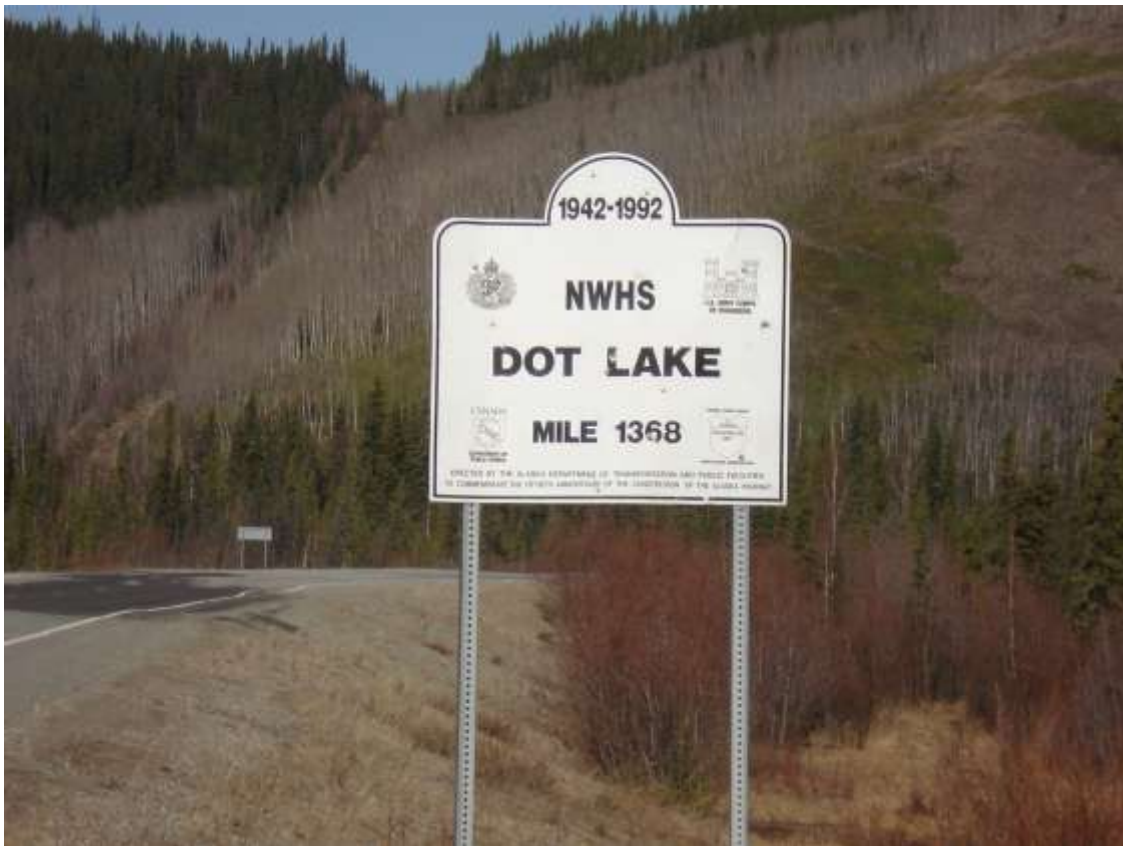


A History
of
Dot Lake, Alaska



The Dot Lake History Project was funded by the National Park Service.

Doris Charles



October 20, 1902 to March 25, 2002

IN DEDICATION TO OUR FOUNDER

DORIS (BILLY) CHARLES 1902 – 2002

The Native Village of Dot Lake was founded by the late Doris (Billy) Charles in the mid 1940's. Doris, believed to have been born around 1902, spent her younger years at Batzulnetas, a small native village, along the Copper River, within what is now known as the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Doris was being raised by her elderly grandmother and recalled how she would accompany hunters into the mountains to hunt sheep, at times wading through icy cold streams to obtain meat for the family. She also recalled how they would catch salmon from the Copper River, Tanada Creek and Tanada Lake. Their diet consisted mostly of fish, sheep meat and berries. It was a very hard life in a very unfriendly environment. The long cold winters and short summers meant they had to work very hard just to live. When Doris was a teenager, her grandmother moved her to Tanana Crossing, now known as Tanacross, so that she would not have to marry one of the old men in the village. Doris lived with the missionary family at St. Timothy's Church in Tanacross, where two years later, she met and was married to Peter Charles. She lived in Tanacross for a period of time, living a subsistence lifestyle with her husband and children. At times, the family would move to a fish camp or hunting camp so as to gather food supplies. Doris was very subsistence orientated, trapping during the winter, with her dog team, muskrat hunting in the spring; picking berries, gathering roots, drying salmon and white fish during the summer; and helping her husband hunt moose and caribou in the fall. She would dry some of the meat and tan the hides into leather to make clothing and foot wear for her family. Doris was also very skilled at beading, she was especially known for her beaded eagle and sheep. The family often traveled on the Tanana River and would camp for long periods of time while gathering their subsistence foods. A few of the areas used during these times were known as Paul's Cabin, Bear Creek, and what is now known as Dot Lake. Under these extreme conditions, Doris managed to raise six children, three boys and three girls. In the mid 1940's, Doris relocated her family to Dot Lake, where she continued her subsistence lifestyle, teaching her children the traditional and cultural values of Athabascan Indians of Interior Alaska. Doris continued to live in Dot Lake until forced to relocate to Fairbanks because of illness. Doris passed away at the Pioneer's Home in Fairbanks Alaska on March 25th, 2002. Doris is missed by all who knew her, as indicated in the following article, written by her son-in law, William (Bill) Miller, and submitted to the Fairbanks News Miner:

FAREWELL TO A MATRIARCH:

Dear Editor;

On March 30th, 2002, the Native Village of Dot Lake laid to rest its beloved matriarch, Doris Billy Charles. For more than fifty of her ninety plus years, Doris had been the traditional and cultural leader of this small Alaskan Native Tribe. Doris passed away on March 25th, 2002, leaving a void that can never be filled. This was a great loss to the family, the Native Village of Dot Lake and the Upper Tanana Region. It was a loss to the concept and idea of the true Alaskan Native tradition and culture of sharing and loving. Doris spent her entire life in the true fashion of giving and sharing. She gave unselfishly of herself and her knowledge to help improve the lives and wellbeing of her family and her people. Until becoming too ill to continue, she fought not only for her rights, but for the rights of all Alaskan Natives. While she had no formal education, Doris was always willing to share her wealth of traditional and cultural knowledge with anyone that wanted to learn. We all know that Doris is now in a better place, with no pain, worries or troubles, but we will miss her and her guiding light. We can only hope and pray that someday, through the grace of God, we can again be with her and listen to her wonderful stories of days gone by. The Charles family, the Dot Lake Village Council, and the Native Village of Dot Lake take this opportunity to thank all those that came to comfort, help and share during this time of deep sorrow. I met Doris in August 1960. I was a young, naïve G.I. I had no knowledge of Alaskan Native tradition or culture. I had hunted and fished for sport, but knew nothing of the struggles and hardships endured by the indigenous peoples of Alaska in their attempts to survive. As aside from being the matriarch of Dot Lake, Doris had been my mentor for over 40 years. She taught me the meanings of many of the traditional and cultural practices of her people. The wealth of knowledge possessed by Doris was unequaled. I feel very rich and blessed today for having had the honor of knowing and being able to share the life of this outstanding woman that I have been able to call my mother-in-law for forty-one years. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the many people that came to pay tribute to this most outstanding woman. Their presence helped ease the pain we all felt.



THE CHARLES FAMILY, EARLY 1940'S

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INTRODUCTION:

Dot Lake, Alaska, is located on the Alaska Highway (between milepost 1359.5 and 1361.5) approximately one hundred sixty road miles southeast of Fairbanks, approximately forty-seven miles northwest of Tok and approximately one hundred six miles from Slana at the start of the Nabesna Road into the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

The Dot Lake is composed of two sub-communities; the Native Village of Dot Lake, which is located north of the Alaska Highway, between milepost 1360.5 and milepost 1361.5 and extends north to the Tanana River. It includes U.S. Survey No. 3217, U.S. Survey No. 3123, U.S. Survey No. 4285, and all lands conveyed to the State of Alaska in trust under Section 14 (c) (3) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The other community is referred to as the Highway Community, which is located outside of the native village boundaries and includes U.S. Survey 3124, U.S. Survey No. 3614, and U.S. Survey No. 4325. All other lands within the area, with the exception of a few Native Allotments, belong to the Dot Lake Native Corporation, which is a Native Village corporation, formed under the authority of ANCSA and is within the Doyon Region, one of the thirteen Regional Native Corporations formed under ANCSA.

In the spring of 2008 approximately 41 individuals lived within the Native Village. There has been a slow steady increase from the original 23 residents. This increase can be attributed to the building of new homes and the influx of new families. Approximately 9 individuals live along the highway. This reflects a decrease from a high of approximately 40 individuals during the 1990's. The decrease can be attributed to the closing of the children's home, the lodge and the motel, in addition to recent deaths. The Village is approximately ninety percent Alaskan Native, while the highway community is approximately thirty percent Alaskan Native.

Dot Lake is located within the continental climatic zone which consist of long, cold winters and warm summers. Temperatures in this area can range from well below zero to ninety above zero. A record high of ninety degrees above zero was recorded in 1950, with a record low of seventy-five below zero in 1947. Average annual precipitation is in excess of nine inches. Average snowfall is approximately twenty-seven inches, with the greatest depth of snow on the ground being sixty inches, which was recorded in 1956.

The Village of Dot Lake is located on the edge of a terrace which is approximately ten to twelve feet above a vast waterlogged floodplain containing mosses, sedges and low growing shrubs. The terrace contains small stands of aspen, paper birch and white spruce, indicating well drained soil conditions. The soils within the village area are mostly sand and gravel, with pockets of clay. These soils are very well suited to construction and have served the village residents well in the construction of their homes. Most of the village area is approximately twelve to twenty feet above the water table and, in the past, individuals have driven their own wells by using a sand point. The foothills to the south of the village contain dense stands of black spruce, indicating areas of poorly drained soil and the presence of permafrost. No permafrost exists within the village area. The Tanana River is approximately two miles north of the village area. The plain north of the village may experience high water during flooding stages of the Tanana River but the village is in very little danger of flooding because of it being approximately ten to twelve feet above the plain and the vast area the plain covers. There has never been any flooding condition reported in the immediate area of the village.



AREA BEHIND DOT LAKE VILLAGE



AREA BEHIND DOT LAKE VILLAGE



COW AND CALF MOOSE ON THE FLATS BEHIND DOT LAKE



COW MOOSE ON FLATS BEHIND DOT LAKE

THE FOUNDING OF DOT LAKE:

During the mid 1940's, in search of a better life for her and her family, Doris Charles set out from Tanacross with her children. She caught a ride to an area now called Paul's Cabin, which was a traditional hunting camp for some of the natives of Tanacross. Paul's Cabin is located approximately thirteen miles east of Dot Lake, along the Tanana River.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, during the construction of the Alaska Highway, a road camp had been constructed in the area now know as Dot Lake. This camp was called Sears City. Upon completion of this section of the highway the camp was abandoned and the structures left in place.

Eventually, Doris moved her family to the area now known as Dot Lake and established her home. This area had traditionally been used as a hunting camp by the natives of the area and Doris and her children were the only residents at the time. Eventually, her husband Peter and his father Big Albert joined the rest of the family and thus established what is now known as the Native Village of Dot Lake.

Over the years, other individuals and families moved to the area, the first among these was the Fred Vogel family, (a non native missionary family from California) and the Andrew Isaac family (a native family from Tanacross). Shortly thereafter, Abraham Luke and his family moved to the area from Sam Lake (now know as Sand Lake) and Gene Henry of Batzulnetas/Tanacross moved to Dot Lake, followed later by Paul Henry and his family.

Peter and Andrew were informed that if they wanted to ensure that they retained the land they would have to get a title to it. Peter applied for a lot with good highway frontage, while Andrew and Fred applied for lots with less highway frontage. A land swap between Peter Charles and Fred Vogel resulted in Peter's and Andrew's land being next to each other and Fred's land being on the highway, outside what is now considered as the Native Village of Dot Lake. Abraham, Gene and Paul applied for and received Native Allotments within the area and made Dot Lake their home.

Some of the old Sears City structures were relocated to the village area. In addition, some of the materials left behind by the Army were used to construct small homes for the remaining families. This resulted in the five native families having small, poorly insulated homes to live in. The Charles home was the largest and had been insulated with sawdust. With the arrival of Maggie Isaac's Mother Bessie (also lovingly known as Grandma Walters) and her brother Jimmie, who lived in a tent until they obtained a small cabin, the village had about twenty-five native residents. Fred constructed a lodge and a church on his land.

The Native families retained their subsistence lifestyles of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering, subsidizing this lifestyle with employment that they could find, such as construction. Being located along the road system they had access to a number of benefits that other villages did not have. Peter and Jimmie obtained vehicles and were able to travel and purchase supplies with less difficulty than residents in other villages that did not have highway access.

It has always been a mystery how Dot Lake got its' name. Some thoughts are it was because the lake looked like a dot, others thought it was because the lake was so small. With the loss of all our elders, the true origin of the name may never be known.



ORIGINAL HOME OF DORIS and PETER CHARLES & FAMILY

For a number of years, the Native Village made little to no progress in advancing or changing their lifestyle. Remaining with just the bare necessities, the village residents seemed content. The lodge had electricity and running water, the village residents depended on hand driven wells or lake water, oil lamps for light and outhouses. After a period of time, the lodge was leased out and the new operator extended an electric line from the lodge generator to Peter Charles home. There was great excitement when the

first light bulb was turned on, this meant the oil lamps would become a thing of the past. By the late 1950's to early 1960's, new electric appliances were making life a little better and easier for these families.



THE FIRST ELECTRIC FIXTURE IN THE OLD VILLAGE OF DOT LAKE

INSTALLED IN PETER CHARLES' HOUSE



RESIDENTS OF DOT LAKE IN THE EARLY 1950'S

As told to this writer, by one individual: “My first view of the Native Village of Dot Lake was in 1961. As a young G.I., I took a friend to see his girlfriend that resided in this small Alaskan Native Village, with her family. The whole village consisted of four small wood frame homes. Most of these structures were constructed from the remains of the old highway camp that had occupied the area during the construction of the Alaska Canadian Highway in the 1940’s. The home we visited consisted of Peter and Doris Charles and their children (Stella, Hazel, and Clara Charles and Pete and Langford Turner). The house had three small bedrooms (Peter and Doris’s bedroom, the boy’s bedroom and the girls’ bedroom), a medium sized living room and a very large kitchen; this was by far the largest home in the village. The only vehicle in the village was an old Chevy pickup truck that belonged to Peter. He used it to haul firewood, transport his family and, keep the village roads (dirt trails) clear of snow in the wintertime by dragging a wooden platform behind the truck. I remember seeing him use a blowtorch to heat the oil pan and manifold in the morning to start his truck when it was sixty below. Having been raised on the east coast, I was not accustomed to being treated so well by strangers. These were, I think, the friendliest people I had ever met. They were willing to share almost everything with others. Their knowledge of survival, their food, their homes and almost everything they had.

MOVING FORWARD:

Things within the village remained very much the same, until 1971, at which time, through funding provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services, seven new homes were constructed. Included in this project was a central heat and water system for these new homes. The project also provided some local employment and training for village residents. For the first time, most of the residents of the Native Village of Dot Lake had inside plumbing, hot water baseboard heat, and electricity. They were also able to do their laundry without traveling a hundred miles to do it. This was the first step into modern living for a number of the residents of the village. The utility building, constructed in conjunction with this project, contained a small laundry facility, five small oil fired boilers and the central well that provided water for the homes and the laundry. The heat and water distribution system was comprised of approximately eleven hundred feet of domestic cold water line and approximately twenty-two hundred feet of hot water heat line, which was sandwiched in Styrofoam. This, in turn, was buried approximately twelve inches. Each individual home had a propane hot water heater to provide hot water and a zone valve and circulating pump, that was controlled by a thermostat to provide heat. For the elderly, which at the time was four of the seven families, this was a great advantage. They no longer had to cut firewood or haul water. Also, the fire danger was reduced because the only flame within the homes was the propane kitchen stove and the propane hot water heater. Because of the design of the distribution system and the fact that the water line was plastic, the system developed a number of problems. The most predominant problem was the water line being broken because of people driving over it. This system was upgraded in 1984, as reflected later under the Capital Improvement section of this document.



ONE OF THE HOMES BUILT IN 1971

The 1970's brought a number of changes to the Native Village of Dot Lake with the passage of The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Under the provisions of ANCSA, the State of Alaska was divided into twelve regions. Each of which represented the Alaskan Native Tribes within their region. The regional corporations received some land and cash as a part of the settlement; they also received the subsurface rights to the land selected by the village corporations within their region. In addition, there was a thirteenth region formed to represent those Alaskan Natives that did not want to enroll in a specific tribe. Dot Lake is within the Doyon Region. The Native Village of Dot Lake had forty-five tribal members and received over sixty-nine thousand acres of land. They were also required to form a Corporation, under State law, in order to receive the land. The Dot Lake Native Corporation was formed, with forty-five original shareholders, each receiving one hundred shares of the new corporation. The land and cash settlement was transferred to the new corporation and not to the Tribe. Lands that had for generations been used by the local natives for hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering, would now be considered as private lands. Each village in the area received land under ANCSA and some tensions began to develop between tribes, as the lands started to be posted and restrictions placed on the use of them, areas that had been used in the past were now no longer available for families to hunt, trap or gather on. No longer were the traditional ways observed. Traditional areas that had been used, but were now part of another village's land, could not be used without permission of the newly formed corporations.

The old ways were being replaced with western ways of land ownership. To many of our elders this was the beginning of the end for them. The new generation would have to be trained in both corporate management and Tribal operations. There were now both shareholders and tribal members. Some individuals were Tribal members and not shareholders, while others were shareholders and not Tribal members, still others were both Tribal members and shareholders. This has led to much confusion because individuals did not know where to go for help. Tribal membership is something you receive at birth or by adoption and have until death, while shares are something you are given or you inherit and can be passed on to others. The corporation had to treat all shareholders equally and could not assist in many needs, while the Tribe could assist individuals or groups, such as elders, while not assisting others. If the Tribe had received the land and cash, they could have initiated programs to assist elders or individuals in need, without having to face the possibility of a lawsuit from other Tribal members. There were also the Regional Corporations, which also issued one hundred shares to their original shareholders. These shares could be passed on through inheritance. Under the authority of the 1990 amendments to ANCSA, the corporations were authorized to issue additional shares to individuals born after 1971, which had become known as "new borns or after borns". They were also allowed to issue additional stock to elders. This only added to the confusion, because there were now a number of different types of stock, some of which could not be inherited or passed on, but were to be returned to the corporation upon the shareholder's death, while others could be inherited or passed on.

INFORMATIONAL DATA (as of May 2008)

Transportation: Approximately ten operational automobiles and four or five operational trucks are owned by village residents, in addition local residents own approximately five snow machines and seven four wheelers. Residents travel to Tok, Delta Junction or Fairbanks for most of their personal supplies. Some residents will travel to Anchorage, a distance of approximately three hundred seventy-five miles, a few times a year for supplies. Alaska Direct bus line is available from Dot Lake to Delta Junction, Fairbanks and Anchorage. A one-way ticket to Fairbanks is \$70.00 and a one-way ticket to Anchorage is \$100.00 (plus \$10.00 per bag). Compare this to 1980, when a one-way ticket to Fairbanks was \$15.00 on Alaska Coach Ways. Access by air is very limited. At one time there was an eleven hundred forty foot runway located just north of the lodge, however, it was closed. In emergencies, light aircraft can land on the highway. The village is not directly accessible by water since the Tanana River is two miles away. A few of the village residents own riverboats which they use for hunting and fishing. As of May the 19th, 2008, the price for regular unleaded gasoline in Delta Junction was \$4.27a gallon.

Housing: In 1971, with the construction of the seven new homes, the residents of the Native Village of Dot Lake moved out of their old homes and into their new homes. In conjunction with this housing project, a utility building was also constructed. This building contained three washers and two dryers, a rest room, a shower, a central heat plant, a back-up generator, a well, and water storage tanks. The “Old Village” was abandoned and the structures used for storage. Between 1971 and 1980, three additional homes were constructed. One large log home was constructed by an individual. The other two were small log structures, constructed by the Village Council, with funding received through grants. Between 1980 and 2000, Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) the Regional Indian Housing Authority for our area, constructed six single family homes. These homes were constructed within the Dot Lake Native Corporation’s Shareholders’ Subdivision. The subdivision had been developed under the authority of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), and provided a one acre lot to each of the original forty-five shareholders of the Corporation. In addition to these homes, IRHA also constructed a tri-plex on two of the sub-division lots that had been transferred to the Dot Lake Village Council. These units were originally occupied by some of our young couples, but in 2007, IRHA closed the tri-plex down because of economic reasons.



ONE OF THE SINGLE FAMILY IRHA HOMES



THE IRHA TRI-PLEX, PRESENTLY CLOSED UP

Two small frame homes and one larger log home were also constructed under the Housing Improvement Program (HIP). As of April 2008, there were a total of nineteen single family homes and one tri-plex within the village area. Of these, fourteen were occupied, one was uninhabitable, four were unoccupied and the tri-plex was closed down. There is an unmet need, at the present time, for winterization of some of these homes. The homes constructed in 1971 were 2X4 frame homes, with limited insulation. These homes are in need of additional insulation, improved windows and doors and, in some cases, interior upgrading. Also, the central heat and water system, that serves the homes constructed in 1971, is in dire need of upgrading. During the winter of 2007-2008, there was one major water leak and one major heat leak. If this system fails, all seven homes could be lost. Some of these homes have oil or wood backup for heat but if the main system goes down the water lines would freeze and break.

Community Buildings: In the early 1970's, a thirty-five by fifty foot log community hall was constructed using federal grant funds. The community hall has served as a place for social gatherings, such as community dinners, weddings, potlatches, birthday parties, public meetings, funerals and even for high school graduations. Between 1980 and 1983, a forty by fifty foot log addition was added to the community hall. During 1985, we constructed an equipment storage building. In 1990, we relocated the old school building to the village area and converted it into a wood storage and woodworking shop. In 1995, we constructed a new utility building that contained a laundry facility, showers, restrooms, water storage and central heat plant.



DOT LAKE COMMUNITY CENTER

Health Care: In 1976, a sixteen foot by twenty-five foot, log addition was added to the original community hall. This addition was intended to be a village clinic. The clinic was staffed by one primary health aide or an alternate, if the primary health aide was not available. Health services are provided by Tanana Chiefs Health Authority (TCHA), which is a department within the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the non-profit Native Corporation for Interior Alaska. TCHA administers health services through grants and contracts from both state and federal governments. Village health aides and alternates are trained in village health surveillance and preventive health care. Within a few years, because of the poor design and lack of heat and water, the clinic became unserviceable and had to be replaced. A new clinic was incorporated into the new addition to our community hall in 1983. Additional health care is available at the Tok Clinic, a distance of fifty miles or Delta Junction, a distance of sixty miles. We also receive some services from the public health nurse from Delta Junction. Dental care is provided through visits by the TCC Dental Clinic or a dentist in Tok. The public health nurse, on her visits, deals primarily with preventive health care, conducts clinics in prenatal care, family planning and well baby and child care. She also gives immunizations, deals with communicable disease prevention and treatment, home visits and referral. Patients requiring extensive medical treatment are typically taken to hospitals in Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Glennallen. In emergencies, patients can be evacuated by private vehicle, air charter, or ambulance from Tok or Delta Junction.



DOT LAKE CLINIC

Education: The first school opened in Dot Lake approximately 1953. It was a small twelve by twenty-four foot wood frame structure. The school did not have inside plumbing or running water. Heat was provided by a wood stove. The first class consisted of fifteen students, ranging in age from six to eighteen. For some of the children this was their first exposure to formal education. Mr. Alsa F. Gavin was the first teacher at Dot Lake. He had taught at Eagle the previous year, but upon closure of that school, applied for and received the position as teacher at Dot Lake.

Between 1953 and 1963, a new school had been constructed at a new location (Lot 1 of U.S. Survey No. 4285). The new school had inside plumbing and heat was provided by an oil stove. This structure was larger than the old school. It was approximately twenty-four by sixty-four feet and was divided into a classroom and living quarters for the teacher. The structure was what was called an earthquake proof building and was constructed with two by four walls, re-enforced with threaded rod. This school served the village and the community for a number of years until the present school was constructed.

The next school, which was constructed in 1977, contained two classrooms, a lunchroom, bathrooms, a boiler room and an office. Between 1977 and 1985, an addition was added to the school, which included a new classroom, bathroom, a gym and another office. This is the school that presently serves Dot Lake. At the present time, our school is a part of the Alaska Gateway School District (AGSD) and is a K-12 school.



THE FIRST SCHOOL AT DOT LAKE



ONE OF THE EARLY CLASSES AT DOT LAKE SCHOOL



THE SECOND SCHOOL AT DOT LAKE



SCHOOL PRESENTLY AT DOT LAKE

Past and Present Economy and Employment: In the beginning, residents of Dot Lake depended on trapping, seasonal jobs, the sale of arts and craft items, or outside support for income. Shortly after being settled, Fred and Jackie Vogel constructed a lodge, which was outside the village area. This business offered some employment for village residents. With the belief that there were children in the surrounding area that needed a good home, Fred and Jackie added on to the lodge and made a small children's home. In later years, they constructed a larger children's home on their homestead, which they named The North Star Children's Home. During the time they owned the home they operated it by themselves. The home was sold to Carl and Ruth Charles, who also operated it themselves for a few years and then sold it to a Christian group from North Pole, Alaska. They operated it until approximately 1996, at which time they closed it up. During this time, it employed approximately six to eight individuals, all of which were non locals. While the home was in operation it provided a home for anywhere from five to fifteen children at a time. Most of these children were wards of the State and were placed at the home until their family life stabilized or they reached the age of eighteen. The State of Alaska paid a set amount for each child placed at the home.

As time went by, residents realized that in order to make a living, they would be required to seek employment outside the village. A number of the village residents worked at seasonal jobs, road construction being the primary way of making a living. Today, there are still a limited number of job opportunities available for Dot Lake residents. There is a health aide at the village clinic, a Tribal Family Youth Specialist (TFYS), a Tribal Administrator and a Health Aide, (employed by TCC), a village maintenance person, an Administrative Assistant, a Tribal Environmental Protection Agency Specialist and an Indian Child Welfare Coordinator (employed by the Village

Council), a school maintenance person, a Teacher's Aide and one or two teachers (employed by the AGSD). During the fire season, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employs some residents as firefighters. Some residents depend on seasonal construction jobs, sale of Native arts and crafts, or trapping to supplement their income.

Local Government: Dot Lake is an unincorporated community within the unorganized borough of the State of Alaska. As such, they are represented, at the state level, by the State of Alaska Legislature. The Native Village of Dot Lake is a federally recognized Alaskan Native Tribe, governed by a five member Traditional Council elected by the Tribal members. The five member village council is recognized by the federal government as the authorized governing body for the Tribe, and as such, is authorized to administer a number of federal programs. The federal programs, presently administered by the village council, include the Indian Child Welfare program, a BIA Roads program, an Environmental Protection Agency program and a BIA contract. These programs provide the majority of funding for the Tribe.

The Dot Lake Native Corporation is governed by a five member Board of Directors. One member of the Board of Directors also serves on the Village Council.

The highway community is represented by a non-profit organization (the Dot Lake Services Corporation). In the past, this organization has been eligible for and has received funding through the State of Alaska Revenue Sharing and Capital Projects Programs. Because of the reduction in population this organization is no longer eligible for funding from the State of Alaska, which in the past has required a minimum of twenty-five residents living together in a social unit.

Land Ownership: In the late 1940's or early 1950's, Peter Charles, Andrew Isaac and Fred Vogel applied for and received small lots in Dot Lake. Fred received U.S. Survey No. 3124, Peter received U.S. survey No. 3217, and Andrew received U.S. Survey No. 3123. Fred Vogel later applied for and received a one hundred sixty acre homestead, U.S. Survey No. 4325. Alsa Gavin also received a small lot, U.S. Survey No. 3614, on which he built a home. In addition to these private lands, there are four Native allotments in the area of Dot Lake.

Peter Charles and Andrew Isaac constructed homes on their lots, which are located within the Native Village of Dot Lake. Paul Henry, Abraham Luke and Gene Henry also had homes on their Native Allotments. The other Native Allotment remains unimproved.

Fred constructed a lodge, a motel and two churches on his smaller lot. The lodge has been sold a number of times and today is a private residence. The motel now belongs to the Vogel's granddaughter and as of April 2008, is unoccupied, and the churches remain in the ownership of a religious group. Fred constructed a children's home on part of his homestead and sub-divided the rest into smaller lots to be sold. Mr. Gavin's lot was sub-divided into two lots and sold.

By the mid to late 1960's, additional non-native families had moved into the area. This, coupled with the military facility located only sixty miles away at Fort Greely, began to affect the subsistence resources and the lifestyle of the village residents. Our village elders could see that in the not so distant future, their traditional and cultural ways would be lost. Something had to be done and very soon or future tribal members would not have anything. Peter and Andrew set about attempting to secure their valued lifestyle. On December 25, 1965, Peter Charles passed away at Dot Lake. Andrew

continued with the fight to preserve the land and lifestyle. Andrew was very active during the time ANCSA was being passed and made a number of trips to Washington D.C. to speak before Congress.

The idea of land ownership was alien to Peter and Andrew. As traditional Athabascan Natives, they respected the land and the rights of individuals to use it. It was their custom to respect areas of land that was used by individuals and/or families. Athabascan people would not go into an area that was used by another person without permission. They knew who hunted, fished, trapped, or utilized areas of land. It was their way to respect this use and not violate the boundaries. This new Western concept of land ownership had changed the way Native people looked at the land.

In 1971, Congress passed ANCSA. At first, everyone was happy because they believed that now the Natives would receive title to their lands. This was not the case. The Act required that each village form a corporation under the laws of the State of Alaska. These corporations would select land and receive title to it. They would also receive the cash settlement. The idea of land ownership and corporations was alien to most Native people. Large sums of money were wasted in an attempt to form and operate the ANCSA corporations. Village Councils were the governing bodies for the tribes, but the land and cash resources went to the ANCSA corporations. Dot Lake Native Corporation was formed, with forty-five original shareholders and governed by a five member board of directors. They were entitled to approximately sixty-nine thousand acres of land around the Native Village of Dot Lake. The selections were originally based on subsistence needs of the Tribe. After the corporation received its' land base, it was caught between the need to protect the natural resources and the land for subsistence activities and the mandate to show a profit for the shareholders. In 1980, the corporation received interim conveyance (IC) to most of their land entitlement.

Three of the seven homes that were constructed in 1971, were constructed on private lands. The remaining four were constructed on what eventually became Dot Lake Native Corporation lands. One of these has since been transferred to the family that occupied the land in 1971. The remaining three were transferred to the Village Council and two of them, in turn transferred to individual families, leaving one belonging to the Village Council.

During 1987, the Dot Lake Native Corporation developed a fifty-three lot subdivision under the authority of section 1407 of ANILCA. Each lot was one acre in size. One lot was assigned to each of the forty-five original corporation shareholders or their estate. The remaining eight lots were eventually conveyed to the Dot Lake Village Council. IRHA homes were constructed on two of these lots and the Tri-plex was constructed on two of the other lots, the remaining four lots are presently vacant.

During the mid 1980's, the corporation also developed a thirty-nine lot recreational subdivision at George Lake. As of May 2008, twenty of these lots have been sold to either the State of Alaska or individuals. Income from these sales has provided small dividends for the shareholders over the years.

During 1990, the Native Corporation initiated the process of transferring certain land to the State of Alaska in trust for a future municipality. This was a requirement under Section 14(c)(3) of ANCSA. By the end of 1990, the corporation had transferred approximately one hundred fifty acres to the state and received a "Certificate of Satisfaction" in January 1991. The area transferred included the village landfill, village

cemetery, village roads, green-belt areas, woodcutting areas, recreational areas and village expansion areas. The Village Council filed for and received the lands, occupied by our community hall, central utility building, voc/ed building and equipment storage building.

The remaining corporation land remains undeveloped and is utilized by Tribal members and shareholders for subsistence uses, such as fishing, hunting, trapping and berry picking.

A number of years ago, prior to his passing away, Traditional Chief Andrew Isaac told the President of the Dot Lake Village Council:

“God put the land here for all to use, for no one to own. Families and individuals used areas for hunting, fishing, trapping, berry picking and other subsistence activities. Other families and individuals respected these areas and would not use them unless invited to do so by that family or individual. This was our traditional way. Today it is not like that, people just go out and hunt or fish anywhere. If I were to leave one of my trap lines for a year, someone would move in and use it. That is not our way.”



TRADITIONAL CHIEF ANDREW ISSAC
FRIST TRADITIONAL CHIEF OF TANANA CHIEF'S CONFERENCE

Communications and Electricity: Telephone and electric service in the area is presently provided by Alaska Power and Telephone Company (AP&T). Historically, telephone service was provided through the use of what was referred to as “the farmers’ lines”, these were the old military telephone line that had been installed along the highway. At the time, there were about seven subscribers, all on the same line, with different rings for each subscriber. During this same time, electrical power was provided by the Dot Lake Power Company, using a diesel fired generator. The power was not very dependable and would range anywhere from 55 cycles to 66 cycles. It was useless for such items as electric clocks that depended on a steady sixty cycle power supply. In 1982, AP&T obtained the utility rights for the area and upgraded the generation system to make it more dependable and insure a steady sixty cycle supply. At the same time, AP&T also obtained the telephone system and used the old farmer lines.

About 1990, AP&T constructed a power line from their station in Tok to Dot Lake. Initially, they installed a power line in the old telephone poles, using an earth return. This system did not work well, as it interfered with the telephones. Eventually, they constructed a telephone station at Dot Lake and discontinued the use of the telephone lines. Today there are about twelve individual subscribers, in addition to six phone lines at the village council office, one at the school, one at our Alcohol Office and one at the village clinic. All of these are private lines. Presently we receive our electric power from the electric generating station in Tok.

Basic residential telephone service cost approximately twenty-six dollars a month, while commercial service is approximately thirty-eight dollars per month. This is compared to the cost in 1980, that was eleven dollars for residential and fourteen dollars for commercial. Electricity, for residential use, for the month of March 2008, had an electric rate @ 15.81 cents per KWH plus an energy charge of 25.10 cents per KWH, for a total of 43.91 cents per KWH. The energy cost changes, as the price of diesel fuel changes. Our electrical costs are presently subsidized by the State of Alaska, through their Power Cost Equalization program (PCE).

Most families within Dot Lake have a radio and can, because of a relay that has been installed in the area, tune into KJNP radio station. We also have access to Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS), which is a state operated television station. Some families have subscribed to satellite T.V., such as Dish Network. Newspapers read by areas residents include the Tok Mukluk News, the Delta Wind, the Fairbanks Daily News Miner and the Anchorage Daily News. Mail is delivered from Fairbanks six days a week, to the local Post Office.

Water, Sewer and Solid Waste: Eight of the homes within the village and the village utility building are connected to the central water system. Ten homes within the village have individual wells. The tri-plex, the school, the Village Council office and the Community Hall, also have individual wells. At the present time, all occupied homes within the village have wells or are connected to the central water system. Outside the village area, most of the residences have individual wells.

During September and October of 1984, a central septic system was installed in the village. This project was accomplished through a Memorandum of Agreement between Indian Health Services and the Village of Dot Lake. It consisted of approximately 1,000 feet of 8 inch PVC arctic pipe, three manholes and two cleanouts, a 5,000 gallon septic tank with approximately 10,000 feet of drain field with 1,000 feet of leach pipe and 12 each 4 inch PVC arctic pipe service lines and house connections. During June 1994, the central septic system was upgraded to include a second drain field. Approximately 420 feet of 8 inch PE pipe with filter sock was installed in the new 4,200 foot drain field. A diverter valve was installed so we could rotate the fields as needed.

At the present time, all of the homes, that are serviced by the central water system, including the village utility building, are also serviced by a central septic system. The remaining homes within the village area have individual septic systems. The tri-plex and the school have individual septic systems, while the Office Complex and the Community Hall share a septic system.

The Village Council developed a landfill, approximately one and a half mile from the core village area. The landfill is located on 14(c) (3) lands that had been transferred to the State of Alaska in trust. In the mid 1990's, the village council installed a "burn box" at the landfill. Residents haul their own trash and place it in the burn box, which in turn is burned, prior to being emptied into the landfill trench. This has greatly reduced the amount of trash. It has also reduced the problem with ravens, seagulls and bears in the area. We are presently in the process of applying for funding to install an additional burn box and recycle bins at the landfill.



BURN BOX PRESENTLY BEING USED AT DOT LAKE

Public Safety: At the present time, the only fire protection available to the residents at Dot Lake is a “Project Code Red System,” that was obtained a few years ago. It consists of two small six foot by four foot trailers, containing a limited amount of fire fighting equipment. In addition, a number of homes have individual fire extinguishers. There is a volunteer fire department located in Tok, fifty miles away, and one located in Delta Junction, sixty-five miles away. The Alaska State Troopers based in Tok provide law enforcement services upon request. Recently, they have been making weekly visits to the village. Wildfire protection is provided by the Bureau of Land Management.

Social Services: Tanana Chiefs Conference has a variety of programs available to the Native residents of Dot Lake, including general assistance, employment assistance and information, vocational training assistance, realty, energy assistance, weatherization and agricultural assistance. Most of these programs are administered through their employee, the TFYS, within the village. In addition, the Village Council administers the Indian Child Welfare program for their tribal members, and is available to provide assistance, as required, for such things as medical travel for tribal members, through a number of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programs.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

As the governing body for the Native Village of Dot Lake, the Dot Lake Village Council established the following set of Goals and Objectives:

1. Provide for the health and well being of village residents.
2. Provide for training of local residents to allow for employment and economic development.
3. Develop an economic base for the village, without adverse effects on their way of life.
4. Develop procedures for the transfer of land to village control, so that a land base would be available for all future tribal members.
5. Provide a sense of security for village residents and to preserve their way of life.
6. Provide equipment and facilities for local use, to improve individual and village lifestyles.

With these goals in mind, the Village Council set about attempting to improve the lives of village residents. Oil revenues had started to increase the State’s capital funding, so the Village Council applied for and received funding from both state and federal sources to accomplish some of their goals and objectives. Following are some of some of the projects accomplished by the village council over the years:

1. Our first large capital project was the fifty foot by forty foot log addition to our old community hall. This project was accomplished between 1981 and 1983. The new addition was designed to contain three nine foot by twelve foot offices for village staff, a seventeen foot by fifteen foot kitchen, two ten foot by nine foot bathrooms, a fifteen foot by forty foot recreation room, a small utility room and a small storage room and a clinic. The project was completely constructed, using local labor. It provided employment and training for a number of our youth, as reflected in the pictures.

2. During 1984, an eleven hundred foot cinder block, cement and steel utilidor, for the central heat and water system was constructed. The new system was buried three to five feet deep. The utilidor contained a four inch galvanized water supply line and two inch heat lines. This project was needed, because the original utilidor was a plastic water line and black iron heat lines incased in insulation and buried approximately eighteen inches deep. This system was being broken and required a large amount of maintenance.
3. During 1985, we constructed a fifty-four by forty foot equipment storage building and purchased a five yard dump truck. The storage building was used to store village equipment and as a shop for equipment maintenance. The dump truck has been used in a number of our construction projects, to haul gravel and also to transport our heavy equipment.
4. During 1986, in conjunction with a state highway project, the Village Council contracted to have the village roads paved. This project greatly improved life within the village, by reducing the dust that had been created by having dirt roads in the village area.
5. During 1987, the landfill area was improved by covering all the old fill areas, installing approximately eleven hundred of fencing, and identifying designated areas for old vehicles, metal waste, scrap wood, burnable trash and household trash.
6. During 1990, we had the old twenty-four foot by sixty-four foot old school building that we had obtained from the state in 1987, relocated to the village area, leveled, skirted and renovated into a woodworking and wood storage area.
7. During 1993, we purchased a John Deer 570B, motor grader. This equipment has been very helpful in maintaining our village roads and the landfill area.
8. During 1995, through a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, we constructed a new utility building. This building was divided into two sections. One section contained three new washing machines, three clothes dryers, two showers, two restrooms and a utility room. The other section contained four, five hundred thousand BTU boilers, three water storage tanks, a water treatment room, a storage room and a day tank for boiler fuel.
9. During 1995, the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation, constructed roads within the shareholders sub-division, to include the road from the village to the landfill area.
10. During 1997, we constructed a playground and picnic area within the village.
11. During 1998, we installed a four thousand, four hundred gallon wood fired boiler. This system was designed to supplement our oil fired boilers that provide heat for seven homes and the utility building. This project was funded by and coordinated through the State of Alaska, Department of Energy, and was designed as a test project for wood burning boilers in remote areas that have ample supplies of wood.
12. During 2003, we replaced the ceiling in the old part of the community hall. We also improved the drainage in the area of our equipment storage building to prevent runoff from entering the building during spring breakup.

13. During 2004, we upgraded the kitchen area and the restrooms in the community hall.

In addition to the above projects, the village council has also installed street lights in part of the village, obtained a burn box at our landfill for household trash, replaced the skirting and insulation on seven homes, constructed arctic entrances for the community hall, replaced interior sheetrock on one elders home, completely renovated one log home for a young couple, coordinated the installation of three wells and septic systems for individual homes, constructed a twenty-eight foot by fifty foot office complex that contained five offices for village council staff. We also completely renovated our health clinic, to provide a larger exam room, a health aide office, an alternate health aide office and a waiting room.



VILLAGE UTILITY BUILDING



VILLAGE COUNCIL OFFICE COMPLEX

TRADITIONS AND CULTURE:

Because of the loss of our elders, Doris Charles in 2002 and the recent loss of Gene Henry, we are dependent on the knowledge they have passed on to the next generation. It is hopeful that the stories told and the knowledge these and other elders, such as Traditional Chief Andrew Isaac, Maggie Isaac, Abraham Luke and Eva Luke can be passed on to our younger generation. One of the main reasons for this writer taking on the assignment of preparing this document was to record some of the knowledge that had been passed on to him.

Potlatches: There are three types of potlatches traditionally given within the Upper Tanana Region of Alaska. They are a funeral potlatch, a memorial potlatch and what may be called a general potlatch. Each of these potlatches are very distinct and have individual traditions to follow. A discussion of each type is covered later in this section.

Historically a potlatch could last for a month. This was because people traveled great distances to attend and would travel by foot, riverboat or dogsled to reach a village. Today, with modern travel most people can reach the village giving the potlatch within a day, and most potlatches last for one to three or four days.

The family giving a potlatch is expected to feed their guests during the time the potlatch is being given. In the old days, meals would consist primarily of wild meat, such as moose, caribou, sheep, muskrat, and beaver. Berries, roots, and other types of local foods would also be included. With the arrival of western foods, fry bread, potatoes and

other western foods began to appear. Normally, one main meal would be prepared in the evening for the guests. Guests were expected to take food with them after the meal, to be eaten and fed to other family members the following day. In the old days, children were not allowed in the community hall and only adults would receive food. During the day, guests would visit and socialize with one another. During this time, elders would get together and tell stories to some of the younger people. They would also compose songs and practice them, to be sung later when they all assembled to eat, dance, sing and give speeches. In the evening, everyone gathers at the community hall for the evening meal, after which the singing and dancing will commence. Because they were not allowed inside, the children would gather outside and look in to observe what was happening. In this way, they would learn about the potlatch. During the singing and dancing, the dancers would always have something in their hands, such as a scarf or they would be wearing gloves.

Today, the family giving the potlatch will normally feed their guests breakfast, a small lunch and have a main meal in the evening. Soup, sandwiches, coffee and tea will normally be available throughout the day. Cooks will work all day in preparation for the evening meal, which is a very large meal, consisting of such things as boiled moose meat, fried moose meat and other wild meats, chicken, turkey, ham, moose soup, salads, fry bread, fish, berries, pilot bread, spaghetti, cakes, cookies and cup cakes. Normally, the boiled moose meat will be prepared outside, in large pots, over an open fire. The boiled meat will be stored in boxes until time for the evening meal. The broth from the boiled moose will be used as a base for the moose soup. In addition to these foods, some delicacies, such as moose head soup, moose stomach, moose heart, moose liver, beaver, or half dried and baked muskrat will also be prepared and served to special guests or elders.

The last night of the potlatch, the family hosting the potlatch will have what is called a giveaway. At this time, the family will place a large tarp or cloth on the floor of the community hall, on which to place the gifts they intend to give away. It is believed that this tarp or cloth represented the family's wealth and good luck, and once it is placed on the floor, guests were expected to remain quiet and not walk around. Only family members and clan members are allowed to walk on this tarp or cloth, because if others walked on it they would take the family's wealth and good luck with them. The gifts may consist of rifles, blankets, beaded gloves and moccasins and necklaces. Gifts may also include such items as axes, knives, pots, pans, dishes or other items of value. For a funeral potlatch, the shovels, axes and picks used to dig the grave and the rope used to lower the casket into the grave, are usually given to the pall bearers as gifts. Two of the most prized gifts are the rifle and the Hudson Bay White Blanket.

If an individual is given a gift, they are not allowed to give it away. They may sell the gift and buy something for themselves. If they do give the gift to another person, they are insulting the family that gave it to them. Normally, the men of the family hosting the potlatch will wear beaded vests and the women will wear beaded or decorated jackets or coats. Family members may also wear beaded moccasins and necklaces. Individuals handling the gifts will normally wear gloves while giving out the gifts. The intent of the potlatch is to have the host family give away their wealth, to show that material things mean little to them and to honor the person for which the potlatch is being given. Traditionally, a poor person giving away all his possessions was bestowing more honor than

a rich person giving away a large amount that represented only a small portion of his wealth.

Traditionally, the host family would buy back some of the gifts and/or would cut a small piece from some of the blankets given away, as a way of retaining their wealth and to start over. During the giveaway, the family will give gifts to their guests. Only individuals from the opposite clan will receive gifts. This is a very important time for the family. They have to be very careful that they do not insult someone by giving a gift to someone that is related to them, because this would mean that they are not considered to be related. There have been incidents in the past, where gifts have intentionally been given to a person that is related to show that they are not considered as a relative. Some individuals also believe that because a spirit may be waiting to steal their luck and wealth, gifts should not be taken out through the same door they are carried in through.



THE LAYING OUT OF THE CLOTH

The above picture shows a female family member laying out their cloth, prior to bring out the gifts that are to be given out.



HUDSON BAY BLANKETS BEING STACKED
PRIOR TO BEING GIVEN AWAY

The above picture shows ten of the twelve Hudson Bay blankets that were given out at a recent funeral potlatch. These are considered as one of the most prized gifts.



THE LAYING OUT OF GIFTS



THE LAYING OUT OF GIFTS



THE LAYING OUT OF GIFTS



THE LAYING OUT OF GIFTS



THE GIVING OUT OF GIFTS

The above photographs were taken at a recent funeral potlatch given at Dot Lake in 2007. The gifts consisted of 48 ea. 30/30 rifles, 4 ea. 22 cal rifles, 1 ea. 50 cal. Black powder rifle, 12 ea. Hudson Bay blankets, 32 L.L. Bean white Trapper blankets, 19 ea. Other white blankets, 54 ea. Mexican blankets, 18 ea. Comforters, 60 ea other blankets, 28 ea. Coddle wraps, 6 ea. Sleeping bags, 1 ea. 2 hp Honda outboard motor, 16 ea. Collector's plates. In addition, an assortment of dish pans, fishing poles, ear rings, birch bark baskets, a set of stainless steel bowls, and approximately \$ 4,000.00 in cash was given out.

Notifications of a Potlatch: In the old days, runners would be sent out from the village which would be hosting a potlatch. These runners would travel to different villages in the area to invite people and honored guests. The runners would ask the individuals to “come and have tea with the family”. Today, key individuals in different villages and honored guests are normally contacted by telephone and invited. Anyone wishing may attend a potlatch, as it is a means of sharing, which is one of the strong cultural traits of the Alaskan Native people. In the old days, material or scarves would line the trails to the village to show guests the way. This tradition has all but been lost. Only one recent funeral potlatch lined the road leading into the village with cloth.



ROAD LEADING INTO THE VILLAGE



Funeral Potlatch: When an individual passes away, planning for a potlatch begins. Friends will travel to the village of the deceased to visit and console the family. The home of the deceased is, at this time, a very busy place. Family members will be making plans for the funeral, while attempting to feed their visitors and make them comfortable. This helps in keeping their minds off their loss.

Members of the opposite clan will be designated as pall bearers, honorary pall bearers and honored guests. The opposite clan is normally responsible to dress the deceased and will also dig the grave, build the fence to be placed over the grave, build the box in which the casket is to be placed in within the grave.

Members of the deceased clan and family members will begin gathering gifts to be given away the last night of the potlatch. The family will also start a list of those individuals that will be receiving gifts. This can become a very tense and confusing time, as the family must be sure no one is left out and the honored guest receive proper gifts.

Normally, on the day of the funeral, there will be a funeral service, followed by a graveside service and then the burial. The grave will normally be dug the morning of the funeral, because it is believed that the grave should not remain open over night. At times, it is very difficult to dig a grave. In the winter, temperatures can drop to well below zero and the ground may be frozen to depths of two or more feet. In extreme conditions, a large fire is kept burning for twelve to fifteen hours over the area where the grave is to be dug, prior to digging the grave. This helps thaw the ground and makes digging the grave easier. Normally the grave will be dug using shovels, axes and picks.

Traditionally, a white blanket or other highly valued blanket will be placed in the casket with the deceased. Another blanket may also be placed over the box in which the casket was placed. The opposite clan is also responsible to fill the grave.

After the funeral activities are completed, individuals will return to the community hall to visit, sing, dance, have their evening meal and await the giveaway. The songs and dances will be a combination of sorrowful songs and happy songs. These activities are meant to help the family in their time of sorrow. The intent of a funeral potlatch is to honor the deceased and to help relieve the suffering and sorrow of the family, clan and friends of the deceased. It was believed that by bestowing this honor upon their loved one and “putting their loved one away properly” the sadness and sorrow is relieved.

Memorial Potlatch: A memorial potlatch is given in honor of a deceased individual. It may be conducted anytime after the funeral potlatch. One of the reasons for a memorial potlatch would be if the family did not have what they considered enough to give away at the time of the funeral potlatch. Another reason would be relieve the sorrow the family still felt over the loss of a loved one. It follows the same guidelines as for a funeral potlatch, lasting from one to three days.

General Potlatch: This type of potlatch covers many areas. In general, it follows the same guidelines as any other potlatch, with the exception of the reason it is given. This type of potlatch is given for a number of different reasons.

It may be given for an individual that had been seriously ill or injured and had recovered. One could also be given to honor someone for something they had done or just to show the love and admiration someone had for someone else. One such potlatch that was given in Dot Lake was given for a woman in the village. She was in poor health but was preparing for a potlatch to be given in honor of her mother. She and her husband shot a moose for the potlatch, but it fell in a swampy area. The couple worked for hours loading the moose in their boat. The woman could not carry meat because of her health, but spent her time cutting brush and placing it on the ground to provide a more stable footing for her husband.

Upon returning to the village, they stored the moose in their meat house. The next day they started to work on the moose meat to prepare it for the potlatch. After a few hours, they went inside for coffee, during which time, the meat house caught fire and burned to the ground. All the meat that they had worked so hard on was lost. To show the woman how he felt, the husband had a small potlatch for her. He felt so bad that in her poor health, she had worked so hard just to have all the meat lost.

Another type of general potlatch is one given in honor of a child that has made their first kill of an animal, such as a moose or a caribou, or caught their first fish. This is

normally a small potlatch and may consist only of the child giving the meat or fish to an elder, along with some other gifts, such as a pot, money, fishing pole or gun. Normally it is on a more personal level and does not include meals, singing or dancing, although it could, if the family wanted to.

Community Dinners and Activities: Throughout the year, the Village of Dot Lake has a number of activities, such as community dinners on holidays, birthday parties and other types of social gatherings. These are conducted in our community hall and open to all. As Alaskan Natives, the village residents enjoy visiting and sharing with others. On Easter, we have a dinner and an Easter egg hunt for the children. On Christmas, we normally have a big dinner, maybe a play and give gifts to the children. Thanksgiving is another big day with a large dinner. In the spring and fall, there are community clean-ups, followed by a cook out. Most of these activities are coordinated by our Indian Child Welfare Coordinator.



SERVING AT A COMMUNITY DINNER

Subsistence Activities: Subsistence still plays a very important part in the lives of our village residents. The area in and around Dot Lake supports a variety of natural resources, such as moose, caribou, sheep, bear, fur bearers, small game animals, a variety of roots and berries, various waterfowl and fish, such as pike, whitefish, lingcod and grayling. Some of the fur bearers, such as beaver and muskrat, are also used for their meat.

Salmon are not found in the immediate area of Dot Lake, so the residents travel to the Copper River area to obtain their supply of salmon. The Dot Lake people maintain close family ties with the Copper River area, as well as other Upper Tanana Tribes. Subsistence foods are often traded among villages. The whitefish obtained in the Dot Lake area is very prized and often traded for salmon with family members and other individuals from the Copper River (ATHNA) area.

Traditional foods still comprise a major part of the diet for village residents. Meat and fish are dried and in recent times also frozen to preserve them. Berries are normally frozen for winter use and roots are preserved in oil or moose grease. The fur and hides have, in the past, been tanned and used to make moccasins, mukluks, vest, gloves, mittens or other items of clothing. These items are often decorated with intricate beadwork and trimmed with fur. The most common fur, used for trim, is beaver. Tanned moose hide is also used to make small beaded items, such as hair pieces, medallions, checkbook covers, picture frames, key chains, etc. and sold to supplement income. With the passing of our village elders, the art of tanning moose hides into leather has been all but lost locally. Some residents can still obtain smoke tanned hides from Canada or from other villages. These hides have become very expensive, for example a full smoke tanned moose hide may cost in excess of \$600.00.

In the past, Dot Lake residents harvested moose, caribou, sheep and salmon in the Nabesna, Mentasta and Slana Areas, as well as within what is now the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve. With all the changes and restrictions placed on hunting and fishing under the state and federal regulations and the fact that large areas are now considered private property under ANCSA and have been posted, Dot Lake residents, especially the descendants of Doris Charles and Gene Henry, have reduced their use of these areas.

In 1985, based on having been raised in Batzulnetas, along the Copper River and having a Native Allotment at Batzulnetas, Doris Charles, along with Katie John and the Mentasta Village Council filed a lawsuit against the State of Alaska, because the Department Fish and Game had shut down fishing at Batzulnetas and other traditional fish camps along the Copper River. The lawsuit, that latter became known as the “Katie John case,” was finally won and subsistence fishing is now allowed in these areas.

Anthropologist Robert McKennan gave the following description of subsistence activities in the area during the late 1920s: “Fishing at well-known sites in July; moose hunting in the summer; sheep hunting in the fall; then the early migration of caribou; then more moose hunting and quite possibly hunger alleviated somewhat in the late spring by ducks and muskrats; and then again the welcome appearance of the caribou in late May.”

Subsistence patterns vary with the season and the availability of the resource being sought. These patterns have been affected greatly by the fish and game regulations put in

place by the state and federal government, which has established seasons, bag limits and designated areas in which we are allowed to hunt and areas in which we are not allowed to hunt. Following is an example of the traditional subsistence cycle of the Natives of Dot Lake:

1. Traditionally, Dot Lake residents hunted moose during July and August, when the moose were fat and in good shape. Now, because of hunting regulations, they have to hunt moose during September, when there is a good possibility that the bulls may be in rut. Also the moose are not as fat in the fall as they are in the summer. It has been said that you can tell by the gut pile if a moose had been killed by a native or a non-native. If killed by a non-native, the gut pile will often contain the stomach and stomach fat, the liver, the kidneys, the heart, the large intestine and the fat from kidneys and heart. These are taken by natives, as they are considered delicacies. The fat is rendered down into moose grease and canned, which prevents it from turning bad. The grease is used for cooking or to preserve roots. The moose head is skinned out and the meat taken off the skull and used for moose head soup. The chin and nose are also removed from the head. The hair is removed by singeing them over an open fire, after which they are boiled or roasted over hot coals and eaten. The tongue is also removed and boiled, fried or used in moose head soup. The stomach is also used. It is cleaned and boiled and then eaten. The legs are skinned out and the bones placed over an open fire, cracked open and the marrow taken out and eaten. In the past, the hooves would be boiled and eaten, the brains would be used to tan the hide and the lungs fed to dogs. Today, the lungs are not normally taken and the brains and hooves are not used. The lower jawbone can be cleaned and made into a miniature dogsled to be sold as native arts and crafts.



DRESSING OUT A MOOSE

2. Muskrat are trapped in the early spring, when ice is still on the lakes or hunted in the late spring, just after the ice goes off the lakes. The muskrats are skinned for their fur and some of them dried, half dried, or frozen fresh to be eaten.
3. Beaver are trapped through the ice and the fur sold or used for trim on moccasins, mukluks, gloves, mittens or vests. The meat is eaten or preserved by freezing or drying for future use.
4. Traditionally, ducks were hunted in the spring and fall. Thanks to recent changes in the laws, we are again allowed to have spring duck hunts. We are still restricted by limits and types of ducks we are allowed to hunt, but it is an improvement over the period of time we were not allowed to hunt them in the spring. We are also again allowed to gather duck eggs.
5. Most small game, such as rabbits, ptarmigan, ruffed grouse, spruce hens and porcupine are hunted in the late fall and early winter, when they are in season.
6. Traditionally, Dot Lake residents used fish traps, nets, spears and later fish wheels and hook and line to catch fish. They fished when the fish were available. As with moose, most of the fish itself was used. Individuals obtained and used fish oil, the fish eggs were eaten right away or dried for future use, larger fish heads, such as salmon were sometimes boiled and eaten or buried and left to ferment (stink heads). These heads were also considered delicacies and would mostly be eaten by elders. Today, because of restrictions and regulations, we are only allowed to fish at certain times and limits are placed on the number of fish we can get at a time. We are no longer allowed to use fish traps, and the use of a fish wheel or a net requires a special permit. In, what had been our primary salmon area, Batzulnetas, we are restricted to certain days and limits. Historically, salmon that were not in their prime would be dried and used as a winter food supply for dogs. Today, salmon and white fish are the types of fish that are dried. White fish are cut flat, dried and stored for winter use, frozen, or traded for other types of subsistence foods. Salmon are frozen, cut flat (eating fish) or cut in strips and dried for winter use or for trading.
7. Berries, roots, birch wood, birch bark and birch roots are some of the few subsistence resources that have not been affected by regulations establishing seasons and limits. All of these are gathered when they are available. Birch bark and birch roots are gathered in the spring, and used to make birch bark baskets and baby carriers. Wooden spoons, bowls, snowshoes and drum frames are made from white birch. Blue berries and raspberries are picked in the late summer and eaten, made into jelly or jam, syrup, or frozen for winter use. Cranberries are picked in the fall and made into jelly, jam, syrup, or stored for winter use. Eating roots are dug in the fall and eaten or placed in moose grease or oil to preserve them for later use.
8. Dry fish, dry meat, preserved berries, hides, etc. were stored in a cache, which is a wooden structure constructed off the ground to prevent animals from getting into it.



**FISH BEING DRIED AT THE ISAAC FISH CAMP
AT BILLY CREEK**

9. Most individuals process their meat & fish in their meat house.



MEAT HOUSE



INSIDE OF MEAT HOUSE



MEAT HANGING INSIDE MEAT HOUSE



COLLECTION OF MOOSE HORNS



SOME OF THE OLD CACHES AT DOT LAKE

THE HIGHWAY COMMUNITY OF DOT LAKE

The Highway Community of Dot Lake is comprised of U.S Survey No. 3124 and 3124A, containing approximately 11.35 acres; U.S. Survey No. 3614, containing 9.54 acres; and U.S. Survey No. 4325, containing approximately 160 acres. Title to U.S. Survey No. 3124 and U.S. Survey No. 4325 were originally issued to Fred Vogel and title to U.S. Survey No. 3614 was issued to Alsa Gavin. These areas have since been subdivided into smaller parcels and most of the land base sold. U.S. Survey 3124 & 3124A presently contains one lot on which two churches were built, the Dot Lake Community Lakeside Chapel and the Fred Vogel Memorial Chapel, in addition to an unoccupied mobile home and a couple unoccupied cabins; a second lot that contains the old Eagle Rest Motel, which had been turned into a private residence and is now unoccupied; a third lot, on which the old Dot Lake Lodge is located, which is also now a private residence. U.S. Survey No. 4325 has been subdivided into one large lot, on which the old North Star Children's Home, an occupied mobile home, a shop and a few out buildings are located; one smaller lot that had been sold to a construction company for gravel; five small lots, each containing one single family home, only one of which is occupied as of April 18th, 2008. U.S. Survey No. 3614 was subdivided into two lots on which single family homes were built, both of which are presently occupied. The remaining land base, with the exception of the Native Village of Dot Lake and Native Allotments, in the immediate area belongs to the Dot Lake Native Corporation. There are a few easements and right-of-ways in the area.

The Settling of the Highway Community: The first residents, of what is presently referred to the Highway Community of Dot Lake, were a missionary couple, Fred and Jackie Vogel. Fred, after exchanging lots with Peter Charles, thereby obtaining the lot with the greatest amount of highway frontage and a number of old road construction buildings eventually built a wood frame lodge and installed a generator on his land. At the time, the lodge was the only place that had electricity. Around 1954, they built a children's home behind the lodge. They also constructed a small chapel beside the lake, which became known as the Dot Lake Community Lakeside Chapel. During one of the times the old lodge was being leased out, it burned down and was replaced with a new log lodge, with a gas station and a garage. Fred also constructed a motel and three small log cabins on the lot. In addition to these, there are three mobile homes and the parsonage, which was the original schoolhouse that had been relocated. In the 1990,s Fred constructed a new larger church, which was dedicated as "The Vogel Memorial Community Chapel". Fred had this lot subdivided into smaller lots, one for the lodge, one for the motel and the remaining land in the name of the church. All of these, with the exception of the lodge, are vacant and unoccupied. The motel, after being constructed, was operated for a few years by the Vogel's, after which it was operated for two years by two local women and then turned into a private residence, which is presently unoccupied.



THE OLD MOTEL, TURNED INTO A PRIVATE RESIDENCE



THE DOT LAKE LAKESIDE COMMUNITY CHAPEL



INSIDE DOT LAKE LAKESIDE COMMUNITY CHAPEL



THE PARSONAGE



ONE OF THE VACANT MOBIL HOMES



TWO OF THE THREE VACANT LOG CABINS



THE VOGEL MEMORIAL CHAPLE

Eventually, Fred constructed a new larger children's home on his 160 acre homestead. After a few years, the home was sold to Carl and Ruth Charles, who operated it for a number of years and eventually sold it to a Christian group from North Pole, Alaska. This group moved some mobile homes onto the property and operated the home for a number of years until they closed it. Presently the home is not in operation and is looked after by a caretaker. The facility is normally used for about one week a year for a vacation bible school.



THE NORTH STAR CHILDREN'S HOME, PRESENTLY CLOSED

Alsa Gavin constructed a small cabin on his lot in the early 1950's. Being a school teacher, he taught school in Dot Lake on two different occasions, making improvements on his cabin during these times. He eventually subdivided his lot into two smaller lots and sold them. Each of these lots today, contain one single family home, both of which are occupied.

Dot Lake Lodge: The original Dot Lake Lodge was constructed in the early 1940s, after being burned down, a new log structure was constructed. It was operated as a lodge and post office for a number of years and, in the early 2000's, was converted into a private residence, which it is today. The owner still operates our local post office.



**THE OLD LODGE, PRESENTLY A
PRIVATE RESIDENCE WITH POST OFFICE**

After the 1980 census, it was discovered that, based on the fact that the whole area was being considered one community, the Native Village of Dot Lake was in danger of losing some of its' funding because the community was considered as being less than fifty percent native. Prior to the 1990 census, through the efforts of the village, the area was divided into two areas. One of the census areas was designated for the village and the other area was designated for all the remaining area.

The Native Village of Dot had always been governed and represented by their Village Council, while the remaining area had no organized representation. In the mid 1990's, as a result of some controversy between the highway community and the village, the Dot Lake Services Corporation was formed. At the time, there were approximately thirty-five to forty residents living along the highway in the vicinity of the village. By forming this non-profit corporation these residents became eligible for a number of

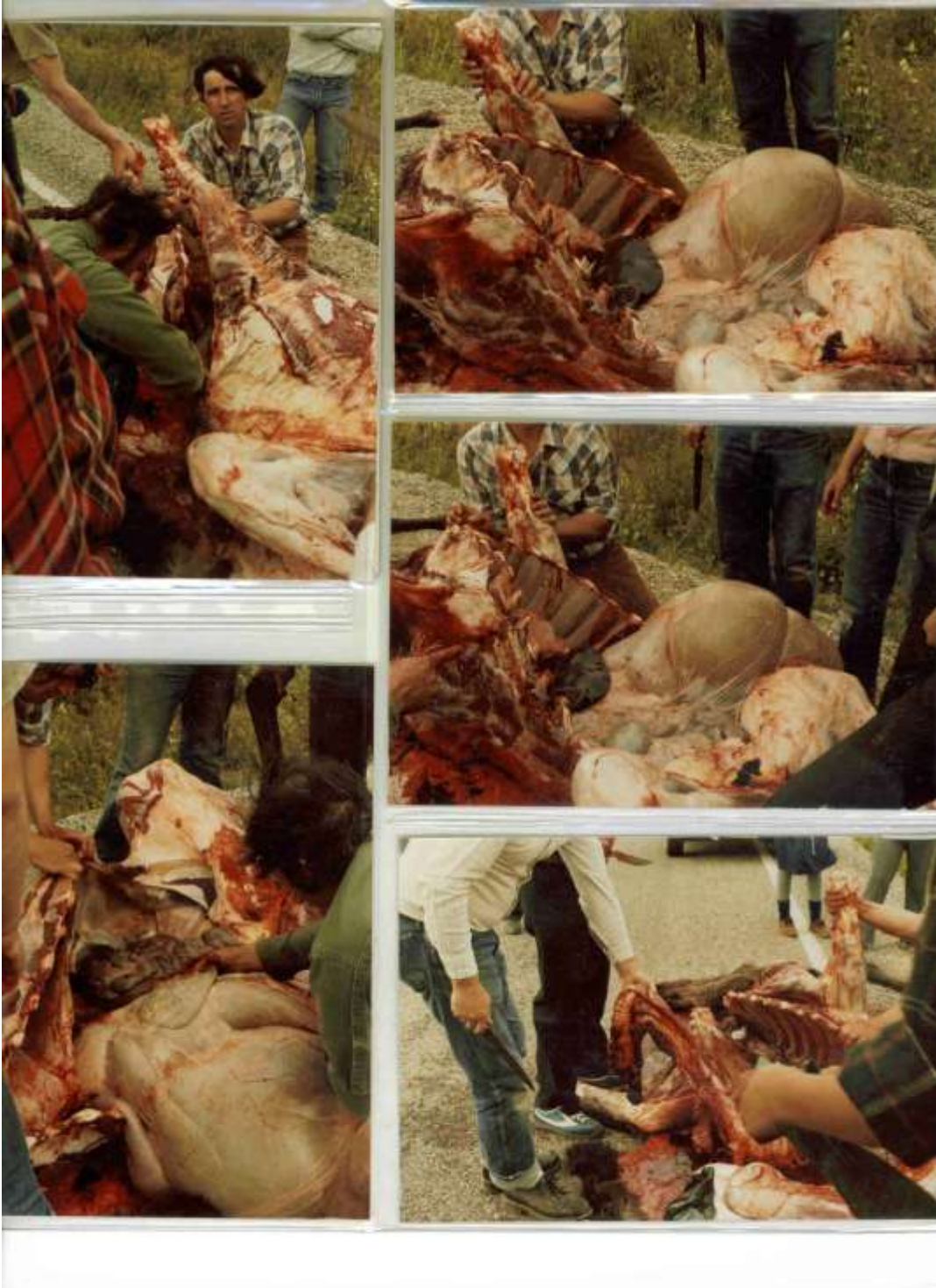
funding programs, including the State of Alaska Revenue Sharing Program. Through some of these programs the highway community was able to receive some funding to provide services to these residents. Utilizing some of the new funding, the Dot Lake Services Corporation purchased a small lot from the children's home and constructed a maintenance small shop on it. They were also able to purchase some pieces of equipment, such as a Bobcat, for the use of their residents. Some of their funding went for emergency equipment for the Emergency Medical Service Team that was active at the time. This team has since been disbanded. Presently, the population along the highway has dropped below the twenty-five person minimum required for state funding and is not eligible for future funding, unless they again reach the minimum level of twenty-five residents. For a number of years there was tension between the Native Village and the highway community. With the departure of some of the residents and the arrival of new residents, the tension has subsided and there is a good working relationship between the Native Village and the highway community.

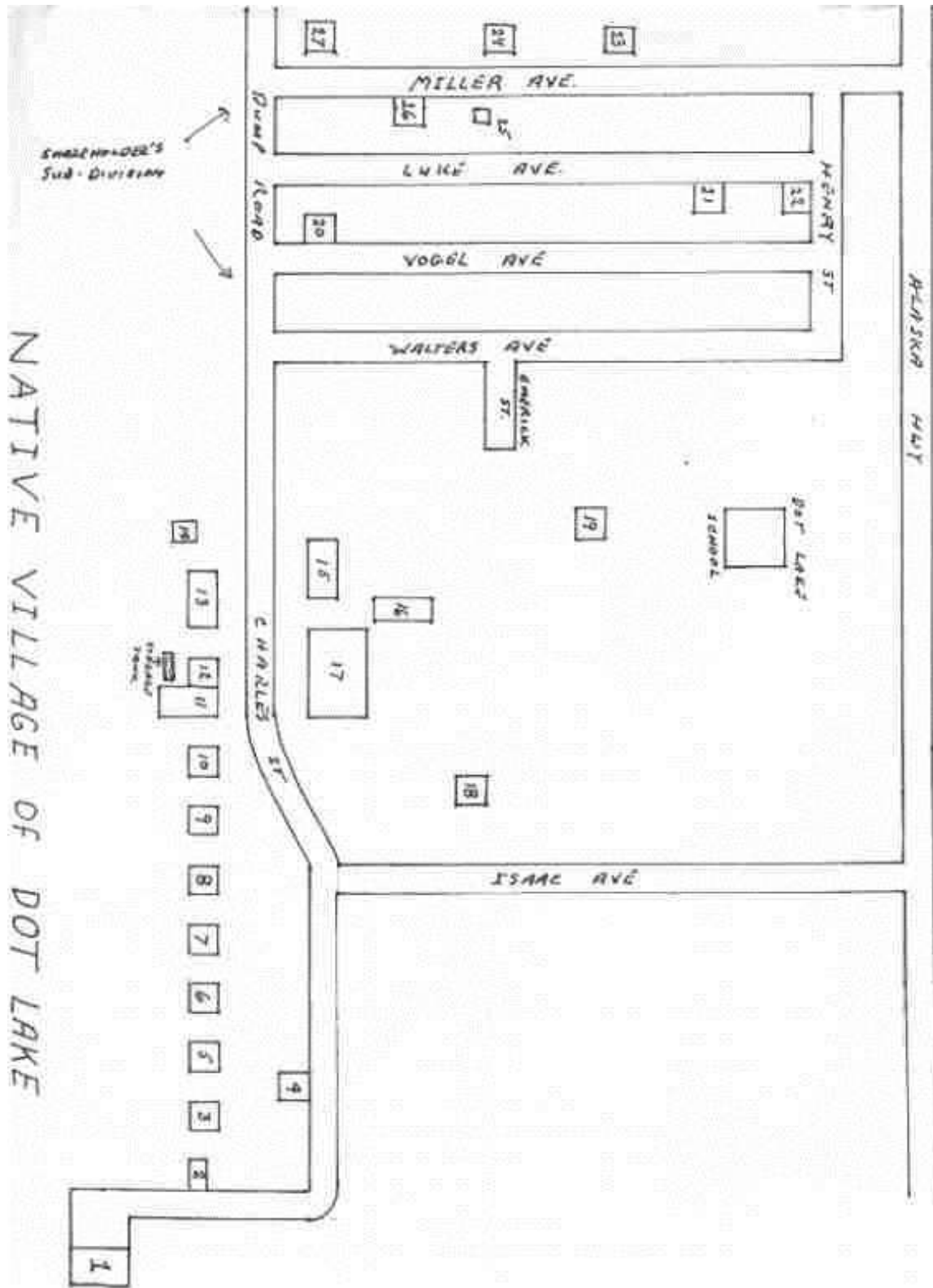


GENE HENRY, LAST OF THE VILLAGE ELDERS

PASSED AWAY IN 2008

FIELD DRESSING A MOOSE



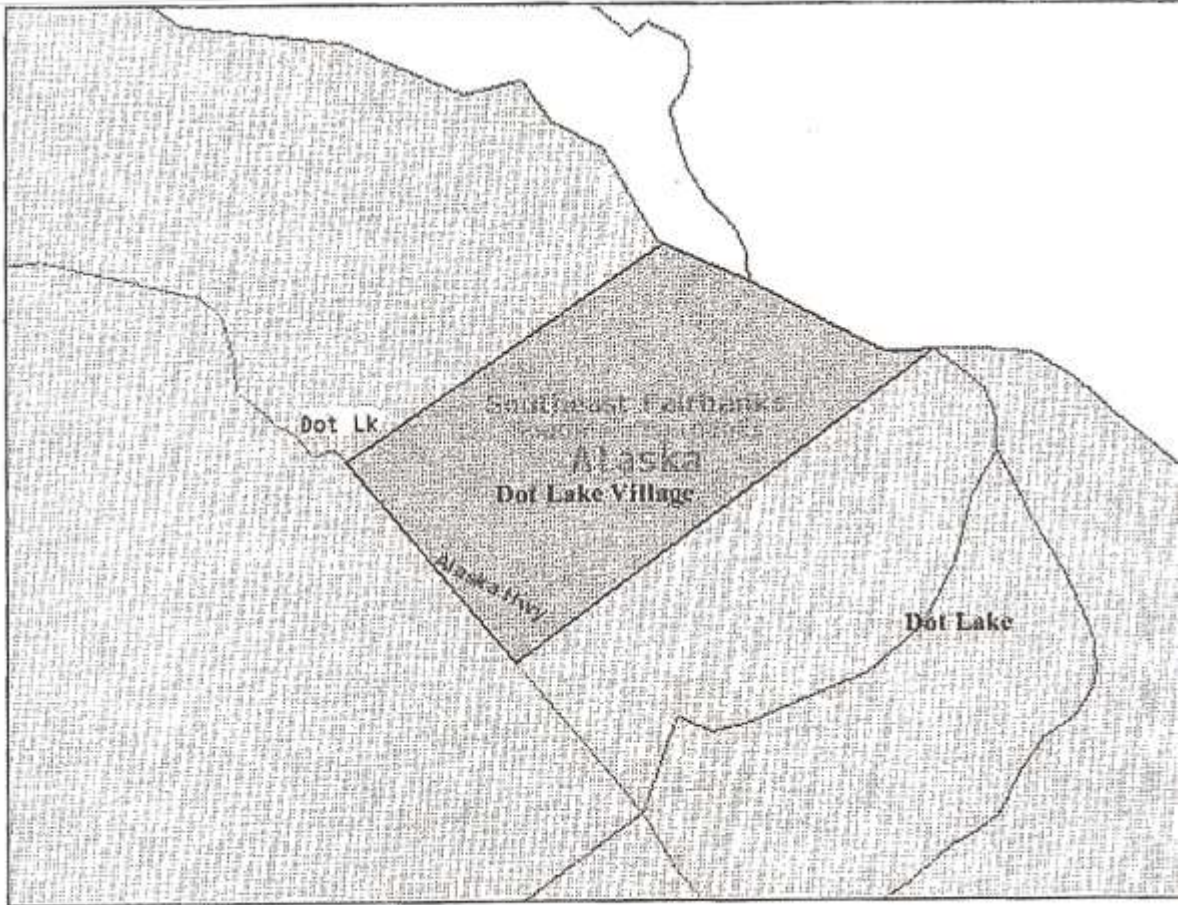


NATIVE VILLAGE OF DOT LAKE

SMITH-HOOD'S
Sub-Division

Dot Lake Village CDP, Alaska - Reference Map - American FactFinder

Dot Lake Village CDP, Alaska



7 miles across



Dot Lake CDP, Alaska - Reference Map - American FactFinder

Dot Lake CDP, Alaska

