

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE

(Nagsrak)

Anaktuvuk Pass Settlement Site

Privately owned land within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve

Anaktuvuk Pass

North Slope District

Alaska

HABS No. AK-196

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C St. NW

Washington, DC 20240

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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<u>Location:</u>	South side of Contact Creek, Anaktuvuk Pass (central Brooks Range), North Slope Borough, Alaska
<u>Present Owner:</u>	several private owners
<u>Present Use:</u>	vacant
<u>Significance:</u>	A semi-nomadic people until after World War II, the Nunamiut Eskimos adopted a sedentary lifestyle in order to send their children to school and have regular air contact with Fairbanks, Alaska. The first log buildings and sod houses in Anaktuvuk Pass symbolize the Nunamiuts' transition to sedentarism as they adopted their lifestyles and traditional dwellings to village life.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

"A gate in the stone wall" of the imposing Brooks Range,¹ Anaktuvuk Pass lies well above the Arctic Circle midway between Fairbanks and Point Barrow, Alaska. The pass is a wide, high open valley from which the headwaters of the John and Anaktuvuk rivers descend. The continental divide bisects the pass such that the John flows south towards the Bering Sea, whereas the Anaktuvuk River flows north towards the Arctic Ocean. Other notable bodies of water in the pass include Eleanor Lake at the summit of the pass and Contact Creek, which enters the pass from the west just south of the summit. To the north lie a few isolated foothills beyond which the arctic prairie stretches as far as the eye can see. Scattered willow groves along the shores of rivers, streams and lakes stand in sharp contrast to the flat tundra through which the waters flow. Sparse, low vegetation covers much of the ground; the nearest spruce trees grow eleven miles beyond the southern side of the pass on the banks of the John River. With steep, wind-scoured limestone walls standing over 2,500 feet above the valley floor, Anaktuvuk Pass is a fascinating yet formidable aspect of Alaska's arctic landscape.

The climate of the region is as dramatic as its topography. Situated at 68° 11.5' 87.5" N latitude and 151° 67.9' 54.9" W longitude,² Anaktuvuk Pass experiences only two

¹ John Martin Campbell, *Anaktuvuk Prehistory: A Study in Environmental Adaptation*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1972; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1977), 23.

² Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs, Research and Analysis Section, *Community Profile: Anaktuvuk Pass*, Juneau, 1994.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 2)

seasons--summer and winter. Summers are brief, cool, dry, and windy, with long hours of sunlight yet an average of only twelve days with temperatures above seventy degrees. In contrast, winters are long, dark, cold, and still windy. Each year more than seven feet of snow falls on the pass and the temperature stays below freezing an average of 228 days.³ Despite these inhospitable conditions, the summit of Anaktuvuk Pass is where a group of Nunamiut Eskimos have established a permanent village. One reason for their choice of location is the region's usually abundant wildlife. Like the Nunamiut themselves, the wildlife is well adapted to the demanding climate. Twice a year huge caribou herds migrate through passes in the Brooks Range, making their way between the calving grounds on the arctic coast and the warmer winter feeding grounds in the south. Dall sheep roam the mountain peaks, though they have been hunted nearly to extinction; grizzly bear, wolf, wolverine, red fox and ermine are the region's principle carnivores. Moose dwell primarily in the forest regions near the mountains and grayling and lake trout are the major species of fish in area lakes and streams.⁴

The present day Nunamiut began the regular occupation and use of the Anaktuvuk Valley in the late 1940s and at the summit of the pass in 1949. They moved to the Anaktuvuk Valley from smaller camps near Chandler Lake and Killik Valley, yet for many years after the move most families periodically left the pass to hunt and trap each winter. Anaktuvuk Pass village grew in several stages, each marked by the establishment of a western institution and more permanent settlement by the Nunamiut. The major impetus for their initial move was the desire to have regular air contact and a school for their children. The subsequent establishment of a trading post, post office, and church drew more Nunamiut into the village for longer periods of time. As they settled into village life the Nunamiut adapted their traditional dwellings to their new needs. They built sod houses similar to traditional moss-covered *ivruliks* and lived in them until they had the money to build western-style plywood houses. The Nunamiut finally settled permanently in Anaktuvuk Pass in 1960 when the State of Alaska established a full-time school there.

Before contact with Westerners in the late nineteenth century, the Nunamiut were a semi-nomadic people who roamed northern Alaska from the Brooks Range to the shores of the Beaufort Sea. They lived primarily in the Brooks Range and the northern foothills hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. Each spring following the seasonal caribou hunt, a number of families from each Nunamiut band would descend to the Arctic coast to attend an annual summer trade fair to trade with the coastal Inupiat. Those families who remained

³ Campbell, *Anaktuvuk Prehistory*, 35.

⁴ Charles Wynn Amsden, *A Quantitative Analysis of Nunamiut Eskimo Settlement Dynamics: 1898 to 1969* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1977; reprint Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983), 35-39.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 3)

inland for the summer passed the season hunting and fishing, eagerly awaiting the return of the coastal traders. In the fall, the traders would make their way back to the mountains with seal oil and other vital coastal products needed to survive the cold months of winter, augmented by meat and fat from the fall caribou hunt. This traditional pattern of life continued on into the final decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when a combination of recently introduced diseases and the catastrophic failure of the area's caribou herds led to widespread death among the Nunamiut. Their population and culture were so diminished that by 1920 they had abandoned their traditional territories in the Brooks Range and moved to the coast in order to survive. Their return to interior Alaska and subsequent adoption of a sedentary lifestyle are landmarks in the history of the Nunamiut people.

Though nearby archeological sites indicate human presence in the area possibly over 6,000 years ago,⁵ archeological evidence collected by John Campbell in Anaktuvuk Pass led him to conclude in 1962 that the "presently surviving Nunamiut and their antecedents have inhabited the area for no more than a few generations."⁶ By the late nineteenth century the Nunamiut consisted of four regional groups, each inhabiting specific river drainages in north central Alaska. Several bands of six to twelve extended families made up each group. Both the size and number of bands fluctuated according to resource availability. The families generally gathered into bands for the spring and fall caribou hunts, then dispersed again into family groups to hunt and fish and even to trade along the Arctic coast in summer and to hunt and trap in the foothills during the winter.

The Nunamiuts' highly mobile subsistence lifestyle did not lend itself to permanent dwellings. Rather, their summer dwelling was a domed-shape willow-frame tent covered with caribou hides called an *itchalik*. It had a willow bough covered floor and a grizzly bear skin to cover the doorway. The hide tent could also be used as a winter dwelling when covered with an additional set of hides or even snow for insulation. A second, more sturdy, type of winter dwelling was the *ivrulik*. It consisted of a main room with four fork-topped posts at the corners and a flat-roofed entry. Stringers connected the main posts and supported willow poles which formed the side walls and roof. The entire framework--except for a skylight/smokehole in the roof for the central fireplace--was then covered with moss and a willow bough floor was added.⁷ Despite their relative solidity, *ivruliks* were rarely

⁵ William E. Brown, *Gaunt Beauty...Tenuous Life* (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1988), 525.

⁶ Grant Spearman, *Anaktuvuk Pass: Land Use Values Through Time* (Fairbanks: North Slope Borough, 1979), 31.

⁷ Wendell H. Oswalt, *Alaskan Eskimos* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1967), 92-96.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 4)

occupied for more than one season. Abandoned ones were often used for storage purposes.

Caribou were the mainstay of Nunamiut existence, providing both the hides for their summer dwellings and their major source of meat. The unpredictability of caribou migration patterns necessitated a flexible, transient lifestyle for the Nunamiut; the availability of caribou for food largely determined the size of the Nunamiut population. Sometime between 1870 and 1885 the Western Arctic caribou herd, which the Nunamiut depended upon, went into sharp and rapid decline due to what is now believed to have been a natural and cyclical population downturn. Undoubtedly, this situation was further impacted by the widespread availability of repeating rifles introduced by Western traders and the New England whaling fleet which often hired Nunamiut hunters to provide meat and skins to their crews as they overwintered in coastal waters. These and other factors pushed the Western Arctic herd to the edge of extinction; it did not begin to show any clear signs of recovery until after 1910.

The drastic reduction in the caribou population, together with disease, severely disrupted Native cultures and lifestyles by decimating the population and causing large-scale population shifts. Whereas before Western contact researchers estimate that around 1,500 Nunamiuts lived inland, by 1900 only two to three hundred lived there and by 1920 the interior was effectively abandoned.⁹ The Nunamiut were drawn to the coastal areas both by the need for food and by the desire for cash to buy Western goods. A few individuals herded reindeer introduced by the U.S. government to supplement their diet, while most trapped fur-bearing animals to sell or trade for Western goods. The Nunamiut scattered from Barrow to Fairbanks; many were assimilated into their adoptive villages. Northern Alaska was soon in turmoil again, however, when the price of furs collapsed at the onset of the Great Depression--a severe blow to the economy of the arctic coast and to the livelihood of many resettled Nunamiut.

Heeding reports that the caribou and moose populations in the interior were recovering, one coastal Eskimo and three Nunamiut families returned to interior Alaska in 1934. They established a seasonal base camp near the mouth of the Anaktuvuk River and returned to a semi-nomadic lifestyle, spending winters inland and summers on the coast. As the years passed they were occasionally joined by other Nunamiut families returning from the coast. After 1939 these families ceased their strong coastal orientation and turned its attentions further inland towards the mountains. Initially three small bands were formed, later reduced to two bands which seasonally occupied the Chandler Lake and Killik Valley areas. Most of the Nunamiut who fled coastward in the years around the turn-of-the-century, however, remained there and never returned inland.

In the late 1940s contact with the outside world again caused dramatic changes in the

⁹ *Ibid.*

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 5)

Nunamiut culture. Bush pilots first established air contact between the inland Nunamiut and Fairbanks during World War II; air contact eventually became the major means of trade and resupply and the impetus for establishing a permanent village. Regular air contact allowed the Nunamiuts to rely on trade while inhabiting a relatively isolated territory on a full-time basis.¹⁰ It also made interior Alaska accessible to scientists, tourists, and government officials who "discovered" it after World War II. The Arctic Research Laboratory, the United States Geological Survey, the Alaska Health Department, Alaska Native Services, and many university scholars studied and sometimes lived in the Anaktuvuk Pass region of the Brooks Range, examining everything from the geology to the fauna to the Nunamiut themselves. They often provided the Nunamiut with trade goods and temporary employment.¹¹ These people were very influential in the acculturation of the Nunamiut and the introduction to them of Western institutions.

For many years pioneer bush pilot Sig Wien provided the most permanent link between the Nunamiut and the outside world. During one of Wien's visits to Chandler Lake, Nunamiut elder Simon Paneak told Wien that his people would like to "locate in a permanent place"¹² so that the children could have a school. When Wien asked where they wanted to settle, Paneak replied that he thought Anaktuvuk Pass would be a good place because of its abundance of willow groves and caribou during the biannual migrations. Ease of air transportation was also considered when in 1948 many Nunamiut in the Chandler Lake area moved camp to Tulugak Lake in Anaktuvuk Pass. Wien himself helped find a teacher for the summer and flew her and her supplies to Tulugak Lake free of charge. The following year most of the families from the Killik Valley also moved there, forming a combined group of approximately 65 people.¹³

Initially Tulugak Lake and the surrounding area became a "primary base of operations" for the Nunamiut, but it could not be called a permanent village. Families seasonally moved into the foothills and surrounding mountains to trap each winter and a few only frequently came into the pass. After 1951, however, most families began staying at Anaktuvuk Pass for the summer and they decreased the distance they traveled from the site in winter. Major changes were happening in Anaktuvuk Pass as the Nunamiut became more closely tied to the institutions of white civilization.

¹⁰ Amsden, *Nunamiut Eskimo Settlement*, 315.

¹¹ Spearman, *Land Use Values*, 58.

¹² Interview of Sig Wien by Grant Spearman for the Simon Paneak Memorial Museum, Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska.

¹³ Spearman, *Land Use Values*, 58.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 6)

Trapper and trader Pat O'Connell became the first white resident of Anaktuvuk Pass when in 1949 he "staged up from the Koyukuk to Hunt Fork and finally Anaktuvuk Pass, where he built a log store"¹⁴ near Contact Creek. O'Connell lived in Anaktuvuk Pass in the summer and Hunt Fork in the winter, trapping and trading supplies for furs and paying bounty money on wolf pelts. O'Connell's background is sketchy, but it is known that at one time he lived in Bettles and Wiseman. He probably set up shop in Anaktuvuk Pass rather than Tulugak Lake because of the potential for ever increasing business opportunities. After about 1950 Tulugak was merely peripheral as a camping area with only two or three families based there. Nicholas J. Gubser, an anthropologist who lived with the Nunamiut in the early 1960s, offers this insight on O'Connell's activities:

O'Connell "attempted to gather the Nunamiut into one village so he could carry on his business more easily and, as he once commented to me, to feel the effects of exerting his own power...he was generally successful."¹⁵

O'Connell built at least two log cabins in Anaktuvuk Pass before he left in the fall of 1960. Termed a "mystery man" by the villagers, again no one knows for certain why he left or where he went. Village stories include that he had written too many bad checks and that he was behind on his income taxes, prompting him to move to Canada.

Another Western institution established in Anaktuvuk Pass was a branch of the United States Post Office. O'Connell and the growing number of white scientists and government officials who spent time in Anaktuvuk were influential in getting it established in 1951. Homer Mekiana, a coastal Eskimo who married a Nunamiut and moved inland with her father's family, became the first postmaster. Schooled at the mission school in Barrow, he was one of the few Anaktuvuk Pass Eskimos who could speak English. The post office site, and hence the location of the village, was selected for its easy air access.

"In most respects related to exploitative potential, Anaktuvuk Pass is not as suitable a locality as other areas (e.g., Tulugak Lake), as witnessed by the fact that the Nunamiut only rarely camped there prior to 1951. It did have one of the only areas suitable for a potential landing strip...therefore, it was the choice for the village site".¹⁶

At first operated out of a tent, the post office soon moved to a sod hut near O'Connell's

¹⁴ Brown, *Gaunt Beauty*, 529.

¹⁵ Nicholas J. Gubser, *The Nunamiut Eskimo: Hunters of Caribou* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 29.

¹⁶ Amsden, *Nunamiut Eskimo Settlement*, 324.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 7)

store. It was the first truly permanent link between the Nunamiut and the future village site. For most Nunamiut, however, Anaktuvuk Pass remained largely a summer base camp until the end of the decade.

Presbyterian missionary Reverend William Wartes established contact with the Nunamiut in 1953 when he noticed their camp while flying through the Anaktuvuk Pass. Wartes offered to become the village's pastor and to visit as often as possible from the mission's base in Barrow. The villagers accepted Wartes' proposal, indicating "that they were anxious and eager to have a pastor who would teach them the word of God."¹⁷ Wartes and other church Elders visited Anaktuvuk intermittently and, in May and June of 1958, Wartes worked with the Nunamiut to cut and trim pine trees forty miles south of the village. The villagers moved the logs by dog sled to Anaktuvuk Pass, where Wartes supervised the construction of the 24' by 18' church based on his own design. He flew glass for the windows in from Barrow; aluminum roofing was also flown in. When Wartes was out of town, O'Connell apparently volunteered to help oversee the construction, which was completed in 1958. The church, named Chapel in the Mountains, lacked a permanent minister for several years and remained a mission of the Presbyterian church in Barrow until 1965.

The Nunamiut were anxious for the completion of the church for secular as well as religious reasons. Although it did act as a centralizing force, the church did not draw all of the area Nunamiut permanently into the village. Upon completion of the church, however, the Village Council asked the state government for a permanent teacher to teach classes in the church. Indeed, classes were held in the church during the summer of 1959. As the teacher described it: "We are in our little school packed like sardines in a can, but nevertheless, having school."¹⁸ The church also served as a health clinic when doctors or nurses visited the village¹⁹ until a separate school was built.

When the State of Alaska provided Anaktuvuk Pass with a permanent teacher in 1959 and completed a two room school in 1961, most Nunamiut settled permanently in the village. Those with children had to remain in the village for nine months out of the year and summer travel was extremely difficult over the marshy tundra. Families had been gradually settling in Anaktuvuk Pass since 1951; as they settled, the Nunamiut adapted their traditional

¹⁷ John R. Chambers, *Arctic Bush Mission* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1970), 45.

¹⁸ Michael S. Cline, *Tannik School: The Impact of Education on the Eskimos of Anaktuvuk Pass* (Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University Press, 1975), 86.

¹⁹ Homer Mekiana, *This is the Story of Anaktuvuk Pass Village* (Barrow, Alaska, Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, 1972), 138.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 8)

dwellings to meet their new needs. They typically lived in caribou hide or canvas tents in the summer and sod houses in the winter. In July 1958, missionary John Chambers reported two families living in sod houses at Tulugak Lake and another ten living in tents (though they had sod winter houses) near Eleanor Lake where the present village stands. Chambers described one sod house as:

"perhaps six feet high at the ridge pole and four and a half feet at the sides. The frame of the house was made of small trees hauled by dog sled more than fifty miles from down south. The outside of the frame was securely packed with sod more than a foot thick over the roof as well as on the sides. Inside, the wood slats were covered with tin from empty five gallon cans...and cardboard boxes which had been used to bring in supplies."²⁰

The sod house played a very brief yet important role in the short history of Anaktuvuk Pass. In 1949 the Nunamiut were still largely semi-nomadic; Robert Rausch reported that the ivrulik was uncommon and most people lived in caribou hide tents.²¹ That same year the first sod house was built. Sod houses did not become popular, however, until the mid 1950s when more families began settling permanently near the post office. In 1958 John Chambers photographed several newly completed houses and several more under construction. The sod houses adopted by the Nunamiut as they settled were similar to the traditional ivrulik, yet more sturdy and constructed with different materials. As described above, the new houses were made of sod cut from Anaktuvuk Pass, trees from the upper John River valley, plus glass, lumber, nails, and other goods flown in from Fairbanks. Milled lumber was very expensive to transport and used primarily for doors and window frames. Gas cans, cardboard boxes, and old tires were turned into insulation, roofing, chimneys, door pulls and more. Traditional materials were also put to new uses, such as caribou hide weatherstripping around doors and windows. More material was added onto existing houses as it became available, often in the form of an arctic entry or a plywood floor or ceiling.

Though there was much variation in the design and construction of the sod houses, they resemble the ivrulik in several important ways. Thick posts and small logs replaced the more delicate willow frame of the *ivrulik*, but the rectangular single room design was maintained. Most houses had a vertical post in each corner and three down the center of the room to support the ridge pole. The corner posts were connected by stringers which

²⁰ Chambers, *Arctic Bush Mission*, 46.

²¹ Robert Rausch, *Notes on the Nunamiut Eskimo and Mammals of the Anaktuvuk Pass Region, Brooks Range, Alaska* (1951; reprint Barrow: North Slope Borough Planning Department, 1988), 160.

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 9)

supported vertical spruce poles and small logs which formed the walls. The roof was constructed in a similar manner and iron nails held the logs in place. Stove pipes for wood or oil burning stoves replaced the *ivrulik's* open smoke hole. The entire building was then covered with a thick layer of sod rather than the traditional moss; plywood flooring eventually replaced willow boughs. Most sod houses were oriented on the north-south axis, with the door in the south elevation and windows on any elevation except the north one, offering some protection from the frigid north winds. Plywood or canvas arctic entries were added to many of the houses to serve as a barrier between the arctic cold and the heated interior. Interior finishes varied from house to house; several sod houses were even wallpapered.

Even when sod houses were most popular, few families occupied them year round. They said their houses were "too hot" in the summer, plus the houses tended to flood when Contact Creek rose too high.²² Thus, the summertime dwelling of choice was a canvas wall tent pitched on the higher ground to the north of the creek. Given increased contact with non-natives and better transportation, the sod house quickly fell out of favor with the Nunamiut. They wanted Western-style housing; the first plywood house was built in 1964. By 1969 teacher Michael Cline recorded that "most people desire larger plywood homes and hope to build them when they can afford the cost of lumber, between one and two thousand dollars."²³

In 1995 all but one of the sod houses in Anaktuvuk Pass were vacant. A village of plywood and prefabricated houses has been built beside and on top of the original buildings. The village now boasts gravel roads, a museum, grocery store, airport, modern school, washeteria, satellite television and telephone, a health clinic and fire station, yet many of the sod houses are in serious disrepair. They have missing windows, leaking roofs, collapsing walls, and rotting floors; several have dogs staked to them. The log buildings, such as the church and O'Connell's two cabins, are in better shape, though they too show evidence of weather damage and neglect.

²² Chambers, *Bush Mission Pilot*, 46.

²³ Cline, *Tannik School*, 18.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Note: due to the nature and degree of deterioration of these buildings, dimensions given in this text are approximate. See the drawings for more specific measurements.

PAT O'CONNELL CABIN

HABS NO. AK-197

This 15'8"x13'0", one room sod covered log cabin was once covered with a mud stucco. It has a log framed 4'11"x6'0" arctic entry on the south elevation covered with weathered canvas and plywood walls and a corrugated metal roof. There is a door frame on the east side of the entry, but no door or evidence of hinges--possibly at one time the entry had a canvas door. The cabin is in fairly good condition except for missing window panes and a hole in the southwest corner of the roof where a stovepipe used to be. The walls are made of vertical logs nailed to a log frame and chinked with moss and mud. They are crisscrossed with fine wire originally used to attach the mud stucco to the walls. The north, south and part of the west elevations are covered with tattered corrugated cardboard and roofing paper and the north and west sides are piled high with sod. The cabin has two windows, one centered in the east elevation and one in the south elevation to the west of the arctic entry. Both have plain white wood trim and no glass. The hip roof is made of round and half-round logs supported by a large ridgepole log and covered with roofing paper, then sod. Most of the sod is missing on the eastern plane of the roof.

The interior of the cabin is one rectangular room with a curved southwest corner. The floor, walls, and ceiling are all covered with plywood, unfinished except for gray paint on the ceiling, south elevation, and gable part of the north elevation. The door to the entry is a rather patchwork affair, mostly vertical planks held together with a few cross pieces of mismatched lumber. It has a sliding bolt and a plain board frame, as do the two windows. A can opener is mounted on the south elevation to the left of the door. There are four electrical outlets to the right of the door and there is a light bulb socket in the ceiling. An unconnected Underwriters Laboratories Inc. oil-burning stove sits in the middle of the room.

PAT O'CONNELL CABIN #2

HABS NO. AK-198

Occupied longer and maintained better than O'Connell's first cabin, this sturdy 16'0"x13'0" one room log cabin has a 7'3"x6'7" plank arctic entry and an aluminum hip roof. Set on sill logs atop a dirt and gravel pad, it is of horizontal rather than vertical log construction. The logs, chinked with moss and mud, are unpeeled and have squared off ends, crisscrossing at the corners. Like the cabin, the entry has a steeply pitched hip roof. It has a door with a white frame in its east elevation and a small plastic window in its south elevation. The main cabin has a window to the west of the entry and two more on the east elevation. All of the windows are glass sandwiched between plexiglass and glued into their frames with waterproof glue. The roof, originally of small round logs covered with sod, is now plank covered with a layer of moss or sod and topped with sheets of aluminum. One sheet on the west plane of the roof has blown loose at the top, exposing the moss to the elements. A fairly new-looking aluminum chimney extends from the southwest corner of the

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 11)

roof.

Inside, the cabin's floor, walls, and ceiling are all covered with paneling approximately six inches wide. The floor is darker than the walls, due either to stain or age, and the southern end of the floor is covered with plywood atop the paneling. The exposed logs and braces in the ceiling are also stained a dark brown. The windows are simply glued into their holes; only the one in the entry has a semblance of trim. The inner door has caribou hide "weatherstripping" to keep out the cold and a rubber door pull, possibly cut from an old tire. The door itself is plywood with miscellaneous pieces of wood nailed to it, as is the entry door. The interior door has a white wood frame. The only mechanical equipment in evidence is a light bulb suspended from the ridgepole.

POST OFFICE

HABS NO. AK-194

A small 10'6"x10'0" vertical log and sod building with a relatively recent 4'3"x8'0" plywood arctic entry, the post office is in fair condition. It has relatively stable walls, yet a sagging roof and no glass in the windows. It is of typical post-in-ground construction with a hip roof and roofpoles covered with sod. In the southeast corner a five gallon "case gas" gasoline can serves as a chimney jack. The small logs and poles which make up the walls are spaced about two inches apart and covered with blocks of sod. There is a window on the east side of the south elevation and one on the north side of the east elevation. Both have plain milled lumber frames and the latter one has a plywood ledge above it to hold sod. Period photographs show an awning over the door with a US MAIL box attached to the supporting post, but these features no longer exist.

Inside, the room is bisected by three roof support poles set into the ground. The floor is covered with plywood and the walls and ceiling are paneled. Some paneling is missing on the north elevation, revealing corrugated cardboard and wallpaper tatters. Missing paneling on the west elevation reveals the poles which support the sod walls. The two windows and door have simple milled lumber frames; the door is covered with a layer of linoleum. Though the building at one time had electricity, no hardware or outlets remain.

CHAPEL IN THE MOUNTAINS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HABS NO. AK-192

Designed by the Reverend William Wartes and built on a sill log foundation, each part of this church reads as a separate element on the exterior: narthex, sanctuary, and chancel. The 17'7"x24'6" sanctuary and 7'9"x7'4" chancel both have hip roofs with poles supporting a corrugated metal roof, whereas the 17'4"x9'2" narthex has an almost flat roof; it is a single layer of decking covered with corrugated metal. Originally about the same size as the chancel, sometime before 1973 the narthex was extended to the same width as the sanctuary. Built of logs chinked first with moss and later with yellow fiberglass insulation, the church has a white wooden cross attached to the south end of its highest ridgepole. The church has a new roof and is in fairly good condition, though some logs are charred to the west of the door. A metal stovepipe extends from the southwest corner of the roof. The church has four windows on each side of the sanctuary and one on each side of the narthex, plus one on the south side of the sanctuary above the narthex and a pentagonal window in the

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 12)

north elevation of the chancel. All of the windows are boarded over. There is a white door in the middle of the south elevation with a glass upper panel, a plywood bottom panel, and no doorknob. It is set in a plain white frame. The chinking on the west elevation has been almost completely covered with boards nailed into the log wall.

The interior of the church has undergone extensive renovation since the church was constructed in 1958. The narthex is divided into an entry hall with a room to the east which opens off the hall and one to the west which opens off the sanctuary. The sanctuary is a large open room and the chancel opens directly off the north end. There are no stairs in the church, though the floor of the chancel is raised about five inches above the floor of the sanctuary. The floor is plywood and appears to be a platform built over a previous plywood floor. The chancel has a linoleum tile floor and unfinished log walls. The rest of the church has a yellow plywood ceiling and white paneling, except for the narthex rooms and south elevation of the sanctuary, which have white drywall and exposed Spenard Builders Supply brand insulation. The windows are the same as described on the exterior and have had all trim removed. The church very recently had electricity and has a very new MPI Monitor 441 fuel oil heater. The interior is in the midst of a good deal of renovation, the goal being turning the church into a senior citizens center. As of June 1995 the status of this project is uncertain.

SOD HOUSES--General dates of construction 1951-1959

Though generally similar in appearance, layout, and construction technique, the Anaktuvuk Pass sod houses exhibit great individual variation. This variation is especially evident in the arctic entries and other additions made to the houses as more building material became available in Anaktuvuk Pass. A few constants, however, are: the north elevations--subject to harsh north winds--never have doors or windows, the doors and windows are all made of imported glass and milled lumber, and the houses all have sod-covered gable roofs. Period pictures show many styles of caribou drying and storage racks outside of the homes.

RULLAND HOUSE

HABS NO. AK-199

Located at the northeast corner of Airport Road and Main Street, Rulland House is a one room 17'0"x9'6" sod house with an additional 13'0"x10'0" plank entry on the south elevation. The entry is rather square, with a door in the west elevation opposite an alcove-like, open-ended extension. The entry, added to the house at an unknown date, is missing several vertical boards and is patched with metal on the west side. For the main house, a post-in-ground foundation supports vertical half-log walls and a hip roof. The entire structure was once covered with blocks of sod; over time some blocks have worn away leaving bare logs at the top of the walls and a layer of dirt several feet thick at the base. The sod is covered with grass and low vegetation and is missing from most of the east plane of the roof. The house is not in very good shape, having not been lived in for some years. The roofpoles are rotting and falling in, and much of the floor is covered with moss, damp and debris. Of the four original windows--one on the west elevation, one on the south and

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 13)

two on the east--all but one have been boarded over. There is no evidence of a chimney; the hole was probably boarded over when the plywood ceiling was put in.

Inside the sod house a small alcove extends several feet from the south end of the east elevation and a single center post supports the ridgepole. The floor, walls, and ceiling are all covered with unfinished plywood, which contrasts strikingly with the yellow linoleum on the back of the otherwise plywood covered door. The plywood on the walls and ceiling is in fairly good condition and is not as old as the house is. The building's only hardware is a threaded rod door pull; wires indicate that it once had electricity. Unlike the other sod houses in this survey, Rulland House has seven built-in plywood shelves of various shapes and sizes along the walls.

RULLAND HOUSE No. 2

HABS NO. AK-200

Originally a relatively small sod house with a door on the west elevation and a hip roof along the east\west axis, this house has undergone at least three additions. One added a 7'0"x10'0" plank arctic entry to the west elevation, another added on to the main part of the house, removing the north plain of the original roof and adding a second ridgepole perpendicular to the first and bringing the dimensions of the main room to 13'1"x21'10". The third addition is a 11'5"x8'0" plywood box attached to the east elevation, at one time connected to the main house by a door. Like the Mekiana House, this house has a post-in-ground foundation, yet horizontal log walls. At one time planks were nailed to the vertical supports inside of the log walls; they now form the exterior walls since the logs have rotted away. Most of the sod has fallen off the house and forms a mound around it. The only distinguishable exterior openings are the plywood door in the west end of the arctic entry and a boarded up window in the middle of the south elevation. The most notable feature of this house is its roof, or lack thereof. The only remaining part of the main roof is the east end of the south plane--only the ridgepole remains of the rest. What once was the roof is now either on the floor or stacked behind the house. The ridgepole bristles like a porcupine with rusty nails and a single light bulb socket dangles from its middle. A stovepipe protrudes from the southeast patch of remaining roof. The entry roof, a hip roof of 2'x4's covered with green roofing paper, is relatively solid, whereas the flat roof of the plywood box cannot be seen due to the uneven height of the walls.

The interior of this house can clearly be viewed from the exterior simply by standing on a wall. The arctic entry is large enough to be termed a room and was probably used for storage purposes. The main room has two posts supporting the ridgepoles and a built-in partition, shelf, and bench on the south end of the west elevation. There is a plywood stall in the southeast corner. The door between the main room and the plywood addition has been boarded over; the only access to the addition is through a hole in the wall. The flooring is probably plywood, now covered with collapsed roof, dirt, and junk. Unusually, the north elevation is covered with white drywall; the east, west, and south elevations are mostly covered with plywood and clear plastic. The only visible openings are the plywood door from the entry to the main room and the boarded up window. Neither appear to have frames. The house was wired for electricity via the entry roof; no other hardware or

ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 14)

mechanical equipment was in evidence.

JUSTUS MEKIANA HOUSE

HABS NO. AK-193

The Justus Mekiana house is the only sod house presently occupied in Anaktuvuk Pass. Originally built some 25 miles south of the village near Puvlatuuq Creek, Mekiana moved it first to a location near the church, then to its present location on Main Street. To keep the pieces straight during the moves, several logs have Mekiana's name or numbers written on them. The Mekiana house is unique from the other Anaktuvuk sod houses in several ways, the most notable being its good repair. The house has two rooms--a 17'6"x16'0" living room and a 14'0"x13'11" bedroom added several years later--plus a 4'3"x8'3" arctic entry built after 1980. It has a post-in-ground foundation, yet unlike most other sod houses all walls except the north elevation are of horizontal logs chinked with mud. The house has a tin hip roof with a metal stove pipe near the south end; the entire structure is covered with about eighteen inches of sod. Another interesting feature of this house is its large front (south) window, which has a wooden window box and small plank awning. Other windows are on the east and west elevations of the main room and the east elevation of the north room. The door into the arctic entry is of unfinished plywood with a plain wood frame, as is the door from the entry into the house.

The house is situated on the north-south axis, with the arctic entry on the south end, the main room in the middle and the bedroom on the north end. A center post supports the roof in the main room while a partial wall and a curtain separates the two rooms. The flooring is unfinished plywood and the ceiling is white 2" thick styrofoam friction fit between exposed ridgepole and purlin log beams. Cedar shingles overlap to cover the interior walls. The windows have plain wood frames and are boarded over when the house is not in use. The house has electricity and an oil burning stove, plus other modern mechanical conveniences.

INUAKIRAK HOUSE

HABS NO. AK-193

Inuakirak built his house, now set between two plywood buildings, before a grid system of streets was imposed on Anaktuvuk Pass village. The 16'0"x14'3" house is in fair condition and has undergone fewer alterations than many of its surviving counterparts. It is a typical one room sod house with a frame of large logs set into the ground and covered with much smaller vertical logs. Most of the sod remains on the exterior walls, though not on the roof. The southern portion of the east wall has caved in where a window used to be and the hip roof is badly deteriorated. Though most of the original roof poles can be seen from the inside, assorted planks have replaced some of the rotted roof poles and the entire roof has been covered with green roofing paper and pieces of plywood weighted down by a stack of miscellaneous lumber. It leaks quite badly. No chimney remains; however, there are holes for a stovepipe and air vent in the southwest part of the roof. The plain wooden door is on the east side of the south elevation and has a large post on the east side. It is wedged into the ground and cannot close. There is a small overhang above both the door and the window beside it, probably designed to hold blocks of sod. There is evidence of a sill on the

collapsed part of the east elevation.

The interior of Inuakirak House is probably similar to that of most Anaktuvuk Pass sod houses at the time of construction. It is a single open room with three support poles running the length of the house. The flooring is probably plywood with some planking, though it is presently covered with a thick layer of dirt and vegetation. The walls and ceilings are now exposed wall and roof poles, though tatters of burlap hang on the west wall and pieces of cardboard and wallpaper ornament the other walls. The wallpaper is very discolored, though at one time it was white with a pattern of green leaves and sprigs. The door is covered with plywood and has a bent metal strip for a handle. Traces of caribou hide weatherstripping remain in the door frame, similar to the weatherstripping found in the second O'Connell cabin. The window to the right of the door has a frame of wooden box slats and no glass, whereas dirt spills into the room from the collapsed window in the east elevation. The only remaining hardware is a metal cuff for a stovepipe, the stove having been removed. A rectangular vent edged with plywood and 2'x4's opens directly to the outside at the south end of the ridgepole; there is no evidence of electricity or other mechanical equipment.

BRIDGE

This bridge was built before a single channel was bulldozed for Contact Creek. It was probably used by villagers on trips between the village and Eleanor Lake. Constructed of peeled half-round logs held together with huge iron nails, the bridge now spans a dry creek bed. It has a six-log wide walkway with a pair of crossbraced supports on either side of the now-dry creek bed. The approach from the north is three logs wide, whereas the one from the south is six logs wide. The entire length of the bridge is 38'6". Though strong enough to support several children, it is too fragile to withstand regular use.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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ANAKTUVUK PASS SETTLEMENT SITE
HABS NO. AK-196
(Page 17)

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Anaktuvuk Pass Settlement Site was undertaken by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a division of the National Park Service. The project was executed under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, and Robert D. Barbee, Alaska Field Director, National Park Service. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1995 by Steven M. Peterson, project director; James E. Creech, Amanda Welsh and Ivan Galindo, architectural technicians; and Anna Lee Hewko, historian.