Guide to Collection

United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs

United States Bureau of Indian Affairs Photograph Collection, 1964
Alaska Good Friday Earthquake, March 27, 1964

PCA 142

1 box
68 b&w photographs

Processed by: Staff
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HISTORICAL NOTE

These photographs supplement *Interim report no. 2, Alaskan earthquake, March 27, 1964*, by the Anchorage Field Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska.

BIA personnel took the photographs during the course of performing their regular duties.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Images includes residents, disaster workers and views of Chenega, Afognak, Kaguyak, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie and English Bay. A text narrative accompanies the photographs.

INVENTORY

1. Villages were peaceful and quiet. After the tidal wave some no longer existed. [Chenega]
2. [Tatitlek?]
3. Churches once stood proudly. [Chenega?]
4. Now only pilings remain. [Chenega]
5. The mail plane landed weekly. [Chenega]
6. Now there is no need for the trip. [Chenega]
7. A school is the lonely sentinel on the hill. [Chenega]
8. Tired and weary survivors arrive at larger communities…[Passengers boarding a plane]
9. … where they make do in temporary homes. [Cordova?]
10. Children smile unaware of the tremendous loss…. [Old Harbor?]
11. … not knowing that homes no longer exist.
12. … that tents instead waited for them. [Tatitlek?]
13. The step from chaos to organization was an important one. Tents served as temporary quarters for engineers conducting a preliminary survey. [Tatitlek?]
14. It was sometimes difficult to decide where to begin. [3 men surveying the landscape]
15. There were so many things to do even before reconstruction could be planned in detail. [Men clearing downed trees]

16. Ingenuity and “field expediency” were necessary in many instances to handle emergency situations without proper equipment. This worker uses a frying pan and camp stove to melt lead to install temporary sanitation facilities.

17. Sealing the joint. [two men working on a pipe]

18. Much specialized equipment was needed [electronic equipment]

19. As more and more equipment arrived, more definite steps in reconstruction became possible. [Port Lions?, numerous woodworking equipment]

20. Typical of immediate logistical problems even before materials arrived was urgently needed fuel for stoves and machines to be stockpiles for the reconstruction effort.


22. The mammoth task of sorting 72 freight cars of supplies was accomplished at Port of Whittier. Goods departed in two increments, in order of need, to the disaster villages.

23. Unitized packing of some items speeded handling. No second repacking was required at Whittier.

24. From Whittier, smaller coastal barges beach themselves directly in front of the village sites. Severe weather conditions made heavy work of this.

25. Careful planning resulted in labor saving, prefabricated units wherever possible. These are roof trusses, ready for installation upon their arrival at the villages. [Port Lions R.C 16 and Old Harbor R.C 16 written on wood]

26. Graphic illustration of the usefulness of donated supplies. New construction in the background. [Old Harbor, sheets of lumber with “To our neighbors in Alaska” spray painted on the side]

27. The only surviving tree is sentinel over the buried accumulation of 150 years. Eight feet of fill provides a new site for the stricken community. [Old Harbor]

28. BIA forces and Native workmen labored ‘round the clock’ to create stockpiles. [Old Harbor]

29. The mountain of supplies grew. [Old Harbor]
30. With the driving of the first foundation pilings a change comes over tent city. [Old Harbor Tent City]

31. Ambition is spurred - cooperativeness emerges.

32. Shy grins and pleased looks of anticipation replace grim fortitude on the faces of villagers as construction begins. [Old Harbor. Paul Tunohan]

33. The first house walls are prepared. [Old Harbor]

34. The raising of these is a labor eagerly sought after by future owners. [Old Harbor, wall raising]

35. Work rapidly becomes routine… [Old Harbor, stacking wood]

36. … with each able-bodied person contributing…[Old Harbor, sawing wood]

37. according to his ability [man pushing wheelbarrow]

38. In fine weather … [Old Harbor, building under construction]

39. … and in blizzard. [men stacking supplies in a snow storm]

40. In ones and twos … [Old Harbor, house foundations]

41. … and threes … [Tatitlek?, 3 homes on pilings]

42. … the homes of the new community emerge from the nothingness and the emptiness … [Akhiok?]

43. … under the eyes of those who can only wait, and who can contribute only to the encouragement of their laboring men … [Old Harbor, new homes in the village]

44. … though trying to make life as nearly normal as possible. [Old Harbor, Mary Christiansen Haakanson, hanging out diapers]

45. These tents house a whole community. The school and the church are all that remain of the pre-earthquake town. [Old Harbor]

46. Life goes on amidst a combination of frustrations, hope and effort. [Old Harbor, woman in front of tents]

47. The tempo of building increases [house framed up]

48. Refinements begin to appear … [house walls insulated]
… until a kaleidoscope of activity is presented … [man attaching framing to pilings]

… in which the bare beginnings of one day [Old Harbor, power poles being erected, church in background]

… seem to merge into completed city blocks the next. [Old Harbor, row of new houses]

A small city takes form. [Old Harbor. Aerial view; houses framed]

Soon it is possible to think about a time for moving into the new houses … [Tatitlek]

and a man can be proud of his part in the building of his own home. He can start thinking of the future. [Old Harbor, Herman Haakanson]

This thinking is crystallized by the deliberations of the Village Council. [Old Harbor Council?]

Even coffee breaks are not immune. [Old Harbor, L-R: Alfred Naumoff, [unidentified], George Inga?, Raymond Kelly?, Sven Haakanson, Wally Craig?]

Even when needed equipment arrived, the weather served to aid confusion and make organized planning and action difficult. [frost covered equipment]

Houses varying in three sizes were constructed using a modification of the plan suited to Alaskan structural and climatic demands [house plans]

Background for future development comes from new skills learned during reconstruction as painters … [Old Harbor?, 4 men painting, man on left is Sven Haakanson]

… as plumbers …

… as medical aides … [Jennie Inga Erickson, Old Harbor nurse]

… as laborers … [Old Harbor]

… as kitchen aides …

… and in carpentry. [Charlie Pestrikoff in rain slicker]

Village residents, aware of the importance of good government to their future cast their ballot in the November 3 election as construction rises in the background.

New schools will be built at Port Lions and Old Harbor to meet the educational needs of children such as these shown crossing a wash-out caused by seismic waves at Afognak.

Summer classes were maintained to offset lost educational time.
68. The faces of Alaska’s future – the real beneficiaries of a coordinated program.