

LDIR#052
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
BACKGROUND
MATERIAL
1969-1970

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF LANDS

KEITH H. MILLER, Governor

344-6th AVENUE - ANCHORAGE 99501

March 12, 1969

Dr. Robert A. Frederick, President
Alaska Historical Society
Post Office Box 35
Alaska Methodist University
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Dear Bob:

We have from time to time discussed the future direction of the Alaska Historical Society. To further this discussion I have prepared the enclosed table showing function and source of income for a number of State Historical Societies. This information is from "Independent Historical Societies" by Walter Muir Whitehill, published in 1962 by the Boston Athenaeum. The data is all ten years old by now, but still should serve as a useful comparison.

Further, this information is extracted from Chapter 11 and 12 which deal with state-supported societies, so that many of the older societies which are supported by endowments and membership dues are not covered. For instance, New Hampshire and Connecticut rely almost totally on income from investments (with a book value of \$556,500 for New Hampshire and \$1,338,200 for Connecticut) for operating income. They also have virtually none of the educational or archival functions of the state-supported societies.

The functions that I have noted for the various societies can take various forms and a brief description is probably in order.

Publications - The most universal activity in this field is a publication of general interest circulated to members and occasionally of wider distribution. This is usually a quarterly, but in some states is as frequent as monthly. Membership dues are usually pegged to the cost of this publication.

Most societies also publish monographs and occasionally books on a specific historical subject. Books are usually a commercial venture, with the hope that sales will recover the cost. Monographs and bulletins are usually a membership dividend.

Many societies also issue publications aimed at the younger reader. These are usually distributed through the school system.

TOTEM POLE CRISIS

Princess No Price Dog Salmon is a long way from her native Alaska, but only in a Washington museum can she find a totem pole that decently represents her people.

Princess No Price Dog Salmon is the free English translation of Princess Due Etta Chauc of the Tlinget Indian Tribe. In the office of Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel, where she is a confidential assistant, she is better known as Jo Anna Demmert.

The pretty Miss Demmert's Indian heritage was spotlighted this week by the arrival of an Alaskan delegation bent on saving the rapidly deteriorating symbol of this proud tribe—the totem pole.

A combination of factors has reduced the stock of authentic totems to a mere 44, and unless they are rescued soon, the state of Alaska will be deprived of one of its most cherished ethnic landmarks.

The Smithsonian Institution has a number of them, as do other museums throughout the world. Some have been set up in seven totem parks in Alaska, but almost all have been altered from their original authentic character.

"If we do not save the remaining ones by next spring, they are doomed," said Mrs. Jane P. Wallen, director of the Alaska State Museum at Juneau. "We must have \$200,000 for the cost of gathering them up and for a building in which to store and conserve them."

So it was to the Interior Department and the Smithsonian that she went with other members of the team in quest of funds. The Smithsonian has promised to lend staff assistance and to help in obtaining a grant, if possible.

Princess No Price Dog Salmon is modest about her royal lineage, but comes by it honestly through her late mother, who was a princess in the Raven branch of the tribe.

"My Indian name comes from the fact that nobody wants to buy the lowly dog salmon when king salmon are running," she explained. "In fact dog salmon isn't very good even when king salmon are not running. I don't know whether that makes me priceless or price-less."

Last June the Alaskan government financed a survey of the remaining totem poles in southeast Alaska. It is only there and in coastal British Columbia that authentic totems exist. The poles, up to 110 years old, and from 10 to 63 feet high, tell the story of tribal families in animal and human figures.

Many of the remaining totems, only half of them completely intact, are hidden in the tangled vegetation of abandoned villages.

It took a series of reconnaissance missions by boat and plane to find them. Surveying five different areas were natives who grew up in each section and could point out clumps of trees beneath which totems were decaying.

One of the natives was Miss Demmert's father, 75-year-old Joseph Demmert. Following Eagle tribal custom, he had been committed at birth to marry his eventual wife.

One of Miss Demmert's grandfathers was called Russian Bob. He was more than six feet tall, blond and blue eyed. As an infant he was found under a hitch following one of the natives.

Accompanying article was carried in the Washington Evening Star of November 4. It was written by Star staff Herman Schaden with photo by Star Photographer Francis Routh.

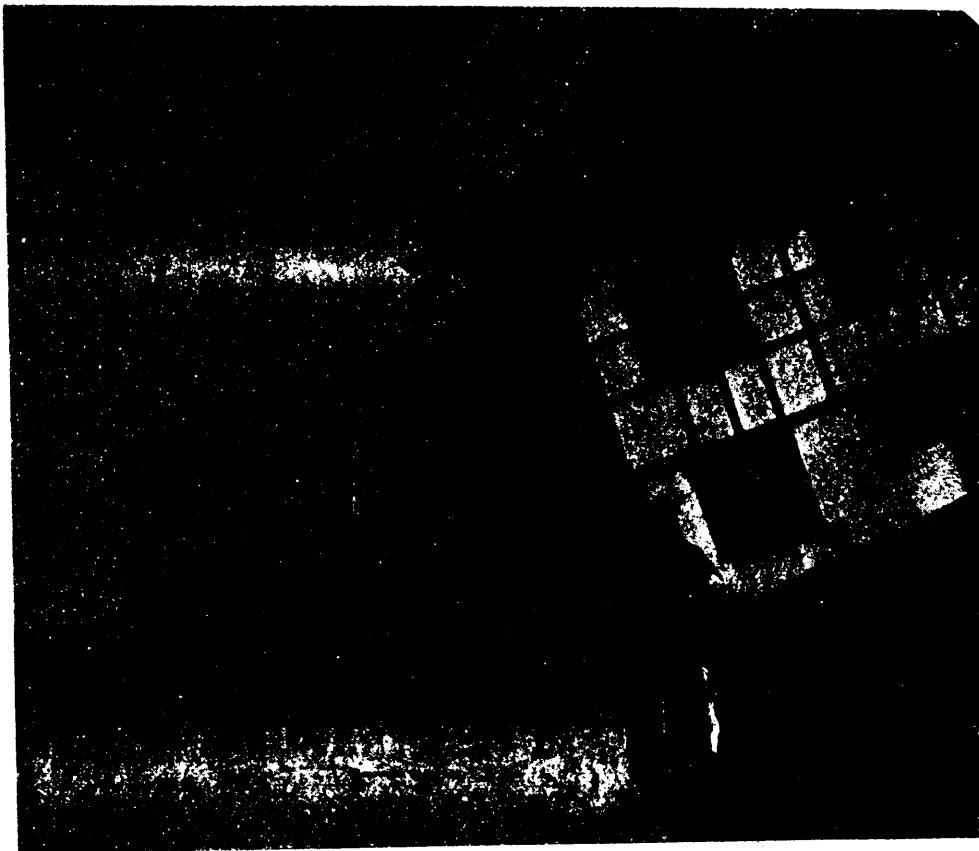
J. O. BREW

Salvage archaeology (in Europe it is called "emergency archaeology") is a term coined to describe the survey and excavation of sites and areas endangered by the technological developments of our expanding economy. In general usage, not only prehistoric, but also paleontological and historical sites have come to be included in our defense against this threat to the common cultural heritage of mankind.

Although there were isolated instances of the study and excavation of threatened historical and archaeological sites during the 19th century and earlier, salvage archaeology was inaugurated as a formal procedure early in this century in Egypt. The original Aswan dam, built in 1902 at the first cataract on the Nile, inundated for part of each year the temples on the island of Philae ("The Pearl of Egypt"). The proposed addition of seven meters to that dam in 1907 would flood the valley of the Nile as far south as the village of Derr, a distance of 250 kilometers. All of the record of human life in the Nile valley for at least a half million years is on the shores of the river; back of that is absolute uninhabitable desert. The realization of the damage to be done by the increase in the height of the dam caused the Egyptian government to set aside funds for a systematic archaeological survey, followed by the necessary excavations. The director of this work was Professor G. A. Reisner of Harvard University, who had for many years been excavating in Egypt from

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Salvage Arch



The
Cook Inlet
Outlet



MASTER PLAN

ALASKA STATE PARK SYSTEM

Theodore G. Smith

August, 1969

HISTORIC PRESERVATION in ALASKA 1970



A BRIEF SUMMARY REPORT TO
THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Washington, D. C.

24th ANNUAL MEETING AND
PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 5-8, 1970

Charleston, South Carolina

THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

4th ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 6-8, 1970

Sitka, Alaska