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INFORMAL ASSESSMENT  
OF  
CULTURAL VALUES  
ON THE  
ROUTE OF THE HAINES TO FAIRBANKS PIPELINE

1514-02 Investigational Project Files  
Informal Assessment of Cultural Values  
on the Route of the Haines to Fairbanks  
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The area of the Fairbanks to Haines pipeline and the Alaska Highway is usually considered an archaeological vacuum, except in portions of the Yukon Territory which will be considered here only in general terms---taking notice of the fact that present day political boundaries in no way correspond to the history of trade, marriage and war between peoples of the coast and those of the interior of Alaska and the Yukon.

The historic and prehistoric vacuum of the areas in question (arbitrarily separating the Skagway area from the interior) is more apparent than real, however, as recent work has emphasized. The early impression of Froelich Rainey that "Inland Alaska is undoubtedly, one of the most discouraging areas for archaeological research in North America" (West, 1967: 363) still remains, but the reasons lie in the nature of the sites, the landscape, and the difficulty of travel in undeveloped portions.

The area was inhabited and enough is now known to predict to a degree where sites may be found, and to note some of those that are presently known. Sites on the coast present other types of problems in detection. The Tlingit occupation of the Haines area is, as told in legend and oral history, of fairly recent origin. However, the vegetation works to cover the remains of villages that are known to have existed within the past 200 years. In addition, the materials utilized in the economic and social life of the Tlingit (wood, basketry, shell, etc.) is seldom well preserved in the wet climate. There is every reason to presume a pre-Tlingit occupation of this area as is being demonstrated farther to the south, but evidence is scanty and to the best of our knowledge, it was only this summer that any actual objects likely to pre-date the

Tlingit occupation of the Haines Valley came to the attention of archaeologists.

One jadite adz was given to Professor William B. Workman of Alaska Methodist University by a resident of Klukwan. It was said to come from 4 to 5 feet beneath the surface when a house basement was excavated on the hill side. This can hardly be considered conclusive evidence, but it is suggestive that work in this area might show occupation over a longer period of time than was heretofore realized.

The data that follows is by no means exhaustive. Our files are in the initial stages of a literature search of Alaskan history and archaeology, and a relatively small portion of the literature has been examined. Thus, within the limitations of easily accessible data, we will enumerate sites from the interior and the coast in the following manner--historic and ethnographic (native) sites; early sites; and sites of unknown age and/or cultural affiliation that have been reported or surveyed, but not excavated. In the final section, we will examine the areas where sites should be expected and the rationale behind such expectations. As our materials are arranged by U.S.G.S. quadrangles, the data will be given in that manner. The numbers are our filing system within a quadrangle. If the exact route of the pipeline were better known the number of sites mentioned could be cut down considerably; however, it is probably wiser to give too much than too little, in view of the fact that an appraisal of potential site locations is desired.

FAIRBANKS QUADRANGLE

Historic Sites:

- 3 Fairbanks Gold Dredge No. 8, Mile 9, Steese Highway
- 4 George C. Thomas Memorial Library, Lot 1, Block 18, Fairbanks
- 5 Sternwheeler Nenana located in Alaskaland
- 6 Johnson's Roadhouse on right bank of Tanana River, 16 miles Southeast of Fairbanks
- 7 Engineer mining camp and post office on creek of same name
- 11 Chena, former southern terminus of the Tanana Valley railroad and post office from 1903 - 1918.
- 12 Bylers Roadhouse 18 miles southeast of Fairbanks on Fairbanks - Valdez trail
- 18 Graehl townsite on north bank of Chena; annexed by Fairbanks
- 25 Little Chena Roadhouse (1915) 14 miles east of Fairbanks
- 26 Alaskaland in Fairbanks

Early Sites:

- 1 Campus site on University of Alaska campus; Denali complex
- 29 Site on Rosie Creek; Denali complex

Sites:

- 27 Site on Chena Ridge; in housing development; microblades
- 28 Site in Goldstream Valley, north of Happy; being tested

Historic sites to the north of Fairbanks have not been enumerated; knowledge of military lands is limited.

## BIG DELTA QUADRANGLE

### Historic Sites:

- 1 Aurora Lodge (Munson's) located along Richardson Highway at junction of Salcha and Tanana, 40 miles northwest of Big Delta. Established in 1902 when U.S. Army Signal Corps located Salcha telegraph station 3 miles from the mouth of the Salcha River.
- 6 Delta Telegraph Station on right bank of Tanana at the Little Delta River
- 7 Fox Farm Lodge on the Richardson, 5 miles south of Harding Lake. "Overland Roadhouse" in 1913.
- 8 Birch Lake Roadhouse on the Richardson. Established between 1904-1910 on the Valdez trail.

### Early Sites:

- Birch Lake (West 1967; 361-362) - possibly early; fairly well destroyed prior to 1948. Probably along highway.
- 20 Village Site, Healy Lake.

### Sites:

- 9 West side of Harding Lake between it and the Richardson; reported, not examined
- 10 Northwest bank Tanana, below Birch Lake; reported, not examined
- 14 Mouth of Shaw Creek; reported, not examined
- 15 East of 14 at mouth of Shaw Creek; reported, not examined
- 16 Near Shaw Creek Lodge; reported, not examined
- 17 North bank Tanana, South of Richardson; reported, not examined

MOUNT HAYES QUADRANGLE

Historic Sites:

- 2 Donnelly, 26 miles south of Delta Junction; established as a telegraph station in 1904; on the Richardson Highway

Early Sites:

- 4 Garden Site on Healy Lake (J.P. Cook, U. of A.)  
11 Burgess Point, Healy Lake (J.P. Cook, U. of A.) Donnelly Ridge - Mount Hayes 5 - 1,512 stone artifacts from 1/2' below the surface (West 1967).

Sites:

Healy Lake complex (c. 12 now known) various ages; Athabaskan  
Lake George complex (c. 5 now known) various ages; Athabaskan

This is an area where the highway passes between a number of sites of extreme importance in Alaskan prehistory. Undoubtedly, construction of the Alaska Highway destroyed or disturbed a number of sites for which there will never be records.

However, in speaking of this as a central point of the Denali Complex, we are taking in a much larger area than that of the highway and pipeline. These sites include the Campus site at Fairbanks (the totem pole which marks its location does not reflect past cultural affiliation), the Teklanika River sites in the Alaska Range, the Donnelly Ridge site, Dixthada, near Mansfield Lake (this site also contains a later component

with a copper industry), and lower portions of the Garden and Village sites on Healy Lake. Tangle Lakes Archaeological District is to the west, near Paxton. These sites, while not securely dated, appear on typological grounds, to be old and to have Siberian and Asian affinities (West 1967). The important sites which the highway goes between right here are on Healy Lake and Donnelly Dome. Both areas have a heavy concentration of sites, some quite early (the lower levels at Healy Lake are C-14 dated circa 11,000 BP), others undated or ranging from the ethnographic present back thousands of years. The stratigraphy, where present, is compacted and cultural materials occur usually in the top few inches of soil, occasionally to a depth of 12" or 18" below the surface. Materials from the above sites have been restudied occasionally as our knowledge of tool manufacture improves. Milepost 1382 near Dixthada is mentioned by Johnson and Reup (1946).

#### TANACROSS QUADRANGLE

Our data for this area is scanty. Nandell, on the Tetlin River near Tetlin Lake, was reported by Allen in 1885. The modern villages of Tetlin, Mansfield, and Northway reflect, to a degree, past occupations. Additionally, the Tetlin Indian Reservation is located here. Dixthada is near the highway on Lake Mansfield. Mansfield, Fish and Wolf Lakes are probable site locations.

NABESNA QUADRANGLE

Historic Sites: (all are either historic or ethnographic - memory culture)  
Many listings in our files, but none fall anywhere near the area of the pipeline.

SKAGWAY QUADRANGLE

Historic Sites:

1. Fort William H. Seward, Haines - 12 acres
2. Pleasant Camp Post, Mile 42, Haines Highway. Log buildings, way station on Dalton Trail and former RCNWMP post.
5. Chilkat, 2 miles south of the center of Haines; abandoned c. 1910 - Tlingit village.
7. Haines - originally an Indian village called Iteshshuh meaning "end of trail". During Klondike Gold Rush it was the beginning of the Dalton trail.
10. Gantegastaki - native village at mouth of Chilkat River (now at Haines airport)
11. Klukwan - "~~oldest town in Alaska~~" or "*mother town*"

12. Kohklux south of Klukwan - Tlingit name for the site of a USC & GS station.

Katkwaltu - c. 4 miles southeast of Klukwan,

Haines Mission Post Office,

Cannery near Battery Point

United States Coast and Geodetic Survey map of 1892; field work was done in 1869 and 1893; republished in 1895. Map 8300. Lynn Canal and Stephens Passage.

CONCLUSIONS: As noted previously, this does not attempt complete coverage of known sites lying on or near the present Alaska Highway and the pipeline route. However, the sites mentioned should be an indication, not only of the numbers, but of the importance of the area to the prehistory and history of Alaska. There are many reasons for suspecting that more sites will turn up in the area.

From ethnographic evidence, we are aware that Chilkat Pass has provided access from the coast into the interior, not only for early miners and the military, but also long before written records and the introduction of European goods trade was carried on between the coastal peoples (providing dried sea foods, dentalia and other ornaments, etc.) and the interior peoples (furs, moose meat and hides, etc.) from the Haines area to Klukshu, Dezdeash Lake (not a rich area archaeologically, but sites are known from here), Champagne, Kluane Lake (a hot bed of archaeological sites), Aishihik, and Burwash Landing. These areas are the past and present homelands of the Northern Tutchone, an Athabaskan people. It is interesting to note

that the Northern Tutchone in the Yukon Territory have adopted the moiety system of the coastal Tlingit and still feel pride of intermarriage with Tlingit. On the other hand, the coastal Tlingits, while somewhat above other peoples in their own estimation, have long been known to trade, war and intermarry with other groups, thereby incorporating them into the Tlingit social system; examples of this include the Interior peoples of the Skeena, Nass, Stikine, Taku, and Alsek Rivers, the Eyak from the mouth of the Copper River (now extinct if one uses language as a determinant; however the Eyak component at Yakutat is still recognized), and possibly some of the Prince William Sound Eskimo.

Pickaxe Lake on the Alaskan - Yukon<sup>g</sup> border was a meeting place for trade between the Northern Tutchone and the Upper Tanana.

Trade between coast and interior also followed the Copper River where the Atna strictly controlled actual contact between Eyak and Tlingit groups and those groups along the Tanana and Yukon. Copper from the area around Chitina was traded in both directions, and Atna shamans were feared by both coast and interior peoples. There is every reason to believe that these patterns of trade, etc. have been in existence as long as the areas of concern were inhabited, and the Copper River has been ice free for approximately 9,000 years. While not all areas were occupied continuously (interior hunting subsistence involves much mobility, especially as these peoples were also concerned with fishing - often for their main food source), but many areas have been occupied at least discontinuously for thousands of years.

Modern village distributions are some indication of past occupations, but it must be kept in mind that 20th century settlement patterns are much more fixed than was possible when people were confined to the resources of the Alaskan - Yukon areas, and were without aid from Seattle.

Lakes of rivers leading into the Yukon and Tanana Rivers would be good spots for fish camps; ridges are good game look-outs.

It is, perhaps, obvious that roads usually follow the path of least resistance through mountainous areas and rolling hills. So did early peoples; therefore, one can predict with a considerable amount of accuracy that where there is a present highway, there were archaeological sites prior to construction. In addition, where there are plans for roads and settlements, there are very likely archaeological sites which have not yet been discovered. The other side of the coin is that many of these sites will not come to light without settlement and disturbance of the soil. The problem prehistoric Alaska faces is that of getting the most information possible out of an area before sites are totally destroyed. Lands along these roads probably do contain sites, but they will not be excavated until they are known. Agencies are more likely to notify the proper authorities about these sites than are individuals whose main concern is to get a cabin up and a road into it before winter sets in.

Therefore, sale of the lands in question should most definitely consider the archaeological potential of the lands on an individual basis. We would recommend notification of the Division of Parks before sales are completed. Presently the National Park Service is the agency responsible

for such work on Federal lands. *and should also be notified.*

The references attached deal with the areas under consideration.