

rebuilt town itself, would be the 100 acre natural environment zoological park, as recommended by the Alaska Zoological Society, an organization that has won wide respect, and that numbers among its members men well trained in wildlife care, and in park planning and management.

Suggested also for the Knik area is a fish rearing facility, taking advantage of local streams or lakes, and including a proven system for rainbow trout rearing in Alaska. This facility would be operated by an acknowledged master of the science, William Hernandez, father of the very successful U. S. Army, Alaska fish rearing program.

Suggested too, are concessions dealing in Alaskan curios, antiques, and objects 'd art.

Yet another facility named as feasible for Knik is a weekly newspaper, following the format of the original Cook Inlet English-language newspaper -- the famous Knik News.

## THE DEVELOPERS

Joe and Vi Redington, well known sled dog breeders, trainers, founding figures in the great Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, originators of the fund-raising Flathorn Lake square foot of land sale project, owners of land in Knik, recent purchasers of Knik's oldest building a bar operated first in 1906.

Robert and Dolly Fleming, popular radio announcer (he), sports commentators (they), initiators of the Iditarod Trail Centennial Magazine project, long-time friends of sled dog mushing sport, promoters of the Iditarod Race since its inception.

James Irany, former Economic Development Coordinator, Western Alaska, now full time Community College teacher, holder of a master's degree in sociology.

Dick Zinsman, curator, the Arctic Health Research Center "zoo" at Anchorage, early and constant backer of Alaska Zoological Society, Alaskan home builder (a sideline).

Earl Barnard, local consulting engineer, leading member of Alaska Zoological Society.

~~Jane Pender, former publisher, editor, Interior Alaskan weekly newspapers, currently advertising make-up and lay-out specialist for Anchorage Daily Times.~~

~~Pat Bolst, advertising saleswoman, Alaska Construction News, experienced in many other Alaskan media.~~

~~Carol Seung, seamstress, artist, prospectress, long time Alaskan.~~

~~William Houtzinger, original developer of the world famous Fort Richardson fish rearing project, due to return to civilian life early in 1968.~~

~~Ellis and Patricia Taylor, publishers, the reprinted Knik News, 1968 prospectors, Map of Central Alaska, staff writer (he) on the Anchorage Times, publicity aids to the Iditarod Trail Committee.~~

Vondolse and Dorothy Page. She served as co-founder of the \_\_\_\_\_, attorney-at-law Iditarod race and Knik museum.

\_\_\_\_\_, banker

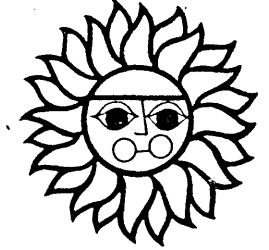
\_\_\_\_\_, accountant

\_\_\_\_\_, architect

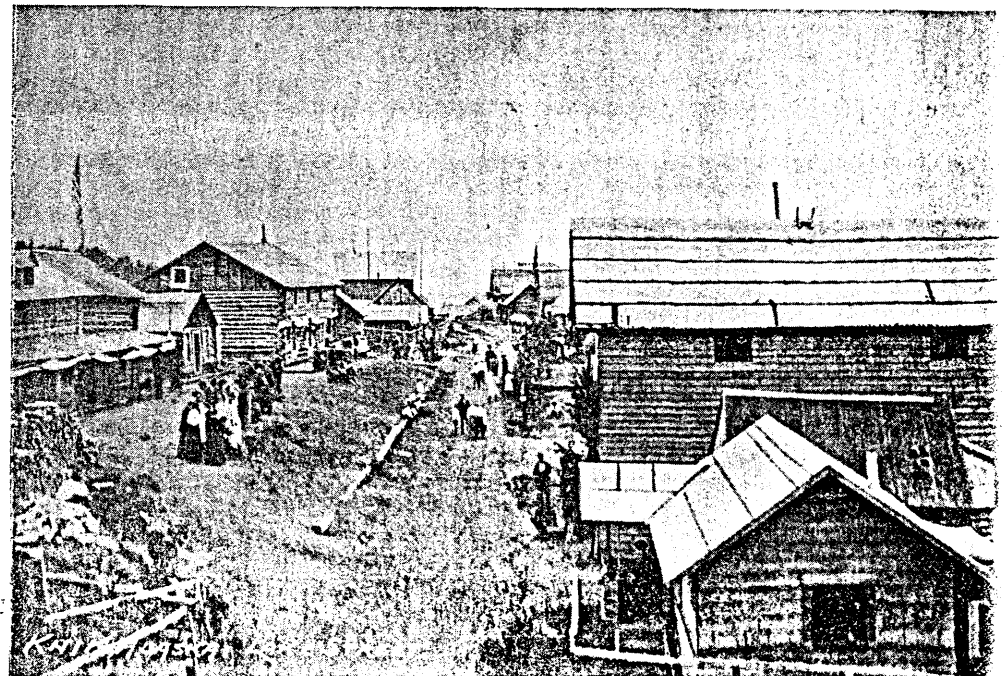
\_\_\_\_\_, spokesman, Cook Inlet Native Association

Alaska's New Bonanza  
P.O. Box 202  
Wenatchee, Alaska 990

# SUNNY



# KNIK



## ALASKA'S NEW BONANZA

# THE PAST

Juneau has the Treadwell, Dawson the Red Dog, Fairbanks the -A 67 project. Outside, Knott's Berry Farm attracts thousands daily, Disney's Disneyland Frontier Town draws millions, and Gunsake moves into its 12th (a record) straight TV year. The West, the Gold Rush, the past... tags for a discomfiting itch for Adventure, an itch our age must satisfy vicariously, by reliving those hardy days we believe our grandfathers knew. All that is needed is atmosphere, imagination, and the backdrop. The first, of course, is readily found, in any weathered cabin on any Alaskan hillside, in any silent valley where the gold muckers left their rusty monuments.

Anchorage, as you know, has its own very special atmosphere site. It even claims, with justice, to be the first American community in the Knik Arm - Turnagain Arm region, and boasts, again with truth, to have given Anchorage its name, as well as many of its leading citizens.

As early as 1835 the Russian cross cast its heavy shadow there, across Knik Arm, at the end of the channel that edges the north shore. Successful, to a certain point, in bringing the Greek Orthodox God to the Kinik Indians, the mission survived until the turn of the century, when it was moved to the narrows of Knik Arm, at what we know as Eklutna. By then, the Alaska Commercial Company had established a trading post there, under the management of George Palmer, who would be given a bit of destiny later, when the Government Colonists named their town for him in the Matanuska Valley. In 1898 a young man from Connecticut, Orvel G. Herning, came into the country at the head of a mining development company. His destiny would intertwine with Palmer's, as he would return from the first placer operation in the Willow Creek District, settle in the growing community, and establish a trading post of his own.

Two more men who would make Alaskan history, the Bartholf brothers, came in 1907, and staked, in rapid succession, the rich hard rock mines on Craigie Creek -- the Gold Bullion, the Lucky Shot, the War Baby. Their success sparked a stampede of respectable proportions, and the little trading center down Knik Arm became a boom town. To further enhance the town's position, sourdoughs working above the Kuskokwim found pay dirt at Iditarod, and Flat, and the Alaska Road Commission built a broadened sled dog trail called the Iditarod. This route, officially beginning in Seward, saw millions in raw gold hauled to the town by sled dog, for loading aboard lighters which ran it to Knik Anchorage, where, at the mouth of a muddy stream called Ship Creek, ocean going vessels took it out of Alaska.

The town was called Knik -- Sunny Knik, the California of Alaska. In 1915 it held 500 whites, a school, a movie house, a U. S. marshal, doctors, dentists, two church groups, a social club, several hotels, a bar, a pool room, four general stores, a hardware store, and freighting firms working on the Arm and roads to the mines.

The rest of the story you already know. The Alaska Railroad came, missed Knik. Knik's people moved away. All but a handful of buildings were taken down, some of them in recent years, for firewood, for other construction needs. All Knik has now is its hills, its beach, perhaps a half dozen usable buildings, and the Iditarod Trail. Only this, the greatest future of any all but forgotten town in Alaska.

For Time has made Knik important once more. Time, and the classic of classics, the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. In this, its first year, the race purse was the largest ever offered for the sport -- \$25,000. Next year it is to be double that figure. And Knik, 60 miles by highway and good graded road, five minutes by air, a pleasant 45 minutes by boat, from the biggest city in Alaska, is to come alive again.

# PROSPECTUS

The enormous potential of a restored Knik, as a historic landmark, year around tourist attraction, as a cultural and sport center that could become one of Anchorage's most attractive features, is at this moment a matter of judgment -- potential

## FACTS

The new Knik Arm crossing, hailed by international designers as most beautiful in the land, offers swift and safe transportation to within minutes of Knik. The site itself is accessible via a new, well graded road from Wasilla. All accessible to the Knik restoration project is a servicable airstrip, developed in 1941 at Goose Bay, and, according to the U. S. Army, its original owners, now turned over to the state, but maintained by the Army as an emergency strip.

Since Knik was served by boat, from the mouth of Ship Creek, a ferry would need in development would appear to be a vessel which could carry visitors and tourists up the same route, from Ship Creek to Knik. This trip, unavailable to Anchorage citizens of ordinary means, would certainly become an attraction in its own right, and, making Knik its destination, would greatly enhance the atmosphere and character of the new Alaskan Bonanza. A vessel capable of such duty is apparently already available, in the Gypsy Queen, formerly of Prince William Sound. A second possibility in this area is the Skimmer, which will open service from Anchorage this summer.

There are, of course, many other facilities suitable for development in Knik, as part of the whole restoration concept. What could happen at Knik is a veritable Disneyland of the North. What can happen is that Alaska, Anchorage, and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, in whose domain Knik lies, can have a hand in creating what visitors from Outside will carry home in memories which will spread the story of Alaska from Seattle to Miami, and beyond.

Exuant in Knik are perhaps four immediately repairable buildings, remaining from the heyday of the town. One, the pool hall, was the object of 3,000 man hours of restoration labor by the Adult Conservation Camp, near Sutton. Used as an information and concession center during the Iditarod Race, the two story building is still being completed, and is planned as a museum. Material for stocking the finished building is most certainly available, in Wasilla attics, Palmer closets, Anchorage storerooms. Another building, the oldest in Knik, is a bar-saloon built in 1900 which has recently been purchased by the Redingtons, leading figures in the project to restore Knik.

As founding fathers in the restoration project, the Redingtons, and the Iditarod Trail Committee, which this year created Alaska's biggest sport spectacle, the Iditarod Trail Centennial Race, and next year will offer double the purse for the sled dog classic, have proposed that the overall management of the restoration be under their guidance.

As outlined in the pre-foundation meeting held at the Robert Fleming home Friday last, the facilities which would be established in Knik, as of that date, include: Museum, General Store, Hardware Store, "Roadhouse" style restaurant, Horse Stable, Blacksmith Shop, Saloon (Period), Social Hall (Dances, Silent Films, Melodramas), Photography Studio, (old Camera & Glass plates available).

Of major importance in the plan is the Knik Dog Ranch, which would be a year around feature capable of drawing visitors from everywhere, who could then see dogs in training, ride in and drive sleds, and learn firsthand about Alaska's own contribution to the world of sports.

Another major attraction, in some ways the major attraction besides the