

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

McCutcheon, Steve, 1911-, Photographers

**Steve and Dolores McCutcheon photograph collection, 1968
Bethel Housing Project, 1968**

PCA 005

33 photos : b&w

Processed By: Staff

ACQUISITION: Steve (1911-1998) and Dolores McCutcheon, Anchorage photographers, assembled these photos in 1968 to document the Bethel Housing Project.

ACCESS: The collection is available for viewing; however, the photographs may not be photocopied.

COPYRIGHT: Request for permission to publish or reproduce material from the collection should be discussed with the Librarian.

PROCESSING: Photographs were housed in Mylar. Detailed information about each view is included.

Historical Note

Mumtrekhlogamute, the Eskimo name for the original site of Bethel, means “people of the smoke house” and in 1880, according to Ivan Petroff, there was a population of 41. The name, “Bethel,” was given at the settlement when the Moravian Mission came in 1885. A post office was established on the north bank of the Kuskokwim River in 1905.

The 1960 census listed 1,258 residents; unofficial estimates place the population at 1,800 with as many as 2,400 living there during summer employment activities. In 1968, it was the third largest community on the western littoral, after Barrow and Kotzebue, and had no central water or sewage system.

In 1968, Bethel was chosen for a national pilot project, Pilot Turnkey III, to improve the living conditions for the Alaska Natives of that region by building 200, low-cost homes. The Bethel Housing project was a collaboration of 8 federal agencies, 6 state agencies, the Alaska Council of Village Presidents, city of Bethel, and statewide community action groups. The Bureau of Land Management provided 410 acres of land and the Economic Development Administration financed a multi-purpose facility for the prefabrication of houses. The first 200 houses were built for \$2,634,000.00 and purchased under a 25-year contract. Rent was based on 20% of an individual’s annual income, amounting to \$20-100 monthly. Braund, Inc., the contractor, provided a training program to train local residents in trades and crafts. [From: “Bethel Housing Project Economic Impact Study,” 1970,¹ and “This Bethel Family Had a Housing Problem...Now They’ll Get a Turnkey Home,” J. Sewell, *This Month in Alaska*, v. 1, no. 7, 1969.²]

Scope and Contents Note

The 8x10 inch black and white photos record the various stages of the project, from unloading the barge to the nearly completed houses. Several are aerial views of Bethel and the surrounding area. Eskimo carpenters and laborers are shown working on construction. No inventory is available currently but each view includes detailed information.

2/2003

¹ HC 107 .A45 A622 B46 1970

² F901. T54