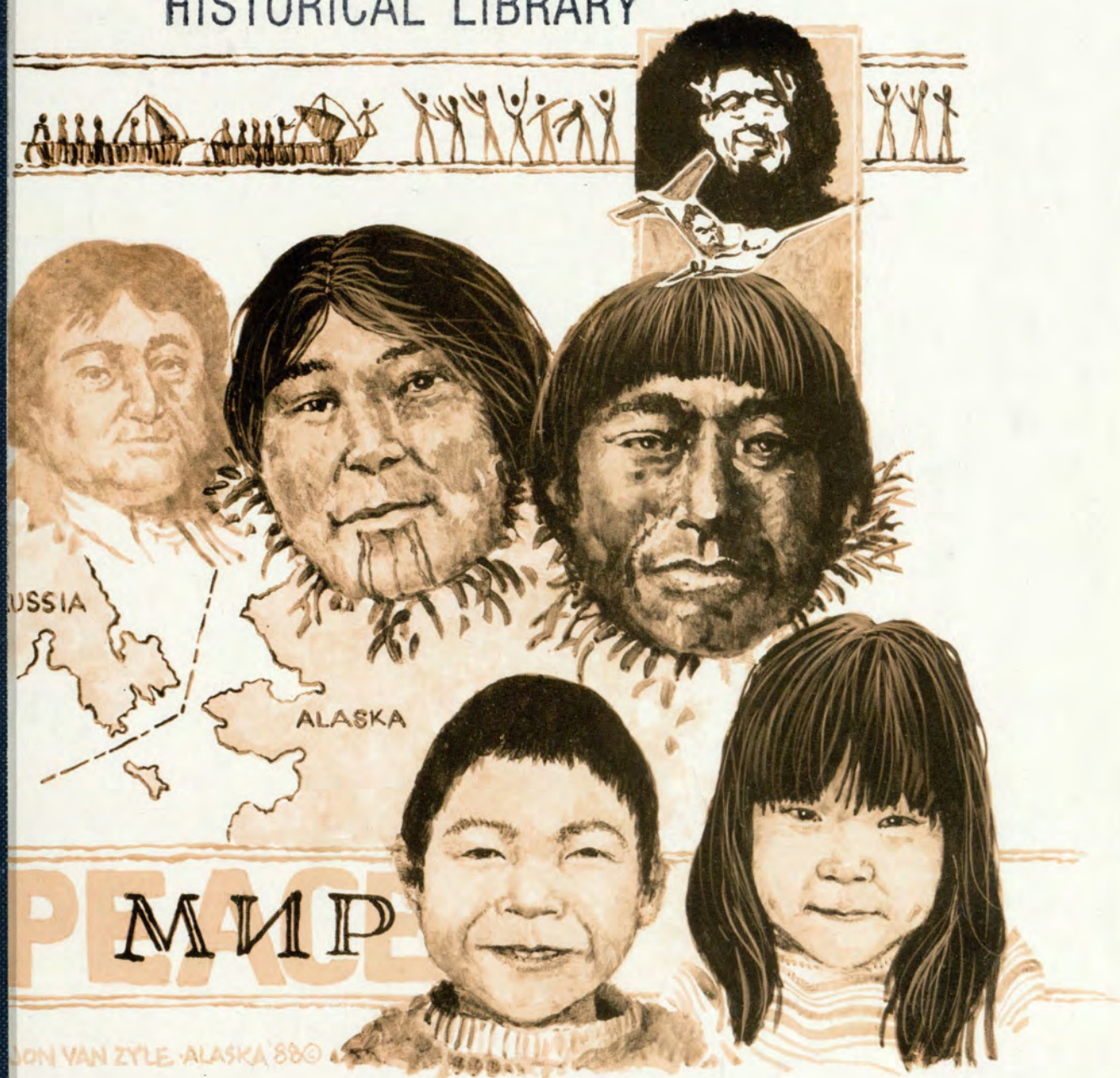


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Friendship Flight #1

ALASKA
HISTORICAL LIBRARY



Governor Steve Cowper
Nome, Alaska
to
Provideniya, U.S.S.R.
June 13, 1988

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Friendship Flight

Governor Steve Cowper

Flight Schedule

Alaska Friendship I

Aircraft: 740 AS

All Passenger: 80 passengers

Captains: Steve Day, Captain in Charge; Terry Smith, Co-pilot

Depart Anchorage: 7:50 a.m. June 13, 1988

Arrive Nome: 9:15 a.m. June 13, 1988

Depart Nome: 10:15 a.m. June 14, 1988

Arrive USSR: 8:00 a.m. June 14, 1988

Depart USSR: 8:00 p.m. June 14, 1988

Arrive Nome: 11:45 p.m. June 14, 1988

Depart Nome: 12:45 a.m. June 14, 1988

Arrive Anchorage: 2:05 a.m. June 14, 1988

Provideniya Itinerary

June 14, 1988

- 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Arrival. Welcome and drive from airport to Provideniya.
Division into groups with identified leaders.
- 9:00- 12:00 p.m. Groups of 20 tour museum, leather factory, port and kindergarten.
- 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. Lunch, visit stores.
- 2:00- 5:00 p.m. Afternoon sessions (similar to morning tours with addition of industry and interests specific groups meeting).
National concert/Native dance troupe (Siberian and Alaskan performers).
- 5:00 -7:00 p.m. Official banquet: toasts, gift and letter exchanges, personal greetings.
- 7:00 p.m. Return to airplane and board for Nome.

Message from Governor Steve Cowper

Forty years ago, a barrier fell across the Bering Strait, closing a bridge between continents that had stretched for many thousands of years. We are rebuilding that bridge today, renewing a historic unity among people who have met the creative challenges of life in the arctic. Alaska and the Soviet Far East can be strengthened — together — by a growing exchange of people, ideas, culture and awareness. That is our aim as we embark upon this first step in a journey of understanding and peace.

I suppose everyone on the airplane has a different reason for being here. Some will meet long-lost relatives, or walk upon their ancestral homelands for the first time. Some will build personal ties with people they have already met by mail. Some will simply do their job — flying the plane, or providing staff support, or reporting to the world the results of this special passage. Some will dream of commercial opportunities, or tourism connections, or cultural exchange. Some will pursue a private or public agenda for world peace. Some will merely satisfy a nagging curiosity about a place that has long been no more than a misty vision on the horizon.

For me, both officially and personally, the reasons are exciting: To push back and indeed begin to merge the frontiers of two great superpowers. To work toward the fulfillment of trade and commercial opportunities between Alaska and the Soviet Far East. And, perhaps most importantly, to help reunite Eskimo people of the region who have been separated, quite artificially, for two generations.

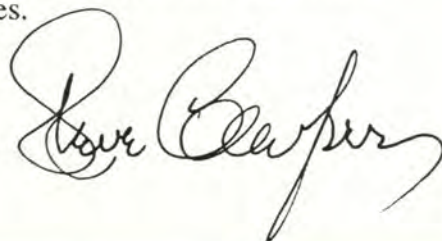
Something keeps returning me to the simple and profound human claim these people present. From pre-historic times, Alaska and Soviet Far East Eskimos have maintained family ties across the Bering Straits while adapting to some of the world's

harshest environments. That they have been divided these past 40 years by international tensions half a world removed from their own lives is both tragic and unnecessary. That we are able today to break down that division, at least for one day, is a hopeful and powerful thing.

It is also a tribute to the persistence, imagination and outright accomplishment of those who made this flight possible.

There is Jim Stimpfle, in Nome, who has launched countless letters to public and private officials around the world. Once he took a batch of letters written by Nome fifth-graders — in Yupik, Inupiaq, Russian and English — and sent them up by balloon in hopes they would reach the USSR coast on the winds. There is Alaska Airlines Chairman Bruce Kennedy, who has committed his company's resources and expertise to this effort. There is U.S. Senator Frank Murkowski of Alaska, who has kept the Friendship Flight on the agenda in Washington, D.C.

Best of all, there are the natural hopes of people for human contact, for overcoming barriers of mystery and mistrust. Something infectious happens when people begin thinking of each other in human terms — and then press their leaders to think the same way. The language of politics and diplomacy too often becomes abstract, theoretical, devoid of human impact. That is when people like Jim Stimpfle, seeing his Soviet Far Eastern neighbors as partners and friends rather than as adversaries in world politics, can make a difference. That is when it becomes possible to rebuild bridges.



Building Bridges. . .

December 1, 1987

686940 CCCP

Magadan Oblast, Lavrentiya

Hello dear Yaayuk,

I received your letter and I was very glad. I am also an Eskimo. I am 50 years old, married, I have four children, who are already grown. The oldest, Aleksandr is 26 years old, the second son, Leontii is 25 years old, my son Sergei is 22 years old and my daughter Irina is 19 years old.

My husband is from the city of Perma, he is Russian, his name is Nikolaem, he works as a mechanic. I myself work at the House of Culture in the village of Lawrentia. I am the leader of the ensemble "White Sail." The repertoire of the ensemble is made up of Eskimo and Chukotsk songs and dances. Our ensemble is widely known by the public of the country.

Zoya Ivanovna, my sister, is also a member of our ensemble. She lives in Lawrentia and works as a doctor at the hospital.

Thank you for the poems, they are very good. I read them to my friends and they also liked them.

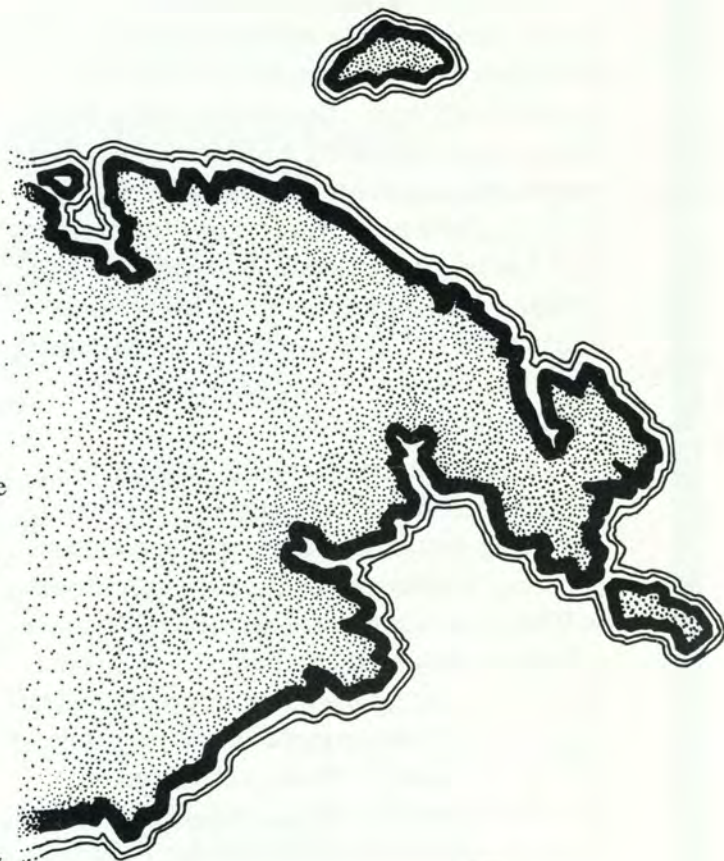
The photographs are nice and illustrate well the life of the Eskimos in Alaska. It is amazing that we live so close to each other, yet know so little about each other. I concur with your wish that we can sometime meet and shake each others' hands.

We have many Eskimos here who are interested and want to know more about you, dear Yaayuk.

I have sent you several photographs of our ensemble.

Thank you for the reports about Kiminak. His sister Mukulyuk has died, and two other sisters, Ulyocyek and Alikak are living. Ulyocyek lives in the town of Uelen, and Alikak lives in Neshkan, with their families. In the next letter, I will find out and report in detail about them.

I will be happy to receive an answer. With sincere respect,
Margarita



...with Letters

Box 729
Nome, Alaska, USA
August 8, 1987

Dear Margarita,

Hello, my name is Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle. My english name is Bernadette. I am Eskimo.

I am 32 years old. I am married and we have 2 children, a girl, age 4 and a boy age 1. My husband is from Washington D.C. We live in Nome for 5 years now. I am a teacher at the school for small children up to teenagers. I teach Inupiaq Eskimo language and customs.

I was at Little Diomed (Inalq) when Lynne Cox swam to Big Diomed (Imaqtq). It was very exciting to listen to you on the CB radio when you spoke to Albert Ayahuk. Your songs are beautiful. I liked your singing. We were all listening to you and Zora Ivanova. I hope some day, our people will one day meet and shake hands. We are so close but yet we cannot meet one another.

Kiminaq is still alive. He lives in Nome. I believe my uncle Patrick told you that.

I write poetry. Here is one I have written about 2 days before Lynne Cox did her swim.

Who Are They

Oh, that land across the way

Kitkuuvat kiaq?

Who are they (I wonder)?

Across the Strait they are

Suwat kiaq?

What are they (I wonder)?

Just a few miles away

(Qanuquuq) kiaq? Itpat?

How are they (I wonder)?

My ancestors used to go across the way

Sulutik kiaq?

What for (I wonder)?

Oh, that land across the Bering Strait

QiniGnava Kiaq?

Can I see it (I wonder)?

Just across from here

Ilagiwigit kiaq?

Are they my relatives (I wonder)?

That land not too far, only hours away

Kitkuuvisi Kiaq?

Who are you (I wonder)?

Friendship Flight Beginnings

- 11/86 Balloon launch to Siberia seeking peace and cooperation. Press release: "Well, Alaska, get ready, maybe before the end of 1988, we will see direct flights from Alaska to Siberia! There is a group of people in Nome who believe that the time has come to visit our neighbors to the West. We are talking about **Provideniya, USSR, Siberia**. Provideniya is directly across from Nome, 220 miles, about 26 minutes by Alaska Airlines 737 jet." --- Jim Stimpfle
- "We must learn more about one another and meet more often: become more friendly and develop commercial ties. Let us work together and trade together."
-- Mayor Kulinkin, Provideniya, Magadan Oblast.
- 2/87 Alaska Performing Artists for Peace trip to Nome with Yuri Rytkeu. Presentation to Alaska Airlines Arctic Advisory Board in Nome on friendship flight concept. Subsequent letter from Jim Johnson of Alaska Airlines to Senator Frank Murkowski informing him that Alaska Airlines was interested in providing an air link between Alaska and the Soviet Union. The letter referred to Alaska Airlines pioneering service between Anchorage, Khabarovsk (in the far eastern part of the Soviet Union) and Leningrad during 1971, '72 and '73.
- 3/87 Design and placement of 8' x 24' sign on Nome City Hall; Resolution of support from Nome City Hall; Greetings of Friendship from Nome; 8'x16' Peace Sign placed on Little Diomed; Letters of Friendship from Little Diomed.
- 6/87 Preparation for Siberian crossing of Eskimo performers to Nome; World Eskimo Olympics participation — did not happen.
- 8/87 Lynne Cox swim to Big Diomed; approval granted.
- 9/87 **NOAA research vessel SURVEYOR** brings gifts from Nome to Provideniya.
- 10/87 **NOAA research vessel SURVEYOR** returns with Proclamation of Friendship and Trade from Mayor of Provideniya. Nome hosts crew of **SURVEYOR** at Mini Convention Center. Slides and video of Provideniya shown.
- The combined efforts of the Nome Committee for Cooperation, Commerce and Peace, the Nome Chamber of Commerce, the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce— Siberian Gateway Project— the Governor's Office of International Trade, Senator Frank Murkowski and the team at Alaska Airlines all continued supporting Jim Stimpfle's tireless efforts to establish a friendship flight.
- 6/13/88 **ALASKA AIRLINES FRIENDSHIP FLIGHT BETWEEN NOME-PROVIDENIYA CARRYING 80 ALASKANS TO VISIT THEIR SOVIET FAR EASTERN NEIGHBORS IN THE SPIRIT OF REUNIFYING ESKIMOS AND BRINGING PEACE TO OUR NORTHERN REGION.**

Provideniya Fact Sheet

Provideniya, Magadan is approximately 230 miles west of Nome, Alaska.

- Town of Provideniya is 1 3/4 miles long and less than 1/4 miles wide. The town is nestled between terrain sloping moderately upward from Emma Bay to the foot of a steep mountain. A majority of the buildings are long, narrow apartment buildings, 2-5 stories high, constructed of prefabricated concrete slabs or concrete block, both locally produced. Other buildings are used for administration and services and include a school, polyclinic, cultural center, library and Communist Party headquarters. A small ship construction and repair yard and commercial port facility dot the shore along the bay.
- Provideniya is the administrative center for Provideniya Raion — similar to a county seat.
- It is a port on an inlet of the Bering Sea and a staging area for supply convoys to the Arctic Ocean ports during the ice-free season.
- Economic activities include: reindeer product processing; small ship construction and repair yard; production of prefabricated concrete slabs and concrete blocks; supply center for population for the interior.
- 1988 estimated population of Provideniya is 5,000 persons.
- The city of Provideniya is primarily inhabited by Russians. Two indigenous ethnic groups dwell in the area surrounding the city: the Chukchi and the Eskimos.

Soviet Eskimo Population and History

Soviet Eskimos -- total population 1,250 -- now live in three main locations: Lavrentiya, New Chaplino, and Sireniki. Those at Lavrentiya are from Naukan, the traditional village on East Cape facing the Diomedes, whose people were moved in 1958. The Naukan Yupik language is somewhat different from the Chaplino-Sireniki Yupik language. This language is very different from the Chaplino-Sireniki Yupik language and very different from Diomedes Inupiaq. Their total population is about 350, including many of the leading Soviet Eskimo writers, educators, and artists.

Six Inupiaqs were on Big Diomedes when the island was evacuated and people were moved to Naukan in 1948. One of these may still be alive in the USSR.

It is the people of New Chaplino and Sireniki who speak the same language as the St. Lawrence Islanders, and have the closest ties. Sireniki remains in its traditional location (Eskimo population 300 of 700). Chaplino (Ungaziq), the traditional village on Indian Point facing Gambell, was moved, also in 1958, into Tkachen Bay. New Chaplino (Eskimo population 300 of 400) is connected by road to Provideniya. Provideniya is the main Russian town in the area (Eskimo population 100 of 5,000).

The largest Native group of the Chukchi Peninsula are the Chukchis (total population 14,000). Their language is completely different from Eskimo, but they have influenced Siberian Yupik culture and language.

By: Dr. Michael Krauss
Alaska Native Language Center
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Friendship Flight

*Bold with friendship
We shall meet
A time for sharing
A time for caring*

*Closed from one another
For so many years
We no longer knew
Each other any more.*

*Freely, our grandfathers
Used to pass
The invisible line
That now separates us.*

*Today, we shall meet
Today, we shall visit
Once again as our ancestors did
Bold with friendship*

*Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle
is a King Island Eskimo now residing in Nome, Alaska*

Message of Special Thanks

The Friendship Flight project required a great deal of support — personal, political, financial, and most importantly, a belief in a community's ability to organize and make a difference in the world. In this case, the communities of Nome, Savoonga, Little Diomed and Gambell joined forces, through the organizing efforts of Jim Stimpfle, to seek an opening in world politics that would permit the invisible line separating Alaska and the Soviet Far East to be erased from our diplomatic map.

Dozens of individuals pooled resources to make the Friendship Flight a reality. Each deserves thanks. They are, in no particular order:

- ✧ *Our Native Elders* for their stories of friendship
- ✧ *Oleg Ivanovich Kulinkin, Mayor of Provideniya*
— for his letters of friendship
- ✧ *Jim Stimpfle* — Committee for Cooperation,
Commerce and Peace
- ✧ *Bruce Kennedy, Jim Johnson* — Alaska Airlines
- ✧ *Senator Frank Murkowski and Jessica Gavora*
- ✧ *Governor Steve Cowper*
- ✧ *Mr. Gennady Gerasimov* — Chief of
Information, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Moscow
- ✧ *Governor Walter J. Hickel*
- ✧ *Senator Willie Hensley*
- ✧ *People of Nome* — for their support
- ✧ *Ginna Brelsford, Bob Poe* — Governor's Office
of International Trade
- ✧ *Neil Colby* — Nome Chamber of Commerce
- ✧ *Mead Treadwell and Shane Johnson* — Alaska
State Chamber of Commerce — Siberian
Gateway Project
- ✧ *Dixie Belcher* — Alaska Performing Artists for
Peace
- ✧ *Mayor John Handeland* — City of Nome
- ✧ *Theresa Horvath* — KNOM
- ✧ *Dan Johnson* — Northwest College
- ✧ *Dr. Ted Mala* — Alaska Siberia Medical
Research Project
- ✧ *Lee Wareham* — Alascom
- ✧ *Gunnar Knapp* — Institute for Social and
Economic Research
- ✧ *Chet Walukiewicz* — PMC Native Corporation
- ✧ *Jon Van Zyle* for his art
- ✧ *Amelia Dickerson*
- ✧ *Steve Lindbeck*
- ✧ Alaskans who called from every corner of our
great land wanting to know when can we go!!!
- ✧ Soviet Desk Officers, US Department of State
- ✧ United States Information Agency, Soviet
Affairs

