One indicator of the higher standard of living was the home improvements made (and not funded by home improvement grants obtained through CRNA). Of the 36 homes found in the village in 1973, 5 had been improved by the original 1973

owners by adding rooms. In 1973, 48% of the village households had automobiles; in 1977, 72% of the households had automobiles.

The change in individual perceptions of the rising living standards varied according to one's ability to take advantage of pipeline employment. The older people realized that the rising living standard in the village in general put them at a disadvantage. Young people, who hoped to benefit from the pipeline, but found that they could not stand the **working** conditions of the pipeline, or could not obtain employment, became bitter. Middle-aged workers who made significant investments and raised their families' material well-being were positive about pipeline developments.

The city "scene", as well as employment, had attracted young Ahtna to Anchorage. But with the rise in the standard of living in the valley, many of the young people returned to participate in an active social **life** even when they could not find employment. The male peer groups grew during the pipeline years, and became more **viable** because some money underwrote good times. Even some older people from Lower **Tonsina** and Chitina were attracted to the "social scene" in Copper Center. Some people, who remained unemployed throughout the pipeline period, moved to Copper Center, attracted by the excitement and the entertainment the pipeline had brought.

In 1975, although there was a lot of money coming into the valley, many of the Natives felt that they did not profit personally from the general rise in the standard of living. In a 1975 survey of the Native people, only 20% of those questioned said that they made more in 1975 than in 1974. (Smelter, 1975)

In fact, few **people** who lived in Copper Center Village in 1973 gained employment on the pipeline. of the 55 **adults** in the 1973 sample, 11 or 20% (a figure representing **fully** half of the 1973 residents who were employed in 1977),

found employment for a substantial period of time on the pipeline. Two villagers worked throughout the period for the **Ahtna**, Inc. construction firm on work directly related to the pipeline. Others worked north of the Yukon (3) and in **Glennallen** Camp. From the same 1973 sample of Copper Center villagers, 11 or 20% remained unemployed from 1974-1977 except for part-time employment or one or two extremely short stints on the pipeline. The Tribal Health report states, "The manager of the **Glennallen** Manpower Office for the past seven years states that the present overall unemployment level of the area is 14-15% with Native unemployment being about 20%." (CRNA, 1977, P. 16.)

Of the researcher's 1973 sample, 5, or 9% depended solely on welfare in 1977. The 18 elderly, representing 32% of the 1973 sample, were either retired, collecting Social Security benefits and the Alaska Old Age bonus, or BIA welfare. In 1977, 9, or 18% of the village population, were employed by the Native corporation or attendant organizations such as CRNA, or **Klutika-ah** Village Corporation. New Federal and State grants had been introduced in part because of the predicted **social** impact of the pipeline. The 1977 employment statistics (see P. 149) underline the importance of the Copper River Native Association in creating **new** jobs in the region. Most of the jobs created by this non-profit arm of Ahtna, **Inc.** were and are supported by federal government grants. The number of people employed by the Copper River Native Association has ballooned over the last five years. The Association was incorporated in February of 1972, and the first two grants received during that year were grants in early childhood development and aging. In 1973, two health grants were obtained including one from the Indian Health Services and an alcoholism program. In 1974, the previously earned grants had expanded: the aging program had obtained an automobile, and the bilingual education program had initiated language programs in the elementary schools. By 1977 seven language instructors

TABLE 16: The Employment of Copper Center's 1973 Native Population in the Summer of 1977  
(From researcher's data)

AGE OF WORKER		EMPLOYED ON PIPELINE	WELFARE (SOLE SUPPORT)	RETIRED/ SOC. SEC. / AK. BONUS	NATIVE CORPORATIONS	UNEMPLOYED
UNDER 30 YRS	MEN	3	0	0	0	4
	WOMEN	0	1	0	2	1
OVER 30 YRS	MEN	7	1	0	2	5
	WOMEN	1	4	4	6	1
OVER 52 YRS		0	0*	14	0	0
TOTAL		11	6	18	10	11
% OF TOTAL		20%	9%	32%	18%	20%

Sample includes 55 individuals.

\*Because of the Alaska Old age bonus, the researcher knows of no elderly person depending solely on welfare. A very few do get help from either BIA or the Food Stamp Program. 61A has various programs to supplement low incomes in the Native community, such as cash payment to "unemployable" fathers, and a set payment for school clothes given out annually.



taught Ahtna in the region's schools, two **para**legals were available in the CRNA Building in Copper Center, and the Health Department had 24 full-time employees, including health aides, homemakers, a nutrition aide, a dental assistant, a medic, a psychologist, and an alcoholism counselor. There were also several administrative and secretarial positions in CRNA.

Ahtna, Inc. now employs between 10 and 15 people, several from Copper Center Village. Other positions are available in Ahtna, Inc.'s subsidiary businesses. In 1977 the Ahtna Lodge employed about 10 people, but only three people were employed in the Ahtna construction company. Had the pipeline maintenance program remained in Ahtna Inc.'s hands, the Native owned Construction Company would have become a long-term Native employer, unlike the short-term pipeline construction industry, and would have permanently changed the employment picture for Natives in the Ahtna Region. In all between 50 and 60 people were employed in various Ahtna Inc., and CRNA programs in the summer of 1977. Most, although not all, of these positions were **filled** by Native people. Thus the presence of CRNA as well as Ahtna, Inc. has become an important employment variable for Natives in the valley.

About half of those employed in 1977, who lived in the village in 1973, worked for either CRNA or Ahtna, Inc. The low-paying positions traditionally held by Natives in the past, such as waitress or janitor, have been **filled** by young non-Natives, who would prefer pipeline jobs, and the wives of pipeline employees, who have recently moved to the area. Not only are the salaries and wages better in the Native endeavors, but also the Natives sometimes prefer to work in **Native-**owned businesses, and organizations. Non-Native migrants into the region have often supplanted Natives in jobs after each successive boom. Should the present

good fortunes of the Native organizations be reversed, will the Natives be able to return to the less valued positions near the village, or will they find these positions filled by recent arrivals, who came to Alaska during the pipeline boom period?

### The Social Organization Responds

The introduction of cash into a **social** system sometimes undermines the traditional bases for interaction in a society. In this section the effects of the pipeline construction on Copper Center society will be analyzed.

#### HOUSEHOLDS

During the pipeline period the people of Copper Center Village maintained the household structures they valued in 1973: the nuclear, conjugal pair, and single person households. Pressures for space during the pipeline period did not force people to live in the complex, undesirable household forms. Those young and middle-aged **Ahtna** migrants who have returned have brought their families with them, so that coincidentally, the average age of household heads dropped, and the community gained young people.

Of the households that were present in the village in 1973 and **still** were present in 1978, structural changes were attributable to deaths (3), adoption (1), and moving away (1). (Note that there were other deaths and moves but these did not effect the structures of households. ) Thus it appears that the basic changes in village households did not **result** from addition of great numbers of people to households on a permanent basis so that an increase in

complex forms came about; rather, the change in the household structures of the community on the whole came from the addition of nuclear families to the community and not from the incorporation of various kin and distant kin into the existing 1973 households.

From the statistics (see P. 153) it is clear that nuclear family households were established and maintained in Copper Center during the pipeline period. In the sample used, 7 out of the 39 households were not within the village proper, although household members were affiliated with Copper Center Corporation. Of these 7 households, 6 are nuclear family households and 4 of these 6 had one member (the male head of household in every case) working on the pipeline through the construction period. Only 1 family living out of the village limits was in the low-income bracket.

New households were established in the village after 1973 when residents married or divorced spouses, thereby establishing totally new households. More usually, they were established when Ahtna migrants returned to the village. Sometimes both factors contributed to the establishment of a new household. For example, a local young man married a young Ahtna woman from Anchorage, and they established their new home in Copper Center Village.

In the sample, 15 households were added to the village survey because they met either of the following criteria:

- The household was located within the village limits (between mile 102 and mile 104 on the Richardson Highway).
- At least one adult household member was enrolled in the Copper Center Corporation and the household was located within a ten-mile radius of Copper Center Village.

TABLE 17: Household Types in Copper Center in 1977  
 (from researcher's data)

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	1973*	1977	
	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Nuclear family household	32%	20	51%
Single person household	36%	7	18%
Extended family household	10%	4	10%
Conjugal pair household	7%	3	8%
Grandparent-grand-child household	7%	2	5%
Joint family household	7%	2	5%
Unknown		1	3%
TOTAL	99%	39	100%

Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

\*The 1973 sample included 29 households(see P. 87.)

Sometimes it was difficult to determine if a family should be included in the sample. For this reason, the above criteria were rigidly followed. In fact, several other Native families moved into non-Native Copper Center, but they were not included in the sample either because they were not **Ahtna** Natives, or they belonged to other **Ahtna** villages.

In general, the people living in these 15 newly established households were attracted by the availability of well-paying jobs. The households they established usually were young, nuclear families headed by couples over age 30. Most were Ahtna people, equipped by education and experience to take advantage of pipeline job opportunities. **Fully** 73% (or 11) of these households had at least one member working, either directly for **Alyeska** Service Company or in positions with the Ahtna, Inc. joint ventures in pipeline-related employment. Two other household heads each were employed by Ahtna, Inc. and the Copper River Native Association in non-pipeline-related employment. Thus only 2 of the 15 households established in Copper Center Village during this period, did not have at least one member employed in pipeline work or by Ahtna, Inc. or **CRNA**. These 2 households were headed by women who were divorced during the study period and depended on welfare. Pipeline employment attracted previously established nuclear families to the village and encouraged the establishment through marriage of totally new households among old-time residents. Some male household heads left long-standing jobs for less secure, but better paying, pipeline employment.

In discussions **held** with the members of this group it was clear that their decision to stay in the village after marriage or to return to the village was based on the availability of jobs in the region. In some cases these workers were recruited by Ahtna, **Inc.**, which needed experienced foremen and

workers and preferred to give these jobs to Native members of the Ahtna Corporation. While some families missed Anchorage city life, most agreed that the village had some positive characteristics. Some viewed the village as a good place to raise children. People knew one another and relatives lived close-by. Some male household heads left long-standing jobs for less secure but better paying pipeline employment.

Of these 15 households, 9 were established within the village limits, and 6 were established outside of the village limits near Tazlina, in non-Native Copper Center, and along the Richardson highway. The variables determining which households were established within the village boundaries were not clear-cut. Those households established outside of the village boundaries were more likely to have household heads employed on pipeline related jobs, display family structure, and have a spouse in the family with at least one non-Ahtna parent. They appeared to be more affluent and were able to buy land and build homes or rent houses at exorbitant pipeline rates. It was difficult to measure affluence in the village because some people chose to redistribute their money rather than to accumulate wealth in the form of material possessions. An important difference between those who lived in the village and those who did not lay in the ways they chose to spend their money rather than in their actual earnings. In fact, pressures to redistribute earnings usually placed on people living within the village might be one reason some families established homes outside of village boundaries.

Those households established within the village boundaries were only slightly less likely to have members working on the pipeline. Out of the 9 new households established within the village boundaries, 6 had household members

working for the pipeline, 1 for CRNA, and 2 were on welfare. Nevertheless, this group did not appear to be as affluent as those living outside the village boundaries immaterial possessions are used as a measure of affluence. Closer inspection reveals that many of the pipeline jobs for people in this group were not as long-lasting as were those for people living outside the village boundaries; they were laid off earlier. Those living in the village did not have as many skills or as much job experience as those living outside the village boundaries.

In comparing the households established outside the village limits and those established within the village limits, there existed a contrasting pattern in family structure. In the village, three of the households displayed nuclear family structure with both parents present, three of the households were **female-**headed nuclear families, one household was a single-person household, and two of the households were conjugal-pair households. This variety of household forms contrasts greatly with the composition of those households located outside of the village boundaries, all of which displayed nuclear **family** structures.

How can these differences be explained? Most of the new households established in the village resulted from new divorces or new marriages made during the pipeline years. **In** contrast, most of the new households established outside of the village boundaries occurred when usually stable families returned to the area. **Women** who returned to Copper Center after a divorce or the death of their spouse, found not only work available, but also the support of kin, who sometimes supplied housing. Sometimes single **men**, who owned a house in the village, returned to it when work became available.

Trailer spaces were also supplied by kin (not parents) within kin compounds, and in 5 cases trailers were set up. Neighbors, fearing noise and crowding on the village lands, usually complained when new trailers were erected, and disputes arose. Kin deflected criticism aimed at new people who located trailers in the village. Thus new households in Copper Center Village usually were not as established as those set up outside the village boundaries, and household members prevailed upon traditional kin-ties for help in relocating in the village.

While permanent changes in household composition were few, Copper Center households hosted many temporary visitors. Some visits were extensive and brought about temporary changes in household structures as people returned to the village. Many of these temporary visitors had grown up in the village and left for Anchorage before the pipeline period. Other young people, who would have left the village after leaving high school, stayed on with their parents in the village. Thus the ranks of teen-agers swelled noticeably during the construction years. Grown children with families as well as grown single people moved in with parents on a short term basis. Taking these visits into consideration, the researcher found that household structures followed the ideal model less rigidly than statistics would imply. Usually within three or four months married couples found their own dwellings. In at least two cases, visiting families left jobs and returned to Anchorage because they could not find housing. The number of people in one particular home fluctuated between 3 and 15 individuals, who sometimes stayed for several months. Of course, this case is extreme, and many of the households added only one or two residents from time to time. Of the 27 original 1973 households, 11 had grown children return and stay in the household for several months.



Visiting sometimes caused domestic stress. Not all of the young, single people found work on the pipeline, **at** least not on a long-term basis. Some people returned to their parents' homes and brought little economic support into the home.

In short, the change in the character of the **pre-existing** households came not in their structural forms, but in their size and the **number** of households found in the village itself. Nevertheless, fluctuations occurred on a temporary basis as kin hosted return migrants. The return of young families and young singles had repercussions in other parts of the society, which will be discussed throughout this chapter.

## MARRIAGE

In 1973, young Native men had difficulty finding marriage partners. Native women often married non-Native men, but Native men **only** rarely married non-Native women, thus locking out from marriage some Native men.

Before the pipeline period, people believed that the non-Native pipeline employees would "steal the village daughters and wives," and people did point to one case in which this happened. But, in fact, intermarriage between non-Native pipeliners and Ahtna women was rare. Recent economic and political events caused a new spurt of **intra-Ahtna** marriages. In fact, many Ahtna women now say that they prefer Ahtna husbands. For example, one Ahtna woman, with three non-Native grandparents, was divorced from her first husband, a non-Native. It was her belief that the two children of her first marriage were not recognized as Ahtna Natives by other **Ahtna** because of their extensive (less than "1/4 Alaskan Native") non-Native ancestry. She said she "had learned her lesson,"

when discussing her impending marriage to a Copper Center man, all of whose ancestors were Ahtna. She pointed out that when she had his children, they would be Ahtna, a positive attribute the **children** of her first husband could not claim. They married during the construction boom when the second husband found employment. Economic considerations such as employment might be secondary to an increased Native political awareness and self-pride.

There were only a few marriage ceremonies in Copper Center during the pipeline period. Between 1974 and 1977, approximately 5 marriages involved Copper Center residents, and all but one involved young people in their twenties. **In** at least one case, pipeline employment enhanced the marriage chances for one man in his early forties. This man bought a home in the village and an automobile in 1975. By the end of the pipeline period, he was married to a young Native woman, and they had a child. **While** many of the marriages forged during the pipeline years were not as clearly related to pipeline employment as the above example, some were sustained by pipeline employment. Sudden unemployment at the end of the pipeline period in 1978 has placed strain on at least three young marriages in the village, and in two cases spouses had separated.

The cause for stress in these marriages appears to be a variation on the theme of rising expectations going unfulfilled. Expectations were raised for villagers in the early 1970s. And, life improved for many people in the village. People worked, established new households, and **felt** good about themselves. Then came the layoffs. One older man described the following scenario: during the pipeline either one or both spouses worked "seven-tens." (See Glossary) They felt euphoric when their incomes rose from \$100 a week to \$1,000 a week. They bought what they wanted and shared with friends. When pipeline employment **fell** off,

they lost their jobs. Hopes were dashed. After three **or** four years of steady or part-time employment, men and women found themselves at home with little hope of future comparable employment. A number of couples who had never quarreled were suddenly fighting. Some wives berated unemployed husbands. Some Ahtna predicted that marriages, other than the two known in 1978, would break-up if employment remained low.

Working women were less dependent than men on pipeline jobs. Native women, especially young women with secretarial skills, found employment in the Native corporation, CRNA, and area businesses, as secretaries, home aides, administrators, waitresses, and cooks. **While** these jobs were not high paying, they had stable year-round incomes. Wives were often more employable than their husbands. Two marriages **under** stress in Copper Center Village in 1978, both were unions of a working wife and unemployed husband. In both cases the husbands said they resented caring for the children. In general, marriages among village residents are quite stable and divorce rates do not approach the rate for the U.S. population as a whole. Of those married couples present in the village in **1973**, only two had separated during the period 1973-1977. By 1978, one separated couple had reunited while the other couple continued to maintain separate residences but continually visited one another. No attempt has been made to legalize either separation. Of return migrant couples, only 1 had separated during the pipeline period, and they too had not sought to legalize the separation.

**Single** people often return to the village after a divorce, and about five villagers **fall** into this category. But the number of single divorced young people (under 35) who returned to the village after being divorced in Anchorage indicates that divorce among the urban Ahtna is significantly higher than among their country relatives.

## KINSHIP

The village continued to be a kin-based society through the pipeline period. Return migrants depended on kin to house them temporarily or supply trailer space. In this way many of the family compounds (see Glossary) were expanded. On the other hand, traditional kin-roles, such as the role of the clan matriarch were no longer universally accepted among all age groups.

### Role Expectations

During the last year of the pipeline, when many people were laid off and had adjustment problems, different expectations of kin roles, **particularly** between the old and the young became especially problematical. **According** to Dr. **Ravsten**, the CRNA psychologist, many of the family and marital problems of Copper Center in March of **1978** occurred when Natives disagreed on **kinship**-defined behavior. For example, in the past, men rarely married before age 30 when they were proven providers. Today, they often marry within their own peer group right out of high school. This places them in an ambiguous position with their parents, who do not think they are adults.

Mothers sometimes continued to act in traditional ways, telling grown sons what they should do even after they are married. **In** one typical situation, a young man's urban-raised wife pushed him to free himself from his mother's influence and from traditional **matrilinal** obligations. The young husband was continually torn between the contrasting demands of his mother and his wife, **until** he and his family finally moved back to Anchorage, and the husband commuted weekly between the city and his Copper Center job.

Young people raised in the cities often lack an historical perspective: they fail to understand why generosity and sharing, performed in **redistributive** acts, are so integral to village life. Most people over 40 view the Western economy as undependable; jobs come and go. Employment, such as that found during the pipeline period is unique. In contrast, traditional society offers security. Kin will always be there when one has financial problems, and those kin one has helped in the past, can be asked for help in return. Different expectations **of** kin roles cause conflict between the old and the young. Young men working on the pipeline often have lived on their own for several years in Anchorage. They view their parents as naive and resent parental advice. Return migrants have often had different experiences than their parents. In some cases a young village man has married a city-born woman of part non-Native heritage. Their expectations of various kin roles differ, especially when the young woman pushes for independence from the village where she has few kin allies. Dr. **Ravsten's** observation that most **family** problems involve inter-generational sparring and disagreement about kin roles, agrees with the observations made by **a** Native man, who has been quoted earlier, "Everyone is his own boss." Family members no longer **rely** on one another as they once did.

In 1973, many of the intergenerational differences were not as clearly obvious as in 1978. In 1973, Copper Center Village was a bastion of tradition, and the residents conserved many traditional behavioral features of kinship. The village young people were often unemployed, and they depended on borrowing from the elders or working for them **to** earn extra money. The young employed people did not fit into this mutually cooperative scheme and they pushed for independence.

In the past, the desire of some young people to leave the village entirely illustrates that kinship ties are not as binding as they once were. In 1978, families living outside of the village usually have at least one spouse with some non-Native ancestry, and are most likely to have grown up in cities, on lonely homesteads, and trading posts, or in non-Native rural communities. Although they are not acculturated to village life, many young Ahtna with some non-Native ancestry are receptive to learning Native customs, a difficult task for people not raised in a village atmosphere.

Return migrants, having one non-Native parent, and couples of racially mixed marriages rarely live within the village limits. Whether the Native racial composition of the village is maintained by choice or by subtle forms of exclusion (both probably operate), the end result is that life for village residents remains more traditional than for Natives living outside the confines of the village limits. For the past 50 years, this exclusionary racial policy has reinforced traditional village life despite the many acculturative forces descending on Copper Center Village because of its location beside a major highway.

During the pipeline period, the subtle, although commonly recognized, rules maintaining traditional village composition defined by kinship, race, and other components seemed to break down. In 1977, return migrants and young people without obvious ties to the village lived within the village boundaries for the first time. Some, who grew up in the city, were not well attuned to the subtle forces of Ahtna social life, and they did not respond to pressures to have them leave. It was not clear whether the trend toward a less rigorously defined village composition was temporary or permanent.

During the pipeline period the age, racial, and kinship composition of the village changed because of the return of young people to the village: They had experience in the cities, were high school educated, and were oriented toward the work place, not subsistence living. These young people had come of age during a time of political and ethnic ferment, and they had a very different concept of "village" than the 1973 population. The implications of the reversal of the out-migration trend in Copper Center Village permeated the village's society. Contrary to what one might assume, the reversal of outmigration of the Native young people hastened the pace of change. Their years in the cities had tutored the young in Western ways. Along with their skills and education, they brought new ideas, new frustrations, and new problems such as drugs.

#### THE CHANGING POPULATION OF THE VILLAGE

Statistics collected by the researcher in 1973 and 1977 and also presented in the Tribal Health Report (CRNA, 1977 P. 3 ) illustrate the changing nature of the Native community. (See p. 165. ) There are small discrepancies between the two 1977 samples which reflect seasonal variation and a difference between the samples. The researcher's **sample** includes Native people **living** within a ten mile radius of the village.

The addition of young, nuclear families with children is reflected in the growth between 1973 and 1977 in the number of children as **well** as young workers in the village. During the years **1973** and 1977, the number of people aged 20 to 50 rose by 41% or from 27 to 46 persons , and the number of people aged 0-19 rose by 64% or from 33 to 52 individuals. The population of young women

TABLE 18: Age and Sex of Native Population in Copper Center in 1973 and 1977.

AGE	1973 (from researcher's data)		1977 (from Tribal Health Report)		1977 (from researcher's data)	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
95+						
90-94						
85-89	(1)*		(1)*		(1)*	
80-84						*(1)
75-79	(1)*		(3)***	***(3)	(3)***	** (2)
70-74		*(1)	(1)*	** (2)		*(1)
65-69	(4)****	** (2)	(2)**		(3)***	*(1)
60-64		*(1)	(1)*	** (2)		** (2)
55-59	(4)****	*(1)		**** (4)	(1)*	**** (4 )
50-54		** (2)	(2)**	** (2)	(2)***	*(1)
45-49	(1)*	*** (3)	(2)**	*(1)	(5)*****	**** (4)
40-44	(1)*	** (2)	(6)*****	**** (4)	(7)*****	**** (4)
35-39	(6)*****	**** (4)	(6)*****	**** (4)	(6)*****	**** (4)
30-34	(3)***	*** (3)	(3)***	***** (6)	(2)**	**** (5)
25-29	(3)***	*(1)	(3)***	*(1)	(7)*****	**** (4)
20-24	(2)**	( 1 )	(3)***	***** (5)	(4)****	*** (3)
15-19	(3)***		(4)****	***** (5)	(3)***	***** (8)
10-14	(6)*****	***** (5)	(10)*****	***** (11)	(10)*****	***** (10)
05-09	(6)*****	***** (6)	(~ 2 ) *****	***** (11 )	(11)*****	***** (10)
00-04	(6)*****	**** (4)	(4)****	C*** (4)	(6)*****	***** (7)
TOTAL BY SEX	49	38	63	69	70	68
TOTAL BY YEAR	97		133		138	

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also rose substantially. By the researcher's data, 7 women between the ages of 20 and 40 lived in the village in 1973; by 1977, that figure had more than doubled to 16. Many good jobs were available for women in the region. The Native corporations and associated ventures, the Copper River Native Corporation, and the pipeline hired young women. There are no strictures against women working in Ahtna Culture, and even traditionally-oriented women are expected to have their own source of income or to contribute to the well-being of the household by harvesting subsistence resources or doing craftwork.

In the summer of 1977, seven women between 20 and 40 did not work, and of these seven, six were the wives of men working on the pipeline. Six women, between 20 and 40, worked during the summer of 1977, two for Ahtna, Inc., two for CRNA, and two for the pipeline. Of these six who were employed, five were married to men who were also employed and one was single. Three women collected welfare, did not work, and were not married. The rise in the number of people over the age of 65 is not a result of migration back to the village, but is simply due to aging. Two of the elderly present in 1973, died during the pipeline years. The number of "older workers" between 50 and 65 remained constant although a few older workers did return to find employment in the area. In discussions with Anchorage visitors during the pipeline season, older workers said they had not returned because they owned homes in Anchorage, did not want to disturb older children's educations, and did not want to leave jobs where they had worked for many years to take on short-term insecure pipeline positions. It was less likely that older married couples with vast investments in urban jobs, land, and lifestyles would return than younger less-established couples. In 1973 teen-agers were leaving the village. But by 1975, many young people, particularly young men, temporarily visited the village. Drifting teen-agers

were the most difficult population segment to measure, because they constantly moved between Anchorage and Copper Center, where they stayed with friends or kin rather than setting up permanent households. The return of women to the area was easier to document because they were more likely to settle permanently in a household, sometimes their own.

#### THE YOUTH PEER GROUP

The youth peer group in the village was extremely visible. From childhood to early manhood, young men "pal" around together. Constantly in each other's company, they had similar interests, drank or used drugs together, and formed an easily recognized group. Their dress, jewelry of Indian design, braided hair, and head bands identified them as Indian. This group could usually be found in a home where the parents were working or at the home of a single middle-aged man who acted as their mentor. Sometimes a member of the peer group attempted to establish his own household. During the pipeline period the youth peer group grew. Members of the peer group remained in the village rather than emigrate. Their brothers and friends who had been living in Anchorage as well as young men from Ahtna and Upper Tanana villages farther from the pipeline than Copper Center, came to join the Copper Center young men. On coming to the village, a homeless young man turned to his peers for shelter and for advice about how to get on the pipeline.

Young men often were not successful in obtaining pipeline employment. When they did they often had difficulty keeping their jobs. Their long hair, dress, and inexperience brought the disdain of the professional pipelines. After short stints on the pipeline, most returned home with black marks on their work

records. The Klutika-ah Village Corporation employed the youths in part time maintenance jobs. The youth peer group membership was fluid because members often visited Anchorage or took jobs away from the village, but the overall emigration trend was reversed during this period.

It was mainly through the youth peer group that the many features of the non-Native pipeline and the American youth culture were introduced to the village. For example, it was through the youth that the so-called "drug culture" made contact with the village. Concerned middle-aged and older people reported that children as young as eight and ten were able to procure marijuana and other drugs within the village. There was no reason for village children to contact pipeliners or distributors of drugs from the pipeline community. Village youth who had contact with the pipeline and urban culture had a great impact on village life. While most 1973 village residents had little direct contact with non-Native pipelines, they had a great deal of contact with migrants from Anchorage and the village youth who had gained wider experiences on the pipeline.

#### POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Some return migrants were married people between the ages of thirty and forty-five, whose presence also changed the social character of the village. Before the pipeline the village preserved Ahtna culture by deflecting some of the most obvious forms of contact. For example, non-Natives were discouraged from living within the village boundaries, sharing was encouraged, and traditional values were rewarded in many subtle ways because the elderly monopolized political power. The return of the young deepened the pool of people from which political

leaders could be chosen. The Native Claims Act encouraged the reordering of the community's traditional, political order when it created the village corporation. The skills required to run a modern economic corporation included reading, writing, arithmetic, and public-speaking in the English language. The village elders rarely had such skills.

The village council had been the traditional governing arm of the village. The **officers** and council members were elected by the village members. The council met irregularly to discuss village problems, including topics such as waste disposal, who would be allowed to live in the village, and where they should live. In 1977, the Village Corporation, **Klutika-ah, Inc.**, had an office located in the CRNA building near the Copper Center village hall and it employed two officers (both middle-aged women) on a part-time basis. **Klutika-ah** Corporation has functions distinct from those of the village council. In particular, the village corporation has many of the resources in land, money, and expertise available to it that the regional corporation has. Its aim is to make money by making investments and undertaking business ventures, often in cooperation with the regional corporation. The village corporation also sponsors activities and grants in order to raise the quality of life in the village. Projects that bring money into the village as well as raise the **level** of services are sponsored by **Klutika-ah, Inc.** For example, the local garbage dump has been run by the village corporation. The quality of service has varied, and the project has not been a complete success, although unemployed members of the youth peer group have been employed. In March, 1978, a dog mushing race was sponsored by the corporation. Eleven mushers, four of whom were **Ahtna**, entered the race. People from throughout the region attended but the event did not gain the **statewide** attention desired, probably because it was held on the same weekend

as the start of the famous, long-distance race, the **Iditorod**. Nevertheless, experience was gained, and the event was popular in the village, a factor which is important if the village corporation is to gain its stockholders' confidence. Probably the most successful economic activity sponsored by the village was undertaken jointly with the regional corporation and unknown to many villagers. As earned money filled the village coffers, there was a rising need for management and investment direction. The call from virtually every **Ahtna** village was the same: Make investments near the village, and in the village, that **will** create jobs for local residents. The regional corporation, Ahtna, Inc., hired an economic adviser to aid the Ahtna villages.

In 1977, the leadership of the village corporation was in the hands of young and middle-aged women, in many ways, the group most able to read and write, to attend training sessions and funnel information gained back to the villages and to gain the trust of other villagers. In 1973, young Ahtna women rarely held leadership positions. During the **early** 1970s, however, jobs in **Klutika-ah** fell from one man to the next, usually because of problems of alcoholism, until finally landing on a woman's shoulders in 1975. Since that time Ahtna women have proven to be effective leaders in the Native corporations.

Two factors have made women effective leaders in the community. Traditionally women have been strong organizers, during the fishing season, for example, and they have been **able** to give direct commands without antagonizing others. Secondly, women have been more successful in school. Their **skills** have made them attractive office holders in the new corporations. Thus, the changing face of leadership stems, **in** part, from the job requirements for leaders **in** a modern corporation.

The leadership of the community has been turned upside down. Immediately preceding the pipeline period, men over 40 and the village elders were often given positions of leadership within the Corporations. The **first** Board of Directors of **Ahtna, Inc.**, consisted almost entirely of men. Slowly, the situation changed: today, there are more women on the board than men. The leadership in the village corporation also has seen a changeover from male dominance to female dominance. Villagers, well aware of the trend, joke about the takeover of the Boards by women.

The pipeline appears to have changed leadership patterns as well because the "return migrants" have brought changes to the community political structure. As young and middle-aged men return, many with non-Native parentage and little previous experience in village life, they press for political power. Many of them, unlike their country cousins, have the skills required to undertake corporation business. They run for office, they attend meetings, they are articulate, and they can make their views known. They are not "gray flannel" Indians or "new Indians," stereotyped misconceptions of the popular media; rather, they are craftsmen, tradesmen, laborers, and strongly middle-class. There are indications that these people will wrestle the power back into the hands of middle-aged men especially after the pipeline, when employment in native corporations becomes more attractive.

The loss of power and control has upset older villagers. When the corporations were just being formed these people were often asked **to** speak and were made to feel important in other ways. After the Corporation gained its stride, the **elders** found they had no position in the corporation. When the Ahtna, Inc. Office Building was first constructed, several of the elderly men used to visit

regularly and sit in the reception area. One man said he wanted "to keep an eye on things." Ahtna employees realized that the elderly men intended to make sure people were performing their jobs. The visits soon stopped. Many of the older men now complain about the Settlement Act and the Native corporation. Among the elderly, white collar employment is not considered to be "work." They feel that the young, "who don't know how to handle money," not only benefit (as corporation employees) in the present, but will see future benefits as well. Some elderly are so dissatisfied with the Land Claims, specifically a clause that forbids sale of their shares for twenty years, that they support dissolution of the Ahtna, Corporation. Most feel they will not live to see substantial earnings from the corporation.

Although the strong kinship ties of the Ahtna are being weakened, kin still sometimes plays an important role in politics. For example, when voting for Klutika-ah Board Members, one woman controlled her own votes as well as those votes of her many dependents. She, therefore, had significant political clout. Because she was traditionally oriented, she could single-handedly place people of her own clan, which is not populous in the village, in positions of power. In return, she was the recipient of patronage in the form of moose meat, free rides, and special considerations. The entrance of people into the village without strong clan ties, such as the return migrants, might dilute the importance of kinship, as people begin to vote using criteria other than kinship. In fact, during the pipeline period, a number of young leaders told the researcher they resented the traditional oligarchy of one or two powerful matriline in the village.

## THE VILLAGE CHURCH

During the pipeline years, the attendance at the village church, the Copper Center Chapel, rose significantly. Young return-migrant families and local families, who had not previously gone to church, attended. As attendance grew, more sermons were delivered by non-Native preachers from the mission church in Glennallen rather than Native preachers from Copper Center. The return migrants seemed to be attracted by the missionaries with wider experiences than those voiced by the two lay preachers, who both claim ancestry to important 19th Century shamans. The lay preachers' sermons repeated the same themes weekly: the evils of drink and the joy of being saved, experiences of relevance to village life in the pre-pipeline era, but not of special interest to a hard-working, skilled laborer. Their shaman ancestry was no longer particularly important to many young people.

Many Natives, especially the young, felt ambivalent toward the church. The negative attitude of the fundamentalist ministers toward Indian cultural forms opposed much of the recent growth of Indian cultural pride. Until about 1974, the church discouraged potlatching because it was considered to have aboriginal religious overtones. However, the strongest church partisans and the strongest potlatch supporters overlapped completely. Finally, the mission gave in to pro-potlatch pressures, and the non-Native "missionaries" attended potlatches in 1975-77. Although many of the Natives criticized the church for a stand they perceive to be against Indian culture, they still attended services. As such, the church is one village institution that ties together diverse segments of the village population.



But the church also divides villagers whose attitudes differ toward alcohol use. This issue, more than any other, polarizes different groups within the village. In the village the use of alcohol is viewed generally as a religious issue, and attendance at bars and attendance at church are mutually exclusive activities. Young people, including many of the return migrants, must choose between church or interaction with their peers in bars. Church-goers make **social** contacts at home, at church, or **at** community functions. Drinkers, however, must **rely** on frequent visits to bars for their social interaction. The church supports the separation of those who drink alcohol and those who don't.

## RACE RELATIONS

Through the pipeline period, the social and cultural life of Natives and non-Natives in Copper Center remained segregated. Long-time residents know virtually everyone in the community, regardless **of** race, but inter-racial interactions are superficial and strictly role **defined**, such as those between employer and employee, customer and businessman, and schoolmates.

Social interaction in bars was indicative of race relations **in** general. Different bars were colloquially referred to as "Native bars," "white bars," or "**pipeliner** bars." Most people expressed fears about possible involvement in fights precipitated by heavy drinking. People believed that the lone non-Native in a "Native bar" or vice versa, or a **local** resident in a "**Pipeliner** bar" could ignite pent-up inter-racial tensions. Because of the segregation inter-racial fights were rarely reported, although **intra-racial** was common, especially late at night. Only at the Ahtna Motel did informal inter-racial socializing occur between young people and pipeliners. The **Ahtna Motel**, owned and operated by **Ahtna, Inc.**, was modern and centrally located. It offered live music on the weekends. Because it outclassed all the other bar entertainment in the region, it attracted many

people. While a few other bars were frequented by Natives, non-Natives and pipelines, the patrons usually were segregated--in separate rooms. At the Ahtna Motel, patrons were much more integrated. A key to why this occurred at the Ahtna Motel may be found in Nancy Davis' observation that Natives maintain separateness by moving out or becoming totally surrounded and left in an enclave when pioneering non-Natives come to an area (1976, p. 53). The statement describes the **pre-land** claims Ahtna, who often reinforced racial segregation voluntarily by frequenting "Native Bars," attending the village church, and excluding non-Natives from renting houses in the village. As the Native **people** increasingly viewed their interests in surrounding lands, businesses, and residential areas as proprietary, they increasingly defend their positions, and held onto those positions despite encroachment from other groups. In fact, this was exactly what happened at the Ahtna Motel.

Most other inter-racial socializing occurred in institutionalized contexts. For example, the Copper Center Volunteer Fire Department held **an** Annual fireman's ball each February, which attracted most of the non-Native residents. While only a few of the older Native couples attended (probably because alcohol was served), many young Natives went to the ball. Another voluntary association, the "Homemaker's Club," included housewives of both races, who undertook various projects, almost all of which had to do with bettering Copper Center School.

Sports events were often inter-racial. Friendly small town volleyball games, little league, and the Klutika-ah-sponsored dog-mushing race were popular. **High** school sports were followed avidly by members of both races, and basketball **games**, in particular, were attended by Natives and non-Natives, alike. Both basketball and cheerleading squads were hi-racial. A popular Ahtna "**potlatch**" song and accompanying pantomime dance celebrates the exploits of the **Glennallen** High School Basketball team.

In short, race relations in Copper Center are not significantly different than elsewhere in the United States. The influx of great numbers of non-Alaskans did not integrate the local people. Members of the two main racial groups never identified common problems that would differentiate them from outsiders. If changes wrought in the last few years had been traceable to the pipeline alone, perhaps local residents would have identified their joint interests. But other variables, in particular, the Land Claims Act, were important in determining the quality of race relationships in the last decade. In fact, a growing fictionalization between the predominate races was directly traceable to the increasing political and economic importance of the Native organizations in the community, region and state.

Because the Native corporation became politically and economically strong, the relative positions of the Native and non-Natives in the **eco-political** arena have changed significantly. For example, both non-Natives and Natives among the **pre-pipeline** Copper Center population have few skills. Due to affirmative action, and the political clout of the regional corporation, non-Natives felt that the Native worker had many advantages over the non-Native worker when seeking pipeline employment. The unskilled young non-Natives, locally educated and without prior job experience, had great difficulty obtaining pipeline employment, especially after the number of jobs began to drop in 1976. Young non-Natives, feeling cheated and discriminated against, complained that Native classmates were employed ahead of them. Increasingly, the non-Native population saw itself in direct competition with the Native population for scarce resources such as jobs, land, and natural resources. Had the economic situation been less competitive, the local people, Native and non-Native alike, might have found that their problems stemmed from similar sources--the shared disadvantages of their rural upbringing, their education, and their lack of political repre-

sentation. This did not happen; instead, the recent advantages given to the Native unskilled worker in hiring, as well as other changes brought about by ANCSA, brought racial antipathy to the surface.

The pipeline economy provided the environment in which the implications of ANCSA were magnified and made visible to both races so that by 1978, most local non-Natives resented the land claims. Five years before, Anti-ANCSA sentiment was only rarely vocalized. As local non-Natives found that they could no longer use the lands in the valley as they once did, they began to question the legality, wisdom, and moral basis of the Act.

Because ANCSA drastically changed the economic and political position of non-Natives vis-a-vis Natives, both groups' view of race relations also drastically changed. Non-Natives, who previously felt no threat to their status in the community from Natives, began to feel that the Natives were "taking over" and that race relations were worsening. As the Natives became more prosperous, non-Natives seemed to be building racial barriers to insulate themselves in the community. They had parties at home, rather than at bars, refused to allow daughters to date pipeliners, and objected to Native language and culture programs in the schools. What occurred, in fact, during the pipeline years was almost a reversal of roles by the two groups. While the non-Native residents isolated themselves increasingly, the Natives began breaking out of their enclave: they rented homes outside the village, did comparison shopping in all the regional stores, went to dinner at restaurants, invited non-Natives to potlatches, and took up new interests. Because the Natives' power and prosperity were greatly enhanced by the land settlement act, they felt confident to move into new situations they had previously avoided, and in turn began to see race relations as having greatly improved.

## Summary

Kinship persisted to be one of the main bases for association with the village. Those people who returned to the village located within the village according to existing kin ties to village residents. For example, where a trailer was located was contingent on the kin ties the owners of that trailer had to the village; returning youths moved into their mothers' homes. Kinship was also an important factor in corporation elections. One woman **could** influence an election outcome by the sheer number of her kin. The village, in many ways, continued to be a kin-based familial community.

Most of the changes within the village society seem traceable to the influx of young and middle-aged people into the village. Their return changed many characteristics of the community. The skilled, middle-aged laborers who brought their children established homes both in and outside of the village boundaries. They participated in the new village corporation, and worked long hard hours on the pipeline or in corporation jobs.

The ranks of the return migrants also included youths, many of whom remained unemployed through most of the pipeline period. While their presence was welcomed by parents as a sign of the slackening out-migration, unemployed youth drained the community in some ways. It was through these young people that many of the negative impacts on the community, such as drugs, became associated with the village for the first time.

Return migrants, flocking back to the region almost en masse, became aggressive agents of impact and instruments of change. And, in many ways, they became stronger instruments of change than the "outsiders" cloistered in the camps.

Their Anchorage education and other urban experiences forged new attitudes toward drugs, Native culture and money in the urban Ahtna. In Copper Center, the country cousins learned from their city-wise counterparts as they returned "home" to the village. In 1973 the researcher counted a total of 21 people, living away from Copper Center, whose parents were still living in the village. This count does not include people associated with Copper Center whose parents no longer live in the village. Ten, or almost half of the 21 people, were present in March of 1978, and four others returned temporarily for part of the pipeline period, for a total of 14 return migrants. Seven of the return migrants found employment with the pipeline, 3 found employment with the pipeline but later took jobs with one of the Native corporations, and 2 immediately found employment with one of the Native corporations. The availability of employment was a central variable in encouraging the return of the village's emigrants.

The pipeline is the most recent part of the larger contact experiences of many emigrants. The local people not employed on the pipeline had very little direct contact with pipelines from the camps. The camps and the long hours had been designed so that interaction would be discouraged between locals and pipeliners. Only in schools, stores, and in the workplace, did Native-pipeliner interaction occur. These experiences should not be underestimated as formative in teaching some of the local population non-Native culture, but they probably were not as important as the interaction between the working, young, return migrant and the village Natives. The mixing of the different values, beliefs, and aspirations of these groups was central in determining the course change would take in the village.

Village residents did not agree in their perceptions of recent social changes because the money flowing into the village did much to rearrange the relative

status positions and traditional roles within the community. Older people, more committed to continuing traditional values, customs, and organizational structures which elevated their status in the village, found that their comparatively high standard of living in 1973 was cut by rising living costs during the five years of the "pipeline economy." Mrs. Smelter writes about this point:

A population of the Valley which is almost totally left out of the marginal prosperity brought about by the pipeline construction is the elderly, and particularly the Native elderly. It has become increasingly frustrating for the elderly, who are mostly low income, to see working-age people around them buying new cars and mobile homes. Most elderly Natives live in substandard housing and their main source of transportation is by foot. Also, with younger persons seeking pipeline construction jobs not many are left to help the senior citizens pay bills, shop, repair households, and get to recreational activities. (Smelter, 1975, P. 10)

In 1973, the elderly were important members of the community, who redistributed their marginal but secure income by hiring the unemployed, by food sharing, and by gifting. They were not dependent on people for rides and other services because they paid their own way, which gave them self esteem. During the pipeline, they saw everyone's standard of living rising around them, while their own appeared to be shrinking, until finally they were the ones in need of help.

On the other hand, some villagers have embraced the course of change during the pipeline, particularly the young middle-aged worker who has been able to improve his economic and political position in the community. Their entire families, including the children perceive their recent experiences positively. Proud of the visible changes in their lifestyle, children list new material possessions for visitors. Of course, many of the people who are most closely tied to pipe-

line employment and therefore most clearly benefitted from it, are people who have already shown their commitment to a more acculturated lifestyle by previously moving away from the village. Some have spent ten or fifteen years in Anchorage and are thus examples of the large contingent of **Ahtna** who have declared a commitment to a lifestyle marked by an increased dependence on wage labor and modern conveniences. Those who refused to leave during the fifties and sixties when the employment picture was most bleak, were those people most committed to the values of the traditional Native village and rural living conditions. The return migrants show that a permanent shift in orientation of lifestyle had already occurred among a large proportion of the Native people. Only a few non-migrants have been drawn into an apparent attitudinal shift toward participation in the Western economy.

Unfortunately, the attitudinal shifts toward a dependence on wage labor and accompanying amenities, will be the source of some bitterness in the future if the opportunity level of the pipeline period is not sustained, and people feel they are **unable** to support their newly defined needs. In the spring of 1978, the unemployed displayed frustrations, which the psychologist for CRNA (Dr. Revsten), thought were central in family problems among **ex-pipeline** Natives. In November, 1978, the Native corporation lost the contract to maintain the pipeline right-of-way during the next two decades, and most Copper Center Natives employed on the pipeline lost their jobs. It is **highly** likely that the Natives will **be** forced again to **follow** the strategy of **labor** migration. It remains uncertain what will be the nature of the village after they leave and what **long-term** changes the pipeline will have brought.



The return migrant was highly visible during the pipeline period. But other segments of the Native population, such as members of the youth peer group, some middle-aged workers without urban experiences, and the elderly, continued to redistribute their funds (some earned on the pipeline) in ways quite distinct from that of non-Natives. By sharing (sometimes seen as wasting) earnings in a variety of ways including **potlatching, commensality**, buying services, gifting, and lending, many continued to invest in interpersonal relationships in a traditional manner. These people continue **to** support a more traditional perception of village life. Many of them have rarely or never held a well-paying job, and for them, the wages of the pipeline were seen as a temporary phenomenon. Village life continues to offer the inexperienced workers, the old, and the disabled a security that the new economic order following ANCSA and the pipeline could not yet approach.

## VI. COMMUNITY STRESS DURING THE PIPELINE PERIOD

### Introduction

This chapter addresses the topic of negative impacts on the village of Copper Center during the pipeline period, 1973-1977. It would be useful to be able to identify quantitative indicators of social stress. But many facts, including the absence of detailed quantitative data and the small population size, discourage the researcher from primarily depending on the analysis of quantitative data. An understanding of structural features of village society and how it works will be more useful, in finally identifying social stress.

In a village the size of Copper Center, a single alcoholic can become a major problem. The use of drugs by just one person can soon spread into an epidemic when passed on to one or two other people. A single incident of child abuse can drag the entire village into a dispute lasting a year. Social problems are often more visible in the village setting than they might be elsewhere. In the end, gross quantitative measures of social stress must be placed in perspective in the context of village society. For example, it could be more significant in the long run if the pattern of drinking or drug use suddenly changed or spread to a group never before identified as abusers, than if the number of problem users were to rise slightly in a segment of the population always prone to abuse.

Because the changes wrought by pipeline construction and related events have affected various population segments in the village differently, the perceptions of stress are not uniform among villagers. For example, among some young people, the pipeline has been viewed as a boon, and although the

alcoholism rate climbed during the post-pipeline bust, there continued to be people who perceived pipeline events positively. Others, to whom the pipeline offered nothing, identify numerous problems which they feel have accompanied pipeline development.

In the past, social researchers have been criticized by American minorities for dwelling on the social problems of minority communities, rather than describing the many social features which are adaptive responses or positive survival mechanisms of their group in a disadvantageous economic and social position within the greater American society. Keeping this often valid criticism in mind, the researcher in this report has previously avoided some of the problem areas that the villagers must cope with daily, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency. Nevertheless, such topics, which villagers themselves often discuss, cannot be ignored, especially if there is reason to believe that recent events have aggravated village problems. Thus, the following sections explore some symptoms of social stress during the pipeline period.

## ALCOHOLISM

Alcoholism is identified by village residents as their primary problem. In 1973, most adult residents over age thirty, with a few notable exceptions, claimed to have had a past problem with alcohol abuse. For the elderly, involvement with the church had literally "saved" them from the bottle. The older people believed that a single drink would pull a person into an alcoholic morass, in which one remains inebriated until he finally entered a hospital to "dry-out."<sup>1</sup> Many middle-aged residents continued to abuse alcohol. Villagers under thirty sporadically abused alcohol, but rarely displayed disabling drinking habits.

TYPE OF DRINKING	1973					1975-1977							
	19-30 YRS FE- MALE MALE	30-55 YRS FE- MALE MALE	+55 YRS FE- MALE MALE		TOTAL	19-30 YRS FE- MALE MALE	30-55 YRS FE- MALE MALE	+55 YRS FE- MALE MALE		TOTAL			
MODERATE OR NON-DRI NKER WITHOUT PAST PROBLEMS	0	1	2	1	1	7	0	4	4	7	3	2	20
WEEKEND DRI NKER-TO INTOXICATION	6	2	2	0	1	12	8	3	6	5	0	0	22
REFORMED ALCOHOLIC- NEVER DRINKS	0	0	3	6	8	19	0	0	3	2	6	6	17
SPREE OR "BINGE" DUR- ING TIME PER IOD	0	0	3	1	0	7	0	0	7	7	0	0	14
CONTUALLY I NEBRI ATED	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
UNKNOWN	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	3	2	0	0	5
				TOTAL		50					TOTAL		82

TABLE 19: Characteristics of Drinking Behavior among Copper Center Village Residents in 1973 and During Pipeline  
(from researcher's data)

In 1973, alcoholics characteristically visited village homes, borrowed money, badgered people for rides to the liquor store, and encouraged others to become drinking companions. It is difficult for residents of a large city to fully appreciate the impact a single alcoholic has on a small kin-based village. In 1973, nineteen out of forty-seven adult residents professed to be reformed alcoholics, (see P. 185 ) by which they meant that after one drink, they were unable to control their alcohol intake. Ten out of forty-seven rarely or never drank alcohol, and had never had alcohol-related problems. Five out of thirteen men between **30** and 55 years old, either went on **long-term** binges or were continually inebriated during 1972-73, and only two men in this age group confined their drinking to weekends. Alcohol use among this age group indicated social stress among the very group of people who should have formed a core of experienced middle-aged workers in the village. Half of the middle-aged villagers who have chosen not to emigrate had drinking problems in 1973, and during the pipeline period they could not take advantage of employment opportunities because of their continuing problems with alcohol abuse. At the initial disruption of the pipeline in 1974 and into 1975, several of the periodic drinkers who had not been employed on the pipeline experienced long binges (see Glossary) culminating in hospitalization. **In** 1976, a period of noticeable decrease in drinking began and lasted until late 1977 or early **1978**, when excessive drinking became a problem for not only the middle-aged core group of alcohol abusers, but also some younger people.

In 1973, only six men in the 17-30 age group drank sporadically, and it was unlikely that they would be identified as alcoholics. Return migrants, who drank in Anchorage before returning to Copper Center displayed drinking behavior similar to the 1973 group of villagers under 30. **In** Anchorage, certain

bars served as meeting places for the young Ahtna, who converged on these places on weekends or during the evenings to meet Native friends. Drinking took place in a social context, in which the society of one's friends was sometimes more important than the availability of alcohol. The 1973 village youth living at home also went to bars. After the bars closed, young people returned home where they stopped drinking. Most of the people who did not drink and fell into the 30-55 age group, it was found, lived in their parents' (reformed alcoholics) homes or had wives who discouraged drinking. On the other hand, many of the middle-aged men in the village lived alone in small homes, where drinking in solitude or with friends was common. The ownership of a house by a single man in middle age invited "partying."

The Glennallen magistrate, Sheldon Sprecker, says that the coming of the pipeline has not aggravated the alcoholism problem among Natives. In 1975, Mrs. Smelter cites Sprecker: "Sheldon Sprecker conjectured that there has been about an 80% decrease in alcohol-related offenses committed by Natives in the past year. He feels that this may be attributed to pipeline employment or overall increased employment opportunities in the Valley." (Smelter, 1975, P. 10.) This view apparently conflicts with that of some of the villagers. According to Mrs. Smelter, many people in the villages feel that drinking has increased since pipeline construction because there is more money to buy liquor. (Smelter, 1975, P. 10) There was a rise in visible alcohol abuse at the beginning of pipeline construction, traceable not only to the habitual 1973 alcoholics but also to the increase in the population of young and middle-aged people, the group most likely to drink, but least likely to be identified as alcoholic.

The researcher's data indicates (see P. 185) that the village as a whole saw a definite increase in the volume of alcohol consumed during the construction period, but the patterns of drinking changed little. Most of the long drinking bouts occurred in winter months during periods of high unemployment. One return migrant woman, whose middle-aged husband went on a binge in 1977, pointed to unemployment as an important factor encouraging alcohol abuse. She told of her husband's 1977 problems, and then said, "I don't know what we'll do if Ahtna (Inc.) loses the maintenance contract and (my husband) loses his job again. If he starts drinking again, we **could** lose everything."

The return of middle-aged **people** who drank excessively, or even moderately, meant more drinking occurred in the village and in local bars during the pipeline period. Since reformed alcoholics, who are usually elderly, have a low tolerance for any alcohol use, they expressed great concern about the presence of alcohol, even though its use, apparently, did not bring more Natives (or a higher percentage of Natives) into Magistrate Sprecker's courtroom. (Other factors, such as trooper policy could affect the arrest rate.) On the other hand, young people, who did not feel their own and friends' drinking to be a problem, did not recognize the rising level of alcohol consumption as a negative impact of the pipeline until the post-pipeline period, when some unemployed people abused alcohol for the first time in their lives. Alcoholics could not maintain pipeline jobs. Drinking that impaired one's ability to perform on the job was intolerable, and workers confined drinking to weekends and returned to work on Monday mornings. Long binges were confined to those 1973 residents who had always followed the binge-drinking pattern, or to return migrants who went on binges during winter lay-offs but returned to work (sober) in the spring. While the total volume of alcohol consumption might have risen,

the percentage of people incapacitated by alcoholism remained unchanged during the study period. During both 1972-73 and through the pipeline period, about a quarter of those people surveyed were partially or totally incapacitated by alcohol abuse. The situation was aggravated by unemployment during winter months. If, in the future, some unemployed return migrants remain in the village and become confirmed, year-round alcohol abusers, while return migrants not prone to alcohol abuse emigrate, the result could be a residue of new alcoholics (not resident in 1973) living in the village.

#### DRUG ABUSE

The biggest drug abuse problem was the misuse of prescription drugs dispensed in 1973 at Faith Hospital. The elderly especially saved drugs, took improper dosages, or shared personal drugs with others. Codeine cough syrup, among other drugs, was sometimes used to induce feelings of well-being. At least one person in good health had a household accident after taking codeine and felt the wooziness that precipitated the accident resulted from taking the drug. There were no statistics available that would measure this type of drug abuse, and therefore it is difficult to determine changes during the pipeline period. A possible relationship could exist between changing patterns of prescription drug misuse and changing patterns of hospital use caused by crowded facilities during the pipeline period. Unfortunately, the researcher has no information on this. Absence of other forms of drug abuse in 1973 reflected the absence of illicit drugs in the region. (Smelter, P. 17, 1975.) It was rumored that a few Ahtna youth had drug experiences in Anchorage, but the local youth seemed naive (compared to urban youth outside Alaska) about the characteristics and use of various drugs.



Patterns of drug-use changed significantly during the pipeline period, and by 1977, the principle drug problem was the introduction of cocaine, marijuana, and other illegal drugs to the village. Since such drugs had been virtually absent in 1973, the sudden availability was a visible and disturbing change which most people traced directly to the pipeline.

The rise in drug use in the entire region, including villages, was spectacular. For the first time drugs, including amphetamines, heroin, and cocaine, could be obtained within the valley. In the summer of 1975, R. Port of the **Glennallen troopers** said that of ten cases involving hard drugs, "All are pipeline workers, both living in and out of the camps." (Smelter, P. 17-18, 1975). Rumor holds that the use of illegal drugs, in particular cocaine, rose dramatically among both Native and non-Native young people in the area. The use of marijuana also rose, but this drug was tacitly legalized by the state in 1976, and this could have encouraged growth in its use.

Drugs were obtained both in Anchorage and within the region. Young people, usually from "outside" and working on the pipeline, actively pushed drugs in local bars or at work. The introduction of drugs into the village, especially to younger people was mediated by the younger return migrants or members of the youth peer group. Nevertheless, cost prohibited extensive drug use. The researcher believes on the basis of hearsay, that young non-Natives were more likely to buy illegal drugs than Natives, but has no data to support this statement.

## VIOLENT CRIME

In 1973, a few incidents of violence, including a rape and an unrelated shooting, connected with drinking, occurred in village homes. Barroom brawls, which the researcher witnessed on several occasions, were common and exclusively involved Natives. The only brawl to which the police were called involved inter-racial fighting, initiated by a seasonal BLM employee. The Natives were more likely to be involved in alcohol-related accidents such as auto collisions and home fires. Alcohol use was closely related to the rate of violent deaths in the Copper River Valley.

The rate of violent crime in the region increased during the pipeline period, but the rise may be attributed to the increase in the non-Native population. Mrs. Smelter writes of the sudden occurrence of a previously undocumented type of violence--stabblings:

In the month of August through October this year there have been four stabbings. All involved pipeline workers (both as assaultants and victims) and all involved alcohol. This has been a 400 percent increase. so to say, since there were no violent crimes last year. (Smelter, 1975, P. 17)

Glennallen Magistrate, Sheldon Sprecker, noted the introduction of rape as well, and said that between 1973 and 1975, the reported rape cases increased from 0 to 4. The rapists were not from the region and included three pipelines and one military man. In at least one case, the victim was an Ahtna Native. Nevertheless, the troopers expected a greater rise in violent crime than actually occurred and they felt that the seclusion of pipelines in the camps and the vigorous presence of many law enforcement officials stymied

violence. (Sprecker, 1978) Statistics on violent crime affecting Natives or occurring in **villages** can be misleading. Natives rarely called in the troopers if they viewed the case as a family, **village**, or domestic matter, and Natives rarely pressed charges against one another. In a Copper Center case in which a man accidentally shot his friend, the victim refused to press charges. The state prosecuted and the **assaultant** was convicted of handling firearms **while** under the influence of alcohol. Other cases, including a rape, were quietly discussed within the village, and the best course of action was informally decided upon. An alleged rapist was informally ostracized for his continual antisocial behavior over many years' time. Generally ignored by the troopers, alcohol abusers or mental cases were eventually committed by family members after villagers voiced concern and applied pressure to the appropriate kin. In cases witnessed by the researcher, family members did not take action until they felt village opinion supported them. Because the Natives manage village or family matters themselves and do not automatically call outside authorities, the growth in trooper force was sometimes viewed negatively by Natives. For example, prosecution of OMVI (operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated) violations was viewed as harassment by some. The numbers of arrests for drinking while driving increased dramatically over the pipeline period. This reflects the influx in population as well as increased trooper activity during the period, Mrs. Smelter writes:

The numbers of arrests for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated has increased threefold in the last year as Table 8 indicates. Once again, the dramatic increase does not necessarily mean that there are more intoxicated drivers on our roads. These statistics may more reflect the increase in Trooper Activity. The Troopers state there are about 50-50 local and pipeline workers. According to Sgt. **Cockrell**, one of the Troopers' top priorities in the area is to get the drunk driver off the roads. (Smelcer 1975 P. 10)

In 1974 there were 26 OMVI offenses prosecuted in Magistrate Sprecker's court. Two years later in 1976, the figures had jumped to 125 OMVI offenses prosecuted. Magistrate Sprecker goes on to say that virtually all of the fatal accidents were alcohol-related. The Tribal Health Report (1977, P.19) also notes the correlation between alcoholism and death by violent causes such as accidents, suicides, homicides, and alcoholism itself. The rise in such violent crimes associated with alcohol use rose significantly during the pipeline period. But the rise in violent crimes applies more specifically to pipeliners and not to the local community.

#### MENTAL HEALTH

The Tribal Health Report (CRNA, 1977) identifies mental health as the second leading cause of hospitalization and the number two health problem in the region. The incidence of mental disorders is so high because alcoholism is included in this category. In 1973, the most visible mental health problem in the village was alcoholism. At that time, only two cases of mental illness, requiring hospitalization and not associated with alcoholism, were identified by villagers. One case was drug-related and another involved hostile behavior which villagers found inexplicable. Some villagers believed the person was also mentally retarded. Another person in the village was also considered mentally retarded, but not mentally ill.

Two women with non-conforming behavior were believed to be "witches." Although villagers sometimes discussed these women, and even teased the researcher or others about visiting them, they were not ostracized from village activities. Various stories circulated about the "witches." For example, one was said to

store in her attic the pelts of flying squirrels, a traditionally dangerous species. Another was believed to invoke curses. The villagers made a distinction between people who were "crazy" and "witches."

Hypochondria was also a prevalent symptom of mental ill health in 1973, especially among reformed alcoholic women, who discussed their own health constantly and visited the hospital almost weekly. During the pipeline period, health topics were replaced by other topics such as Ahtna, Inc., pipeline construction, and the many return migrants. At the same time, outpatient visits at Faith Hospital decreased. Either villagers avoided overcrowded hospital facilities, or illness decreased, perhaps both.

On a region-wide basis, statistics compiled by BIA show that while there was a drop in **total** outpatient visits for most categories of disease, the category of mental disease, which includes alcoholism, stayed exactly the same at Faith Hospital, despite the rise in population, although it fell by more than 50 percent between 1974 and 1975 at Indian Health Service facilities (presumably ANS in Anchorage). Thus while drinking remained a problem in rural areas, return migrants, who might have had alcohol-related problems in Anchorage probably did not seek help for **mental** illness or alcohol abuse at regional facilities, while employed on the pipeline.

The full impact of the pipeline period on the mental health of the community is not yet clear. The most difficult period for many of the people will be during the unsettling economic bust. The self-esteem of many villagers was raised during the pipeline period, as a result of the Land Claims Settlement Act. The new expectations that people have defined for themselves or their relatives

might turn into impossible dreams in the post-pipeline economic environment. They might feel that their new self-esteem was falsely conceived, The resulting stress could cause a rise in the rate of alcoholism, hypochondria, suicide, drug abuse, and other symptoms of mental ill-health. A CRNA-sponsored study of mental health in the valley, due out in January 1979, should shed light on current mental health issues in the Ahtna villages.

#### ILLNESS AND DEATH RATE

During the years 1970 through 1974, there were very few reported Ahtna deaths in the regions, but during the next few years there was an inexplicable increase in the number of accidental deaths and deaths from organic disease. The villagers, the researcher, and the doctor at Faith Hospital noticed a steady rise in the number of deaths due to organic disease among the Natives between 1974-1978. Between 1970 and 1974, only one death was reported--a Copper Center villager who died in a home accident. But between 1975 and 1978, seven deaths occurred: three accidental, three from organic disease, and one from old age. One young man died of carbon monoxide poisoning; he was found in his car with the motor idling. Two other men were killed in separate auto accidents. Two deaths were caused by cancer; one man was in his fifties, the other in his sixties. An infant died of crib death and a man over 90 died of natural causes. Villagers frequently discussed the increasing number of deaths, both in the village and in the region, but they did not seem to relate the deaths to pipeline developments. In fact, neither of the auto fatalities involved people working on the pipeline.

Three suicides involving non-Copper Center Ahtna young people occurred between the summer of 1977 and the spring of 1978. The sudden rash of suicides, occurring

among **Ahtna** youth, also has been reported in other **Athabaskan** regions. The elderly sometimes suggested that young men involved in fatal one-car automobile accidents actually committed suicide, although official reasons of death usually cited reckless driving **while** intoxicated.

On the other hand, the incidence of non-chronic disease and non-fatal accidents fell, a fact reflected in the total number of outpatient visits in Faith Hospital between 1974 and 1975. Such visits dropped 52% from 502 visits in 1974 to 242 visits in 1975. Presuming that this change is not due to reporting problems, it appears that a significant drop in the number of visits is found between the years 1974 and **1975**.

#### SPOUSE ABUSE

Spouse abuse, associated with alcohol abuse, was rarely reported, and 1973 information given the researcher was mainly rumor. Yet in the fall of 1978, increased family violence, associated with **the** rise in alcohol abuse, was reported by **CRNA** employees working in social welfare programs.

Anthropologists have noted that open conflict was avoided within the traditional family-based **Athabaskan** villages and noted also that any loss of control was usually associated with alcohol abuse. In the 1973 village, disagreement was registered privately in non-threatening situations, such as in the secure warmth and dark of the sweatbath, or in a quiet one-on-one discussion. Other modes of registering disagreement included silence (lack of the affirmative "**yes**" in conversation) and **g**iving non-threatening excuses for not performing a requested task (saying "I'm **t**ired" rather than "I don't want to do it with you.")

People's behavior, including the various customs which traditionally have diffused overt hostility in interpersonal relationships, changed as a result of intoxication. People were not held responsible for their actions while drinking, and were quickly reinstated into village society when not drinking. People were more wary of non-drinkers who displayed public outbursts of temper (usually women) than part-time drinkers who became hostile only when drunk. If the drinking environment continues to provide a "safe" place for villagers to show anger, discouragement, or frustration, it could prove to be the most important measure of social stress, especially for traditional males, in the village.

#### PROBLEMS RELATING TO JUVENILES

##### Child Abuse and Neglect

In 1973, the rare and generally unreported cases of child abuse or neglect were virtually always associated with parental alcohol abuse. In fact, every case of child abuse reported to or witnessed by the researcher between 1973 and 1978, was initiated by an intoxicated parent. Parents who consistently abused children were criticized by kin and non-kin alike. Nevertheless, villagers strongly defended the parents' right to keep the children against threats of removal to foster homes by the Cordova-based social worker. The abusers' relatives (in one case a wife's sister, in another a wife's parents) sometimes intervened to shelter the child temporarily from the social worker as well as the parents.

Reports from reliable sources indicate that child abuse rose sharply during 1977-1978, after fathers were laid off. As unemployed fathers remained home to care for children, more employable mothers worked. Drinking fathers took



out their frustrations on the children. The reports of a sudden rise in the rate of child abuse from Ahna themselves, as well as Dr. Pinneo of Faith Hospital, seems to be a significant result of unemployment and post-pipeline alcohol abuse. More time is needed to determine if this trend toward higher rates of child abuse is a temporary or a permanent legacy of the post-pipeline period.

In 1973, there were two juvenile groups in the village which were considered delinquent by some villagers. The high-school drop-outs and the youth peer group were accused of joy-riding, a small amount of vandalism, and illegal drinking. In general, these episodes took place outside of the village. Juvenile delinquency sometimes occurred among 12 to 14-year-old boys, especially when their parents were drinking. Delinquency was manifested in running away, vandalism, and truancy. One boy, whose parents often hosted drinking parties, ran away from home frequently. In warm weather, he slept in abandoned cars and cabins. Juvenile delinquency in younger boys is usually associated with alcoholic parents. Two boys who had been delinquent in 1973 were removed from their homes and sent to an institution in 1976. Villagers felt this was an unusual practice, and said it had not occurred since before the fifties when children were sent to 51A boarding schools. Both boys' problems started several years before pipeline construction began and only came to a head during the pipeline period. The stationing of a CRNA-sponsored social worker in the valley meant that the boys' problems were noticed and the boys finally were removed from the community. At both the elementary and high schools, teachers said they felt behavior problems among Native students had increased. They cited different reasons. One teacher pointed out that some children of return migrants seemed disoriented, hostile, and more experienced than village

children. A non-Native teacher at the high school blamed the behavioral problems on politicization of the young stemming from ANCSA, an opinion which reflects the general non-Native attitudes about changes in Native demeanor since ANCSA. "Latch-key" (see Glossary) children of pipeline employees were sometimes left unsupervised in Alaska's cities. Marsha Irwin Bennett (Bennett, 1977) predicts that a rise in juvenile delinquency might follow the pipeline period when the latch-key children grow older. The village situation differed from the urban situation.

Totally unsupervised children in Copper Center were rare, although children were left with older siblings and teen-age cousins. In fact, the availability of village baby-sitters in whom mothers placed their confidence, was responsible in part for the ultimate demise of the CRNA-sponsored child care center in Tazlina Village. Women felt the center was expensive, they lost confidence in the care being given, and a few women mentioned that there was too much non-Native involvement and supervision. Mothers preferred to leave their children in village homes and pay relatives or friends. When not working on the pipeline herself, one middle-aged woman cared for three to eight village children, including some who came to her house after the nearby grade school let out. Because villagers were closely bonded by kinship ties, children were rarely left alone. Informal social controls pressured mothers or other relatives to care for the children. Child care was one way in which pipeline earnings were redistributed throughout the village. Teen-age girls sometimes quit high school to baby-sit on a daily basis.

Delinquency in young boys was correlated with alcoholic parents. For delinquency with older children, however, this was not true. Older children seemed to be

responding to peer group pressures rather than abusive treatment. Extreme parental alcoholism forced a few children to wander between relatives' homes. Children of binge drinkers left their parents' homes during the binge periods to live with grandparents or other relatives. Since villagers avoided interfering in family matters, a child was left in his parents' home even after the situation had been identified as drastic. In one case, the traditional (elderly) Ahtna believed a 10-year-old child should stay and care for his intoxicated parents. In another case a young girl was chastised for abandoning her continually drunk mother. One child was praised for playing hooky when he stayed home to care for drunk parents. This situation forced at least one child in his early teens to run away, steal food, play hooky, and vandalize a cabin. Village residents tried to solve problems of delinquency themselves by making deals with the child to fix damaged property or replace stolen articles, instead of bringing the child to the attention of the troopers.

Children, like their parents, have had their expectations raised during the pipeline years when their parents were constantly employed. After the post-pipeline lay-offs, some children might have felt shame and confusion when their standard of living suddenly reverted to pre-pipeline levels. They might have felt caught in the vise between rising expectations and unfulfilled dreams. Thus, if juvenile delinquency should suddenly rise in the late seventies, it will not necessarily be due to unsupervised hours while parents were employed on the pipeline. Other post-pipeline factors such as alcoholism and unfulfilled expectations, poor self images, or frustration, could cause juvenile delinquency.

## FINANCIAL FAILURE

In 1973, only small items were bought on credit. Many villagers bought appliances from The Sears Catalogue because Sears allowed time payments. The local grocery store also allowed credit on accounts which the 1973 store owners had inherited from the previous owners. Running tabs were kept and paid at the end of each month using wages, pensions, or welfare checks. Since it was a mark of status to lend money and appear generous, borrowing from relatives was common, but usually involved people in particular kinship configurations.

In 1973, villagers rarely borrowed from banks, probably because the lending policies of banks would not allow unemployed people to qualify. Employed Natives could find financing for mobile homes and automobiles. People who wanted to improve their housing usually turned to mobile homes which were easier to finance because they were relatively inexpensive and easy to install in the isolated region. Lending and borrowing increased during the pipeline period. Between 1974-1977, there were two cases in which Native families, supported by high pipeline earnings, became over-extended following lay-offs, or drinking binges. They were unable to meet mortgages or car payments. During the pipeline there were few such cases. During the researcher's 1978 visits, rumors of financial failures among pipeline workers were a popular topic of discussion. A 27-year-old man, who worked for the Native corporation and refused to work on pipeline construction said that he was glad he had decided to avoid pipeline employment because "the temptation to buy would have been too great," and he would have over-extended his finances. The Alaska-U.S.A. Credit Union, associated with the Native corporation, has found it difficult to collect loan payments. According to one Ahtna, Inc. official, many of the failed loans were personal cash loans obtained on a walk-in basis.

## NON-VIOLENT AND FINANCIAL CRIMES

It was rare for a 1973 village resident to report a petty crime, especially if he believed the crime was performed by a fellow villager. The most frequently mentioned petty crime, stealing from fish wheels, was blamed on Anchorage non-Natives. Native people were rarely involved in petty thievery as victims or as perpetrators. Stealing has been viewed traditionally as an extremely serious crime among Native people, who point out that before Western contact, caches were never locked and never broken into. Magistrate Sprecker generalizes that "Natives don't steal" and that he can think of only a single case of theft during the pipeline period. In that case, young Native men (not from Copper Center) broke into a liquor store. The researcher knows of three other cases, two involving a Copper Center man who may not have been indicted. This man also was a heavy drinker and had social problems throughout his life. All of these cases happened outside of the village.

On the other hand, buying and giving liquor to underage juveniles was a crime commonly done by people who were drinking, and about four or five cases a year involving Natives were brought to the court's attention (Sprecker, 1978) during pipeline construction.

Petty larceny, in the form of passing bad checks or failure to pay bills, skyrocketed during the pipeline years. The victims were local businessmen, utilities and services. The perpetrators were out-of-state pipeliners who had no intention of remaining in the valley or the state. This type of crime has had little direct effect on the village or the Native population, although local consumers will have to pay for the losses in the end. According to Sheldon

Sprecker, the hospital was left with \$40,000 in bad debts. That money could have supported more staff and equipment. The grocery stores reported similar problems. The electric utility had 220 civil cases in 1977. The problem arose because many of the pipeline people had no permanent commitment to the area. Those with permanent commitments will have to pay their debts.

Many cases of grand larceny--unheard of in the village before the pipeline--were reported during the pipeline period. The main target was Alyeska, itself, although what actually happened is unclear. Dick Armstrong (1978) of the Glennallen Camp reported that 62 cases of theft were prosecuted during the period; Armstrong said that Alaska people were involved in thievery because they had someplace to take the stolen items. He also said that there was more theft on the southern half of the line because of easier access. On the other hand, Magistrate Sprecker says there were four grand larceny cases of more than \$30,000 and none involved locals. Magistrate Sprecker says that \$300,000 worth of goods were recovered by Glennallen troopers. Natives were not involved. The unions blocked any attempt by Alyeska to fire employees who had stolen equipment, and also blocked security checks inside the camps. Thus the troopers had to apprehend thieves outside of the camps.

### Summary

In summary, it is clear that most of the social problems in Copper Center are directly associated with the excessive use of alcohol. From the viewpoint of the Ahtna, this is so. From the data, virtually all problems can be traced back to alcohol abuse: it is connected with family disturbances; ill health, both mental and physical; and violent and petty crimes. Those people who have not

emigrated to urban areas by the age of 30 are often caught up in the excessive use of alcohol. In 1973, almost half of the population between the ages of 30 and 55 were disabled or partially debilitated by the excessive use of alcohol. It has been the major social problem in the village, and abuse threatens to increase in the post-pipeline period of unemployment. Some social factors such as the need to control hostility in a small kin-based society, might make alcohol use an attractive outlet for frustrated people, particularly those traditional Natives who value village life. During the pipeline period as well as in the future, changes in the patterns of alcohol-related behavior indicate psychological and social stress felt by villagers.

VII. VARIABLES IMPORTANT IN PREDICTING THE NATURE OF PIPELINE  
IMPACT ON COPPER CENTER SOCIETY

Key Indicators of Change in Copper Center

In order to relate the pipeline experience of Copper Center with projects proposed for other parts of Alaska, generalization is called for. The variables discussed in this report fall into several categories, including income and income distribution; health and safety characteristics, educational and cultural characteristics, political characteristics, amenities, community cohesion and values. In the following sections, an attempt is made to indicate the usefulness of each category of variables in explaining impact on Copper Center, and predicting impact in other Alaskan villages in the future.

INCOME AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION

The manner in which money is funneled into the community and how that money is later distributed has been shown in this report to determine the shape of village society. Thus in future impact assessments it could prove useful to analyze existing incomes and income distribution, forecast the type of employment that will be made available, and determine in what ways and by what segment of the population the new income will be earned and redistributed.

In the case of the 1973 residents of Copper Center, the ability to take advantage of economic employment during the pipeline period was generally limited to those skilled and unskilled workers with prior experience in similar work situations--in other words, those people who were employed



before the pipeline. The unemployed--the old, the young unskilled, and the people with health problems (in particular alcoholism)--who made up a large proportion of the village population before the pipeline period, found it difficult to obtain and maintain jobs on the pipeline. Young women, already skilled in clerical and maid work, could take advantage of pipeline opportunities as well as work in the Native corporations. Many of the Natives with skills and experience were usually Copper Center residents who had left the village for jobs in the cities, and returned when pipeline employment became available.

The structure of income in the village before the pipeline placed the elderly as a group in an advantageous position. Their stable pensions, which in the poor economy of the village placed the elderly in the highest income bracket, were funneled to the rest of the population through redistributive acts. During the pipeline, however, their economic position diminished as did much of the social status they had held traditionally, because less traditional young workers who earned large salaries on the pipeline took over and changed the political and social roles once held by the elders. Changes in the distribution of income in the community left those without access to pipeline employment feeling deprived, even though their real incomes had not changed.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARACTERISTICS

During the seventies there was a significant and inexplicable rise in the number of deaths due to organic disease, while at the same time a decrease in the number of Native outpatients seeking care at Faith Hospital in Glennallen. The elderly, in particular, sought less health treatment perhaps

in part, due to the overcrowded conditions found at the small hospital; they often traded medicines in order to avoid a trip to the hospital clinic. Prior to the pipeline, some feared that accidental injury would significantly increase but the Natives did not report an increase in injury or violence, until immediately after the pipeline was completed and internal community and family problems arising from unemployment allegedly caused some alcohol-related violence.

Until the post-pipeline period, the alcoholism rate remained stable. The ranks of the returning migrants held few, if any, chronic alcoholics, and it was exceedingly rare for alcoholics in the 1973 village population to maintain jobs for any significant period. On the other hand, drug usage rose significantly, due to the rising number of young people with prior drug experiences gained during city visits, who introduced younger siblings from the village to marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs.

The rise in the number of police and other regulatory officials in the valley was seen by many Native people as a problem rather than a positive result of the pipeline: police had no place in the traditional village approach to settlement of disputes. Outside of an occasional incident in which fish was stolen from fish-wheels, the Native people were rarely victims of theft or burglary in their homes. However, they did have problems, which the troopers allegedly ignored, in seasonally occupied subsistence residences. Therefore, the influx of police to protect personal property and investigate civil crimes was inconsequential in the Native viewpoint.

Health and safety characteristics show change during the pipeline period. Rates of some village health characteristics, such as death and drug abuse, rose steadily throughout the period. Other traditional reactions to stress, such as alcohol abuse and related problems, hypochondria, non-chronic disease, and suicide saw a temporary drop until the summer of 1977, when a rising rate was indicated. Other safety factors, such as rape and petty larceny, involved the non-Native community. Thus in future impact assessments it **could** prove useful to **analyse** traditional and non-traditional health and safety institutions, differences in access stemming from attitudes, behavioral or economic characteristics of the various population segments, danger to property, the relationship between economic variables and the rate of illness, death, and crime in the community and how changing characteristics of income and income distribution might affect this relationship.

#### POLITICAL VARIABLES

The establishment of Ahtna, Inc., and its ancillary organizations, at a time when great changes were being made in the economic landscape, enhanced the Natives' economic position in the Copper River Region and drew many migrants home. Non-Natives, faced with this new Native economic force, were compelled to reassess their previous view of the Native community. Natives, themselves, modified their own economic image. The **Ahtna, Inc.**, became a powerful spokesman for Native interests. The corporation's representatives, vocal in their opinions, **publically** addressed state and federal, as **well** as **local** issues, locked horns with the mission radio station, **KCAM**, over alleged "biased news reporting," guarded absentee Native allotments, to assure that the land was not misused, and dined with congressmen visiting Federal Lands on a fact-finding mission.

During the pipeline period, Alyeska Service Company, for instance, was forced to deal with the corporation in order to buy gravel or obtain access roads across Native land. In addition, Ahtna, Inc., served as a watchdog on Alyeska's Native hiring practices.

Only 10 years ago, the Natives had virtually no political or economic Power. Today, because of the central importance of petroleum to Alaska's economy, Ahtna, Inc., has made economic policy decisions that probably have had local, national, and even international ramifications.

Since no government represents the interests of the local people--outside of the meager representation in the state house (rarely discussed by local residents) and the Senator and Congressmen far away in Washington--there is an organizational void in the political structure of the valley. In many ways, the Native corporation, especially in its relationship to the Federal government, has become a de facto government in the valley. How could the smaller voluntary associations representing various interest groups such as the Guided Hunt Association, the now defunct Copper Center Chamber of Commerce, or even the school board compete with the Native corporation, which has access to lawyers as well as consultants from academia and business? Also, it was convenient for a federal official to fly to the Gulkana Airfield, hold meetings with easily identified Ahtna, Inc., officials, and fly home in time for dinner in Anchorage. There is no mayor, no city manager, no borough assemblymen for the official to talk to. In some ways, government officials, by dealing with the Native corporation, are lulled into the illusion that they have surveyed public opinion in the valley, when in fact they have obtained only the viewpoint of the Native corporation's spokesmen.

In recent years, the Native people have profited from these changing power relationships. Despite Native complaints that discrimination continued on the job, causing the high job failure rate among Natives, hiring of Natives on the pipeline was fairly common compared to their past experiences. It is doubtful that the Native people would have been included in the pipeline project to the extent they were, if the Native corporations had not been present.

Thus in future impact assessments it could prove useful to identify political associations, assess **their** relative potential, define differential access by various population segments, and indicate the land, human or material resources that might give that association a special relationship with the impacting industry. Predictions could then be made concerning the future political configuration in a community and the benefits accrued to population sectors.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Educational institutions changed during the pipeline period. The increasing non-Native and urban Native population placed the village child in a minority in the Copper Center School. The school political climate following ANCSA passage, reportedly encouraged Native Glennallen High School students to drop out. On the other hand, the rising Ahtna population in the valley has brought a new interest in Native culture, in particular, the traditional potlatch and the Ahtna language program in the schools.

There is a new pride in an awareness of Native culture, which is attributable to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. For the elderly the potlatch re-

tains its function as an economic redistributive ceremony which grew because of pipeline earnings. But, for the young, it became a political statement which identified Native people and gave them a unique cultural heritage.

The pipeline-induced growth of the media has brought to villagers new sophistication about the Ahtna people's place in the world. The introduction of television, at a time when the valley was a focus of national attention, influenced the view villagers had of the world outside Copper Center. Even the elderly, life-long village residents, were presented with a program diet of non-Native homelife on soap operas, political happenings in Washington, and the violence of city life as presented in police dramas. Thus everyone with access to a television had a kind of "urban" experience through the window of the TV screen. More magazines and newspapers also became available and a book store opened in Copper Center. A small bookmobile visited from Kenny Lake, and the library in Glennallen expanded. At the same time, the showing of G-rated movies in the village hall stopped as did recreational nights at the community hall. No one wanted responsibility for the youth peer group. Thus, while the diversity of literate styles of entertainment increased, those based on informal, non-ceremonial social interaction in a community setting seemed to decrease during the pipeline period.

Thus in future impact assessments it could prove useful to identify traditional educational access, shifting enrollments in the schools, expected program changes, the relevance of education to success in the impacting industry and attitudes among population sectors, including teachers, parents, and children, involved with the schools. It could also prove useful to determine the relationship between economic success, cultural activity, and political

activity to determine if Natives will view their cultural identity as a help or a hindrance during periods of development. Finally, the variations in culture displayed by sectors of the Native population (e.g., urban versus rural Natives) might prove relevant to varied responses to culture change and resulting changes in Native-Native relationships.

#### AMENITIES

The availability of utilities and transportation remained the same for most Natives, although those young people, who moved back to the community and wanted to establish new homes there, often found long waits to get a well dug or a telephone installed. A chauffeur service that picked up the elderly and took them shopping and other places was run during this time by a grant to CRNA. There was some improvement in private transportation because more people owned vehicles, and people from the various Ahna village were able to visit more.

It could prove useful in future situations of impact to define existing transportation and utility facilities, variation in access and habits of use, among different population segments, predicted pressures following from development, and projected capacities.

#### COMMUNITY COHESION

Although many of the 1973 villagers were life-long residents, the high degree of emigration that had gone on before indicated that the village was not capable of fully answering the lifetime needs of its residents. Thus despite

apparent stability among the elderly, the constant loss of young and middle-aged people was, in 1973, endangering the very viability of the village. For the group identified through kin-ties and historical associations as "Copper Center people," the pipeline, by attracting the young home, brought a glimmering promise of a renewed vigorous and growing village. While the return of emigrants signaled a village revival, the behavior of the return migrants showed that village cohesion and unity, as it was known in the past, would probably never be completely regained. The returning Ahtna often located outside of village boundaries, and people moved into the village who were not "Copper Center people" by kin-association. On one hand, these changes were viewed with concern by some of the more traditional villagers, who felt the village kinship base on which they based their authority, was jeopardized. On the other hand, due to the strength of the Native organizations, the village voiced a strong united front in community and regional affairs and decision-making.

At the same time, there was a rise in attendance at formal community functions such as church, potlatches, and school board meetings. Yet, the attendance at government-sponsored meetings having to do with pipeline impact and other ANCSA-related issues fell off. People, complaining that it "never did any good," were distressed to see no solid results of their efforts. Thus, interest in locally dominated activities and organizations supplanted the interest in activities sponsored by government officials living outside of the region, which dominated village affairs in 1973. People were more willing to participate in activities over which they wielded real control than those in which they gave information to non-local people, who ultimately made decisions affecting the valley.



In future assessments, it could prove useful to analyze traditional social organization, and the function and relative status of various population segments within the society and the relationship between income distribution, political organization and that society. Only then can society changes resulting from changes in income entering the village be predicted.

#### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic movement of people, Native and non-Native alike, has been instrumental in changing village values, economics, and society during the years of pipeline construction. In past years, those most prone to change, to take on new values, to participate in the western economy, and to manage their money in less traditional ways, usually chose to emigrate from the community. The **pre-pipeline** village was in many ways a traditional enclave. But the pipeline employment opportunities attracted the **less** traditional Natives back to the community and they made their mark on village society. The rise in the number of non-Natives meant that some crowding of services occurred, and the number of police and other regulatory personnel increased, And perhaps of most importance in the long-term, **the** non-Native population rose. A residue population of new migrants can be expected to permanently remain the region and compete for the ever-dwindling number of post-pipeline jobs. Household and village population density also changed. For some families, there were not enough rooms, houses or trailer spaces available for everyone who came to the village by virtue of kinship affiliation or birth. Young people, not associated with Copper Center and unfamiliar with village customs, expected to be given trailer spaces, an attitude which upset traditional villagers who felt that some of the return migrants had no claim to village lands. There was **little**

internal migration among Ahtna villages: people with village experience gained through a village upbringing, preferred to commute long distances or live in camp rather than reside in a village where they had no association.

Crowding, viewed as an adverse result of rising employment, caused the expansion of some households to temporarily house returning kin. At the same time, pipeline earnings were invested in expanding existing structures, so that in 1978 there were often more rooms per person in a household than in 1973. While large houses were not an especially valued item in the traditional Ahtna value system, some enlargement was viewed as a positive gain during the period.

In assessments of future impacts, it could prove useful to analyze population shifts, the skill level, experience, social and other characteristics of population segments, facilities for housing people, customs of residence, attitudes toward household and village population density and traditional determinants of village composition.

## VALUES

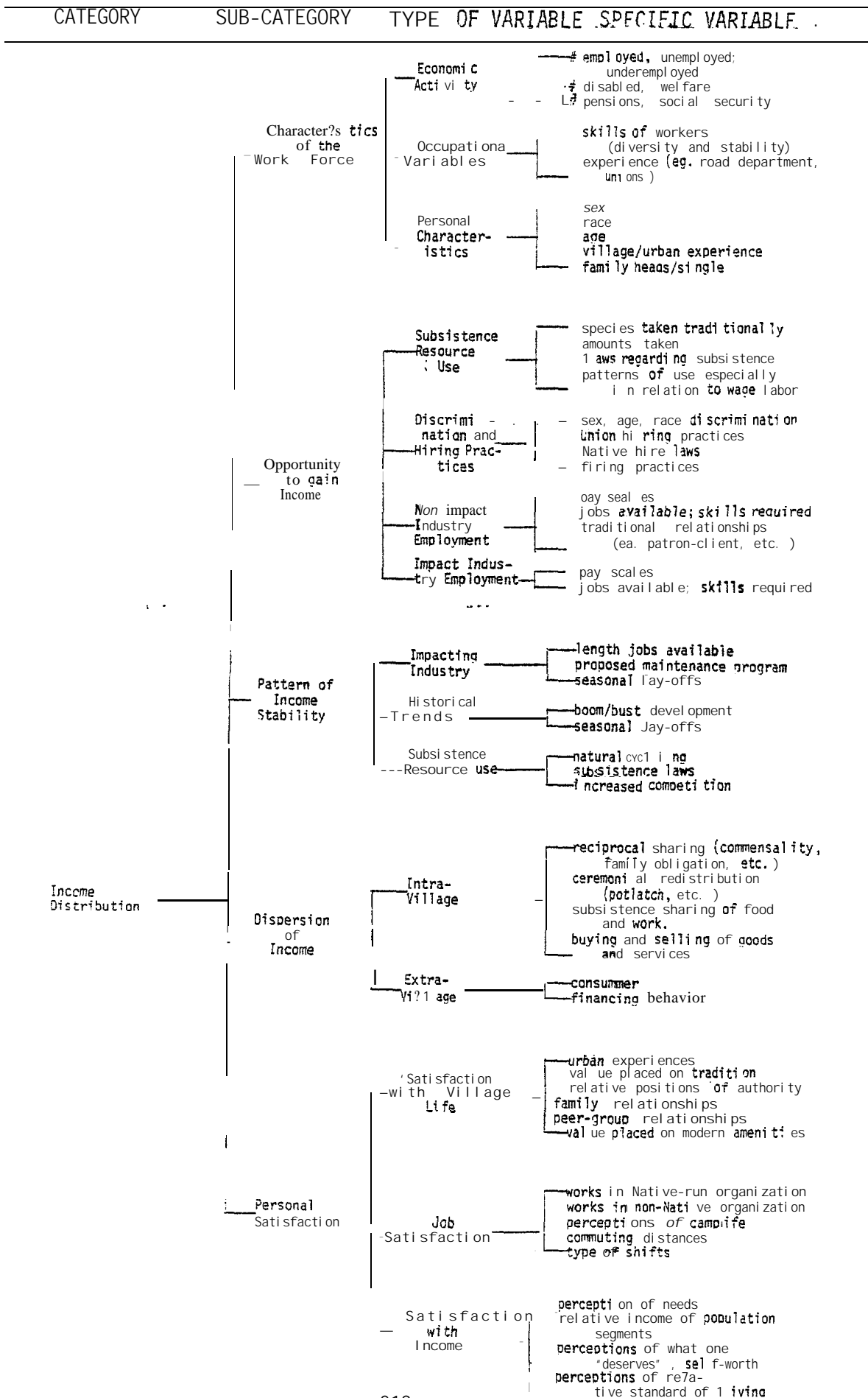
Differences in value systems, displayed by various segments of the Native population, have some bearing on the shape of change in the village. Those people who have chosen to emigrate often have a different kind of value system than villagers-- the people who have chosen to stay. The very act of leaving the village indicates a different valuation is placed on the village and the traditional village life.

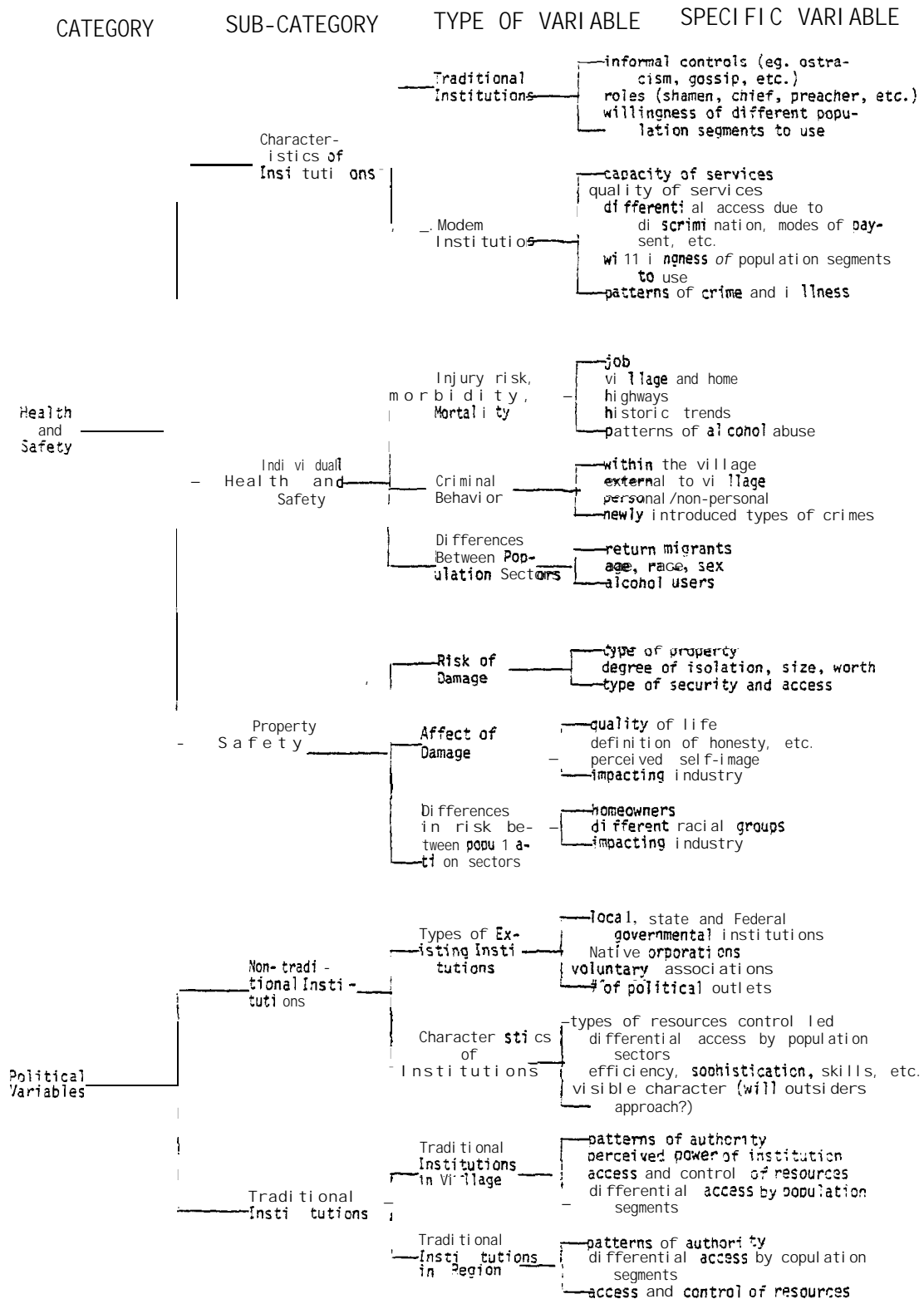
Many of the young and middle aged **who** have left **the** village have become enamored with city life. **Single** people like the **social** life. Family-men expressed pride in their urban homes and their long work records. Visiting the village once or twice a year, they bring presents or attend **potlatches**, and many continue to **value** their village heritage. Some urban **Ahtna**, who were raised in the village, send their own children to grandparents each summer so that they **will** have a taste of village life, and take home a sliver of the **cultural** pie their parents knew as children. Because traditional village **life** has remained important to many urbanites, the pipeline attracted some who hoped to return permanently, a desire which was evidenced by their investments in new homes and land. Nevertheless, they often **built** outside of the village, a physical location symbolizing attitudes different from their parents. They have invested pipeline earnings in good transportation, larger houses, private land, and amenities non-existent **in the** village. Many turn **to** subsistence activity as a way to reinforce their cultural identity, and as a means of enjoyment. **But** they are forced by subsistence **laws** to take **only** a **little** of each species which they usually share; and, they are not **fully** involved in the village subsistence strategy as are their parents. Apparently, the economic forces attracting the young migrant into the cities gave them few alternatives. Given the chance, many returned to Copper Center village. The question is will they be **able** to remain, thereby bringing permanent change to the village, or **will** economic conditions and subsistence regulations again force them to Anchorage in search of wage employment to support themselves and their families.

Copper Center people do not want their village to become another Chitina, a "ghost-village" which has lost its people. Before the pipeline, a number of middle-aged Natives at potlatches told the researcher that they planned some day to return, perhaps in retirement. Some of the elderly who were living in Copper Center in 1973 had retired to the village after long-term employment on the Alaska Railroad in Cantwell or Wasilla. Others had worked seasonally in canneries on the Gulf of Alaska.

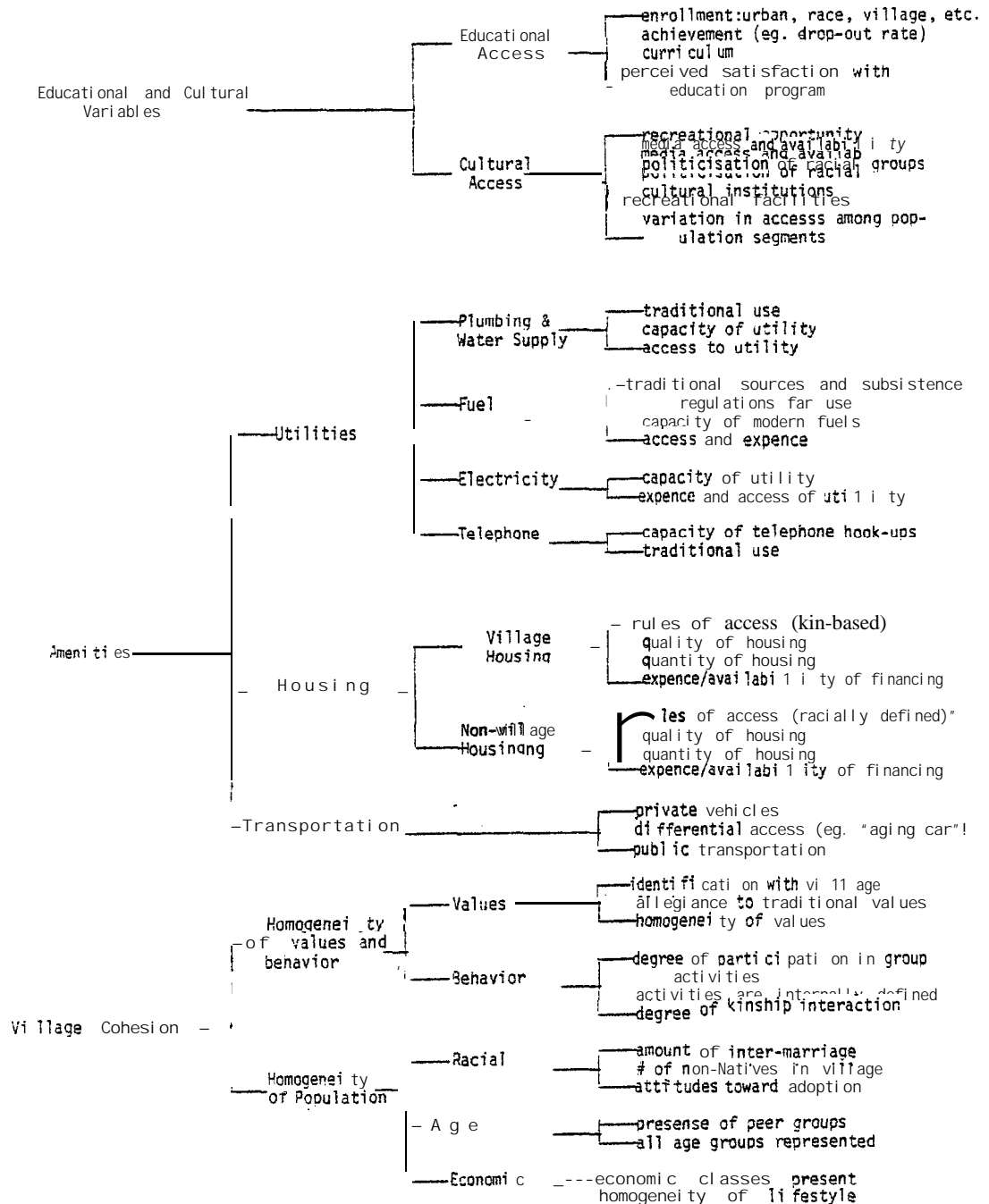
Thus many of the migrants value village life greatly. The pipeline period and the growth of the Native corporation and Native investment in the area has opened up the possibility that young families will again be able to live in Copper Center. Their presence, however, will make it a different kind of place. The traditional flavor that has lingered on, seasoning the life there, will change and become more oriented to the young who have grown up within the western economy, while hearing tales of their Ahtna ancestors.

FIG 3: Variables Determining the Process of Social Change in Copper Center Village during the Pipeline Period

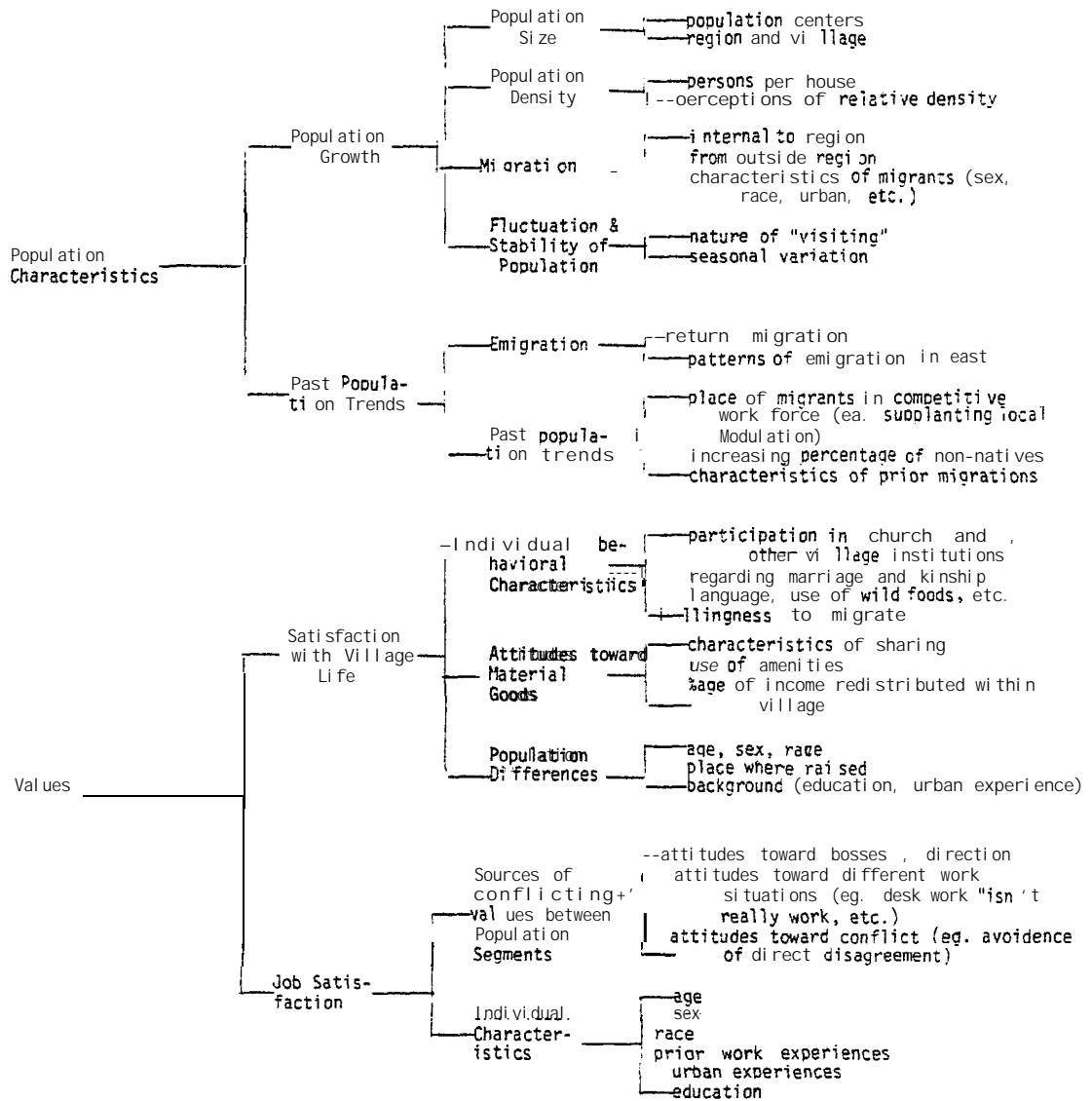




CATEGORY SUB-CATEGORY TYPE OF VARIABLE SPECIFIC VARIABLE



CATEGORY      SUB-CATEGORY      TYPE OF VARIABLE      SPECIFIC VARIABLE







## VIII. THE FUTURE

The permanent changes that will result from pipeline construction in the village of Copper Center remain unclear. As has been mentioned before, the young Ahtna who moved from the cities back to the village became the focal point for many social changes during the pipeline period: behavior not associated with the traditional kinship, new systems of money management that focused on the possession of wealth and material goods, and the revival of interest in Native culture.

Before the pipeline, the village population had been drained because the young were forced to find employment in the cities. During the pipeline boom, many of these returned and revitalized the village. The village's future will depend on the young people staying--an event determined by access to stable employment. If the young are once more forced to leave in search of jobs, the very existence of the village as a unique cultural institution could be jeopardized.

The immediate problem, in 1978, was unemployment among the many people who had returned to live in or near the village. Although many hoped to remain in the region, some were contemplating leaving, and others had already left. In September 1978 a large number of frustrated unemployed people, who felt betrayed by unfulfilled pipeline promises, remained in Copper Center and waited to see if they would gain employment on the maintenance contract signed by the Ahtna Corporation with Alyeska to maintain the pipeline and the service roads. In November, 1978, Alyeska terminated the maintenance contract, and more than 35 Natives lost their jobs (Tundra Times, vol. 15, no. 49). Bitterness will be the inevitable result. Furthermore, many jobs created by social welfare programs

run by the Copper River Native Association, CRNA, during the past five years have evaporated. In September, 1978, CRNA employees found that post-pipeline funding of social welfare programs was being significantly cut back. Few had realized the extent to which the funding of social programs had been justified by pipeline impact. Thus, publicly funded programs, which people had believed would provide a permanent employment base, were petering out. Once more Natives found themselves on the downswing of a boom and bust economy.

An important topic for future study is the response of the village social organization to the renewal of adverse economic conditions. It is inevitable that most of the return migrants, unable to find jobs, will leave. Those that choose to stay in the community will become bitter, if unable to support themselves or their families. During the pipeline period, expectations were raised and the self-esteem of many children and adults peaked as wages peaked. Having experienced economic success, many will find it difficult to adjust to lower wages. What may result is a permanent population of these workers in the village--a group, unemployed, embittered, and perhaps dependent on alcohol.

It is wrong to assume that village society will merely revert to its pre-pipeline form: new societal structures, such as the corporations, have been introduced, and race relations have been permanently altered. The pipeline experience has made many Natives redefine their material needs and economic expectations. The young, who gained power and authority during the pipeline period will not easily relinquish it. The elderly, who had provided an authoritative foundation to the village in pre-pipeline days, cannot possibly support, through the redistribution of pensions and Social Security funds, the new, higher population, including return migrant families.

The access to power among the different racial groups has been permanently rearranged during the seventies, although further changes might develop when and if a burrough government is formed. But if the corporations continue to be viewed as institutions, antagonistic to non-Native interests, the growing rift between the races will continue. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, nurtured temporarily during the pipeline period, could be the major source of permanent social change in the village, as well as the region.

The argument could be made that the village with its fluctuating urban-rural population, actually displayed a flexible social structure which long ago had adapted to the boom and bust nature of development in the Copper River Valley. In the past, the villagers chose among a variety of sources--wage employment, labor migration, subsistence resource use, welfare, pensions, Social Security--to support the village. Redistributive acts then spread the village resources to various population segments. In times of high employment in the valley, money flowed into the community where villagers shared it according to traditional customs, and, by creating obligations, they banked against hard times when subsistence resources, welfare, and pensions had to support as many villagers as possible. The remainder (usually the most employable) emigrated. Thus, village society adapted to the insecure and unpredictable position of Natives in Alaska's economy. Had ANCSA not been passed, the Natives' access to employment and to the benefits of the economy would have remained insecure and marginal.

Perhaps the post-pipeline bitterness, especially apparent among the elderly, stems from the villagers' inability to reestablish, as they have done after past booms, their traditional society. In past gross economic fluctuations at the turn of the century during the twenties and in the forties, Natives often

returned to subsistence resource dependence after participating in wage employment. The traditional manner in which Natives used village society to buffer the conditions of poverty and adapt to an economically disadvantageous position within the greater American society, no longer is relevant. The recent dispute over fishing rights is a case in point. For the unemployed and low-income Natives, salmon and other species have been resources of special significance in buffering poverty. Modern subsistence laws, which since the land claims settlement apply equally to Natives and non-Natives alike, now block Native strategies to use these subsistence resources. The laws define when, where, by whom, how, and in what numbers animals may be taken. Subsistence resource use has always been a traditional alternative to or supplement of wage employment, welfare, or labor migration. Since the 1920s the legal takes have been continually reduced. During the pipeline period, the reduced subsistence takes coming into the village, where they were redistributed, were easily supplemented by food bought with pipeline wages. In the summer of 1978, however, a poor salmon run forced the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to institute a policy that limited the number of open fishing days to weekends, thus placing the elderly Copper Center Native on a par with the Anchorage weekend fisherman. Dissent was loud from the Native community, and elderly Natives were arrested for illegally running fishwheels. Not only was the flow of money into the community shrinking as pipeline-related employment decreased, but also the access to subsistence resources was blocked. Since elders used salmon to support their families and also to create reciprocal obligations through sharing meals and food, they felt betrayed by recent events, in particular pipeline development, the most dramatic change in recent years. The combination of good fishing seasons and pipeline earnings had temporarily deferred the elders' rebellion against subsistence laws until 1978, when a crisis in wages combined with a

crisis in subsistence resources. The elders reacted with an act of civil disobedience (fishing on a closed day), which resulted in the arrest of four elderly Natives by Alaskan Fish and Game officials.

The inability of the villagers to reinstate their pre-pipeline society and follow proven adaptations is causing problems for those people who have no place in the newly created society. The elderly, the unemployable, the handicapped, and others who continue to value village life and have chosen to remain there, find they can no longer sustain the village through traditional modes of support.

Thus many of the social changes in Copper Center Village caused by recent events such as the pipeline and ANCSA are still evolving in late 1978; only in the next few years will the final effect of the pipeline be observable.



## GLOSSARY

**AFFINAL KIN (AFFINES):** Those people to whom one is related through ties of marriage.

**AHTNA INCORPORATED:** The smallest regional corporation in terms of population, created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Just over 1,100 stockholders live in the 28,000 square mile region in the Copper River Valley and in Anchorage. The corporation's headquarters are located on mile 105 of the Richardson Highway. Eight villages are found in the region, and most villagers are the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants, the Ahtna, of the region.

**AHTNA LANGUAGE:** Ahtna is the name of the language spoken by the indigenous people of the Copper, Chitina, and Susitna River Valleys. Belonging to the Athabaskan language family, the Ahtna language has four commonly recognized dialects, the lower, middle, upper and western. Most speakers of the language in Copper Center are over 40 years old and speak either the lower dialect or the middle dialect. Younger people who were raised in the village, often understand the language, but rarely speak it. A modern orthography was designed in 1974 by linguist Jim Kari with the cooperation of many local people. The existence of a new orthography means that the language is presently being documented. The new orthography was used throughout this report with three notable exceptions made because of their common American usage: Ahtna, Klutika-ah, and dené

**THE AHTNA REGION:** The 28,000 square mile territory from which the Ahtna Corporation is entitled to select land for private ownership. The area extends roughly from the Canadian Boarder on the eastern flanks of the Wranglell Mountains to Cantwell at the base of Mt. McKinley, and from Thompson Pass in the Chugach to Isabel Pass in the Alaska Range.

**THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT:** Public Law 92-203 passed by the 92nd Congress on December 18, 1971 which settled the aboriginal claims of the Native people of Alaska by creating economic corporations which would handle lands and money awarded to the Native people in compensation.

**ATHABASCAN:** A classification of North American Indian groups, all of which have related languages, cultures, societies, and past histories. There are two main sub-groups including the Northern Athabascans found throughout Interior Alaska and Northern Canada, and Southern Athabascans, such as the Navajo and Apache found in the American Southwest.

**BOREAL FOREST:** The boreal forest, or taiga, is the northern timberlands characterized by spruce and poplars that extends throughout the Alaskan Interior and in an unbroken band across sub-arctic Canada. The climate is bitterly cold and dry, and the animal populations include a variety of large and small fur-bearers.



**BOROUGH:** A political jurisdiction under **the state level** in the state of Alaska. It is helpful to think of the jurisdiction in the same way as one might think of "county" in other regions of the U.S., although Alaskan boroughs are generally larger than many states. The Copper River Valley is as yet an "unorganized borough," which means that no **formal** government exists at this level and the state must undertake many duties (trooper, welfare, education) that borough governments might be expected to handle in the future.

**COMMENSALISM (COMMENSAL SHARING, COMMENSALITY):** This word refers to eating together.

**FAMILY COMPOUNDS:** Clusters of households which are tied together through kinship, and located on individual driveways to the Richardson Highway in Copper Center. Similar clusters can be identified in other **Ahtna** villages.

**FORTY-MILERS:** Prospectors working in the "40-mile" area, which saw a gold rush at the turn of the century. The 40 mile is a stretch of **the** Yukon River near its crossing of the Canadian-Alaskan boarder.

**GOLD RUSH OF 1898:** One of the **major** gold rushes in the Subarctic. After a large strike in the **Klondike** region of the Yukon Territory of Canada, thousands of "stampedeers" traveled north in 1898. Over 3,000 might have followed a route to the gold fields through the Copper River Valley.

**KLUTIKA-AH, INC.:** The village corporation formed as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and located in Copper Center. The largest village corporation of the eight Ahtna villages, this corporation owns the surface land rights of territory surrounding the village.

**LINEAL RELATIVES:** Those people to whom one is related through relatives of a single sex, such as females (**matrilineal**), or males (**patrilineal**). Families are often related through a common relative more remote than a parent such as a grandparent or great grandparent, in which case the assembled **lineal** relatives make a **lineage**, a group which often has corporate functions, such as **fishing** or hunting territorial **rights**.

**LATCH-KEY CHILDREN:** School **aged** children who return to empty houses because parents are **away** from **home** working. Some carry keys.

**MARKET HUNTING:** The activity in which hunting is undertaken to obtain wild meat to sell for cash. This type of hunting was an important source of cash for Native people in the Copper River **Valley** in the first 25 years of this century.

**MATRICLAN:** Those people who recognize kin relationships to a common ancestor in the remote past, or a common historical event, in the Ahtna case, who trace their origins **to** their **clans' coming** into the Copper River Valley. About eight clans have been identified for the **Ahtna**, who commonly refer to **clans** as "my tribe," or "my people," in English. An individual is not allowed to marry a **clanmate** or someone in a related clan.

**MATRILINEAL KINSHIP:** see LINEAL RELATIVES.

**NATIVE:** The designation for the indigenous people of Alaska used by the U.S. Congress in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and the indigenous people themselves. This term has become popular because it includes the Indian, Eskimo and Aleut people in a single designation. While Ahtna Inc's enrollment is overwhelmingly Indian, a few Eskimo people living in the Copper River Valley have also enrolled.

**NATIVE ALLOTMENT:** A small piece of property awarded to individuals Natives, and applied for before the ANCSA.

**PRIMARY KIN:** An individual's parents, children, and siblings.

**RurALCAP:** The acronym for Rural Alaska Community Action Program, the descendent of the Alaska State Community Action Program, funded by the federal Office of Economic Opportunity, CEO. This organization was designed to stimulate locally based organization and planning in Alaska, and was instrumental in creating the grass-roots support needed to get the land claims passed. The program continues to support welfare and other community based social programs,

**"SEVEN-TENS":** A slang word used to describe a work shift in which a worker works ten hours a day, 7 days a week. This shift was common during the pipeline construction.

**SHAMAN :** A religious leader and healer who called upon supernatural and natural sources for aid. The Ahtna commonly refer to their shamans as "sleep-doctors" when speaking English because of their ability to cure people by "reading" their dreams.

**THE STATEHOOD ACT OF 1958:** More correctly called "The Alaska Statehood Act," this federal act made the Alaska Territory a state and on January 3, 1959 Alaska was officially admitted to the Union. The statehood act disclaimed all right to or title to lands "which may be held by Eskimos, Indians, or Aleuts," and thereby set the stage for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

**TARAL:** A 19th century Ahtna village on the east side of the Copper River, 6 miles below the confluence of the Chitina and Copper Rivers.

**UXORILocal RESIDENCE:** The custom of establishing households after marriage in the bride's village.

**VILLAGE:** In Alaska, this word refers to small permanent kin-based communities, which are virtually all inhabited by Natives. (A few exceptions might be cited in the cases of the Russian Old Believers, and similar religious groups. )



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