OPAQUE HISTORY AND OTHER CHALLENGES IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF ALASKA BOARDING SCHOOLS AND ASSOCIATED CEMETERIES

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> The one who stayed with us when we went to bed would stand up and walk back and forth in that house. He had things hanging on his belt. They were as big as [tundra berries?]. He would be muttering to himself. I became afraid while I was in bed. I couldn't sleep thinking he would kill me [laugh]. Later I understood that he was praying.
>
> There was one among us who walked with a cane. His older brother was ill. Then one morning my friend told me Jasper's older brother had died. That was the first death I saw at that place [Holy Cross Mission].
>
> —Charlie Harpak [Central Yup'ik] (1975)

ABSTRACT

The United States Department of the Interior's Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative involves highly traumatic issues that have negatively impacted the cultures, traditions, and core family relationships of America's Indigenous peoples for a century or more, and continue to do so today. Members of affected Indigenous communities are best equipped to speak to those important, emotionally charged issues, most of which are still invisible to the American public and must be openly exposed to be addressed on a national level. This article focuses on a key baseline objective of the boarding school initiative: identifying former boarding schools and associated cemeteries. An end goal of that objective is to determine which boarding school sites included cemeteries that contain burials of former students, an essential first step toward the potential repatriation of student remains to their families or tribal communities. The article describes impediments to making such determinations with specific respect to former boarding schools in the state of Alaska.

INTRODUCTION

Determining what became of Indigenous Americans who were placed in boarding schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and never returned home is a question that has haunted their families and communities for generations and remains a shameful smear on federal and state institutions involved in "Indian affairs" broadly. When the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative was issued by the United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior (DOI) in June 2021, it gave hope to those families and communities that answers might finally be forthcoming. That hope may be realized in many cases as boarding school records are uncovered, but it will not happen quickly. A multistep process will be required, and big shortcomings with the initiative must be overcome before important steps in the still-undetermined process can occur. As discussed in the introduction to this collection of articles (Pratt, this volume), the three most critical shortcomings are (1) that the initiative is *not* law, so it carries no legal mandates; (2) it was crafted by people who lack the necessary knowledge and research experience to realize the difficulty of many aspects of its implementation; and (3) funding provided for implementation has

been directed almost solely to identifying *federal* records about boarding schools, with no attention given to those held by ecclesial institutions. Numerous related problems are addressed throughout this article.

The obvious first step in implementing the boarding school initiative is to identify former boarding schools that operated in the United States between 1819 and 1969, the initiative's effective period. That step is a particularly complicated one in Alaska (Fig. 1). Research completed by the author indicates that at least 63 boarding schools operated in Alaska during the period 1867 to 1969, but the true number will likely exceed 100 schools.[1] Developing an accurate count of former boarding schools in Alaska is complicated by a variety of factors, including the following key points—many of which suggest the initiative was hastily assembled.

First, the Boarding School Initiative (US DOI 2021) does not define the term "boarding school," implying a definition is unnecessary and that all boarding schools were the same. Thus, it is unclear if "boarding homes"—like the one affiliated with St. James Mission at Fort Adams, near Tanana, and at which several Native children died (Fortuine 1989:184), or other more recent ones in Alaska (see Hirshberg and Sharp 2005)—were meant to be counted as boarding schools for the purposes of this initiative. They were not treated as such in this article. But several "orphanages" that housed Native children and/or received funding support from the federal government (usually channeled through the Bureau of Education [BOE] or Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA]) *are* categorized as boarding schools herein (e.g., El Nathan Children's Home, Lazy Mountain Children's Home,

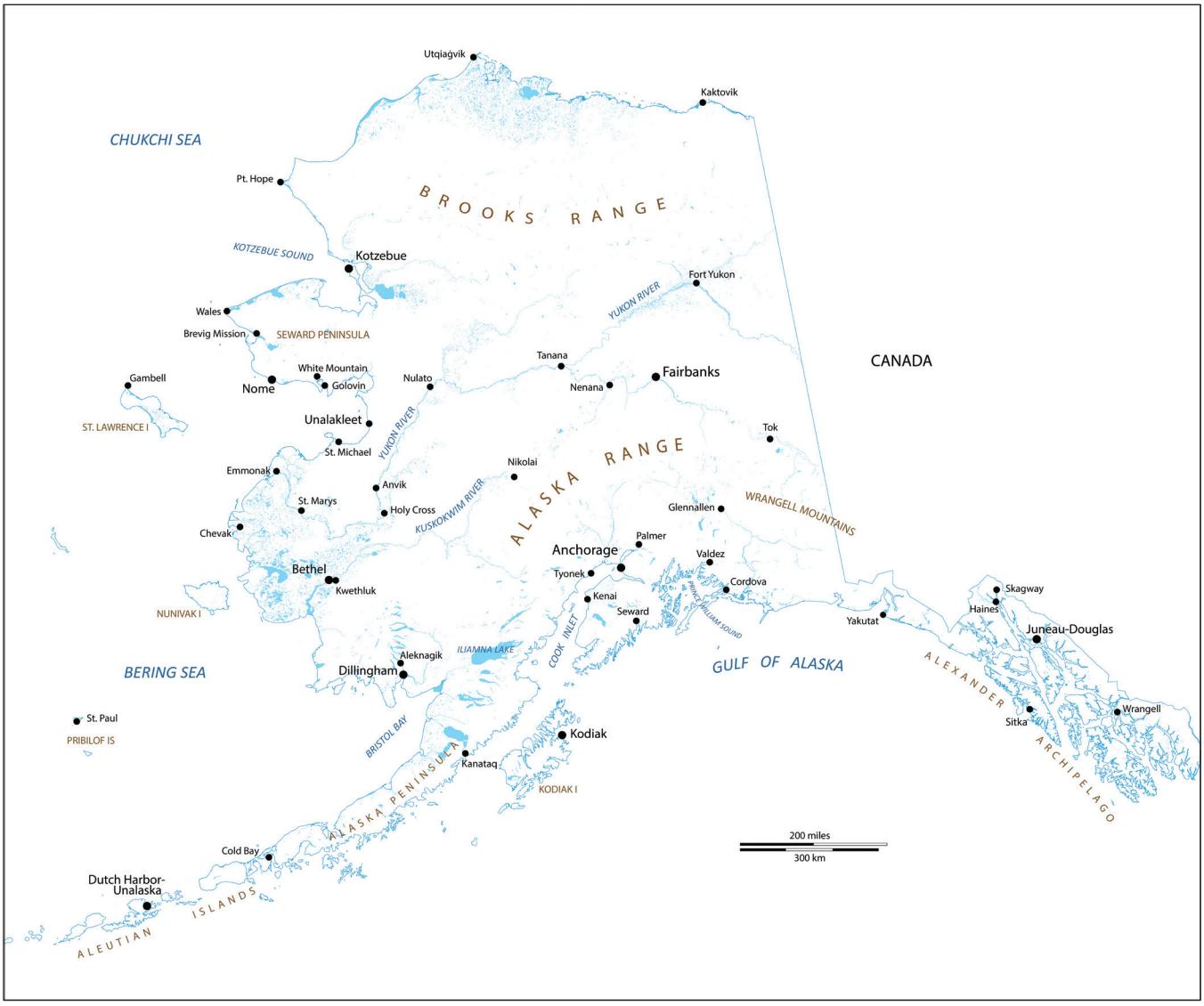

Figure 1. Study area. Map by Matt O'Leary.

Tyonek Orphanage), although they are not recognized by the DOI. Orphanages in larger communities pose another complication, as the resident children often attended community schools. This was true for each of the Jesse Lee Homes, for example, so it might seem to disqualify them as boarding *schools*; nonetheless, that is how they are now designated by the DOI.[2]

The initiative also does not address institutions like Morningside Hospital (Portland, OR, 1904–1968), with which the U.S. government contracted to care for "mentally-ill/mentally-handicapped" patients from Alaska, both Native and non-Native.[3] Some hospitals in Alaska—like Holy Cross Hospital in Nome (see Pratt 2022a:115*n*5)—included schools that boarded students and/or were pressed into service as orphanages during epidemics. Sanitariums were not mentioned in the initiative and have subsequently been treated inconsistently by the DOI. Reindeer herding training schools ("reindeer stations"), unique to Alaska, are not mentioned either. Evidence found to date supports listing at least two of those establishments as boarding schools (Teller Reindeer Station and Eaton Reindeer Station).

Schools and orphanages established in "Alaska" prior to 1867 were operated by Russian trading companies or the Russian Orthodox Church. The first school was established in Kodiak by the American Northeastern Company in 1784–1786 (Fedorova 1973:106, 243; see also Black 2004:110–111), and the first orphanage was apparently built at Kodiak in 1819 by Father Herman of the Russian Orthodox Church in response to mortalities from an influenza (?) epidemic (Fortuine 1989:114, 201). With specific respect to Alaska, the DOI boarding school initiative's effective beginning date cannot be *earlier* than 1867, the year Russia sold its former territory to the United States. Schools run by the Russian Orthodox Church continued to operate in Alaska after 1867—reportedly until the Russian Revolution of 1917 (Smith 1980:6)—and at least two of them were boarding schools for some period, but they were evidently funded solely by the Russian government (i.e., they did not receive U.S. federal funding). Further information about Russian schools in Alaska is provided below.

Documentation on boarding schools in Alaska from 1867 to 1959 is often fragmentary, inconsistent, and difficult to find. For about half of that time, the relevant information would be in Russian-language accounts, most now archival in nature, reducing its accessibility to many researchers. But administrative inconsistencies are likely part of the documentation problem too. Alaska was administered as the "Department of Alaska" from 1867 to 1884; the "District of Alaska" from 1884 to 1912; then the "Territory of Alaska" from 1912 to 1959. Territorial status ended in January 1959, when Alaska was granted statehood.

In some cases, the occurrence of similar names for different sites close to one another (e.g., Teller Reindeer Station, Teller Lutheran Orphanage and Mission, Teller) can frustrate efforts to determine which is being referenced in specific historical accounts, census records, and education reports. Distinguishing between "day schools" and "boarding schools" can also be problematic, and some schools functioned as both during their histories of operation (e.g., Akulurak Mission, Carmel Mission, Kokrines). And planned schools were not always established, even though records might suggest otherwise. For instance, the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska website (episcopalak.org/about-us/history) reports an Episcopal Church boarding school at the village of Tanacross; however, that school apparently was never built (Simeone 1982:88–96).

Boarding schools with the same name and operated by the same organizations sometimes occupied different locations over time. The United Methodist Church operated the Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska for many years, then relocated the operation to Seward, then finally to Anchorage. And the Roman Catholic Church concurrently operated boarding schools at Juneau and nearby Douglas, both of which were named "St. Ann's School." Conversely, boarding schools sometimes existed at virtually the same location, at different times, and were operated by different organizations. One example is Teller Reindeer Station/Teller Reindeer Training School (established and operated by the U.S. government) and Teller Lutheran Mission (operated by the Lutheran Church), which were at the same location. At the Yukon River village of Kokrines, boarding schools were operated by two different organizations: the U.S. Department of Education/Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the "Protestant" [Presbyterian] Church (Honea 1986; Jetté 1909–1912; Renner 2005; USBIA 1991; USBOE 1914).

Another point to keep in mind relative to Alaska boarding schools is that some, including Kanakanak Industrial School (see Troll 2021:98–99) and Pilgrim Hot Springs/Our Lady of Lourdes Mission (Renner 2005:653–654), started as orphanages established in response to the impacts of epidemic diseases such as measles/influenza (1899–1900), influenza (1918–1919), and diphtheria (1906).

Many of these nascent facilities were operated by ecclesial institutions. The scale of mortalities in some epidemics was such that entire villages were decimated, or families lost their adult members and only scattered infants and young children survived (Ganley 1998; Oquilluk 1973:205–208; Pratt 2021; Troll 2021; US BOE 1902:1467; Wolfe 1982). Orphans created by those epidemics often had no one left to care for them, especially in the immediate aftermath of the events, so they ended up in orphanages and boarding schools. But nonorphaned children were also placed in orphanages: children with one or both remaining parents who either could not or were considered unfit to care for children—usually the children of white fathers and Indigenous mothers (e.g., see Pullar 1992).

The circumstances behind children's attendance at boarding schools were variable, as were their individual experiences at the schools. Oral history accounts indicate some families refused to allow their children to go to school, whereas others removed their children from school for one reason or another and they never went back. Orphaned children placed in the care of missionaries were sometimes kept at a mission/boarding school despite efforts of close family members to take custody of and raise the children themselves (e.g., Urvina and Urvina 2016:8–12). There is also at least one known Alaska legal case (Can-ah-Couqua vs. John Kelly and A. E. Austin, 1886) concerning a Tlingit mother's unsuccessful attempt to remove her son from the Presbyterian-run Sitka Industrial Training School (aka Sheldon Jackson School). Conversely, some Alaska Native students personally chose to attend boarding schools (e.g., Harpak 1975), and some parents supported the idea of their children attending such schools (see Burch 1975:30–31).

ASSOCIATED CEMETERIES AND GRAVES

Troubling issues regarding unmarked and mass graves at boarding/residential schools in Canada have given rise to similar concerns about such schools in the U.S. Many Alaska boarding school and orphanage sites have associated cemeteries, and some are known or believed to include mass graves (e.g., Kanakanak Orphanage/Kanakanak Industrial School [see Troll 2021:98], Woody Island Mission [Pullar 2010:17])—none of which appear to have been "hidden" in any purposeful way. It must also be recognized that some mass graves at or very near former boarding school sites either predated or did not occur in connection with the schools' operations (e.g., see Pilgrim Hot Springs discussion, below). Mass graves in Alaska most often resulted from infectious diseases that caused high mortalities at remote sites (e.g., Ganley 1998; Pratt 2022a). The scale of infections and mortalities at some sites left too few able-bodied people to bury the dead (Fortuine 1989:215–226; Oquilluk 1973:205–208; Stern and Ryder 2009:22; Troll 2021:103; Wolfe 1982:108–113). In other instances, victims of such disasters were not discovered soon enough after their deaths to allow standard or traditional burial practices to be followed (Pratt 2021; Troll 2021:81, 88). Mass graves were sometimes the only reasonable way to deal with remains of the deceased (Fortuine 1989:223; Troll 2021:101, 104); unintentional mass graves tied to epidemics occasionally occurred as well (Garber 1934:218–219; Wolfe 1982:110).

The term "unmarked graves" also merits attention. In the context of the boarding school initiative, the term apparently applies to graves thought to have been intentionally unmarked (e.g., respectful burial treatment was considered unimportant, or the objective was simply to quickly dispose of the deceased). Presuming this interpretation is correct, in the absence of supporting documentary evidence—including possible first-person oral history accounts—what criteria must be met to confidently determine that any given burial is an unmarked grave? In Alaska, graves at former boarding school cemeteries were most often marked with wooden crosses. Over time, such grave markers (as well as coffins, balustrade fences, etc.), deteriorated and disappeared due to natural weathering processes, erosion, floods, and fires; in some areas of the state, they sank beneath the ground surface due to permafrost melting (e.g., Pratt 2022b:206, fig. 6.27; Akulurak Mission discussion, below). Since most Alaska boarding schools closed well over 50 years ago and associated graves at the sites could be decades older, it is not reasonable to expect that surface evidence of every formerly "marked" grave at those sites still exists today. The point is that the absence of a marker at an identified grave is not in itself evidence of sinister human action or disregard for the individual who was buried there. To be clear, however, this does not preclude the possibility that intentionally unmarked burials and/or disregard for the deceased occurred sometimes.

Some former Alaska boarding schools had more than one potentially associated cemetery (e.g., Holy Cross Mission, Kokrines). Verifying whether and which burials at such sites can be linked to the given boarding school operations will require careful research and considerable resources for bioarchaeological and forensic science inves-

tigations. It also should not be assumed that cemeteries were present at every former boarding school in Alaska. Boarding schools that only operated for a few years might not have experienced any student deaths, and numerous schools were established within the boundaries of active communities (e.g., Covenant Mission in Unalakleet, Fort Wrangell Tlingit Industrial School in Wrangell, Pius X Mission in Skagway, Our Lady of the Snows in Nulato), Fort Yukon Mission School in Fort Yukon, Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska, Seward, and Anchorage), suggesting that on-site student deaths may have resulted in burials at community cemeteries rather than cemeteries restricted to boarding school students and staff.

Determining whether a cemetery was present at a particular boarding school site can be problematic. In general, the longer a boarding school was in operation, the greater the likelihood that it had an associated cemetery. But even when evidence indicates a cemetery *was* present, its location relative to the school may not be specified, and there is no guarantee that a cemetery exists today. For example, active erosion of cemeteries associated with the Kanakanak Industrial School and Woody Island Mission is well documented. Epidemics known to have caused deaths at or very near former boarding schools (e.g., Ougavik Mission School) suggest those sites might have associated cemeteries as well, but written records may not have been made or curated.

Extensive research in federal and nonfederal archives (e.g., those of ecclesial institutions or municipalities) will be required to locate specific plats and records about cemeteries at various boarding school sites. And it is essential to determine the current ownership status of boarding school/cemetery sites prior to planning any on-site work, especially possible ground-disturbing work related to anticipated repatriation actions. While the situation may differ in other states, in Alaska most former boarding school/cemetery sites do not currently occupy federal lands or BIA trust lands. They are instead located on privately owned or municipal properties, so any on-site work would require explicit permission from the property owners.

In many cases, verifying the presence of a cemetery—as well as its areal extent—will require on-site work such as archaeological investigations, ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys, or even the use of search-and-rescue ("cadaver") dogs. LiDAR (light detecting and ranging) photography, another remote sensing tool, might also be useful for identifying subsurface burial features in certain instances.

BOARDING SCHOOL STUDENT RECORDS

The types of site work just mentioned usually will not yield evidence sufficient to link former boarding school students to specific burials in a cemetery. This will significantly hinder the achievement of one key goal of the boarding school initiative: repatriation of the remains of students who died and were buried at boarding school sites. Many factors can complicate searches for records about individual boarding school students, the most obvious of which concerns student names. Most boarding schools sought to erase Indigenous identities, so when children were enrolled their Indigenous names were arbitrarily replaced with new foreign names—or sometimes numbers.[4] Repressive boarding school policies that forbade students from speaking their Indigenous languages furthered the erasure of Indigenous personal names. In many cases, overcoming these obstacles will only be achieved through extensive archival and genealogical research, including tedious reviews and analyses of census and student records.

Another factor to consider is the U.S. Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 USC, Sec. 552a), which severely restricts the dissemination of "personally identifiable information" (PII) about people. Thus, records access requests may legally be denied if the subject records contain the names of (or other PII related to) former boarding school students. The Boarding School Initiative's silence regarding the Privacy Act created the false impression that when student records were discovered, at least those in DOI records systems, they would be accessible to family members and tribes in furtherance of the initiative's objectives. That is not necessarily true. In fact, after the 2022 DOI investigative report was issued, some Alaska tribes that sought access to federal boarding school records represented therein were informed that—like almost everyone else outside of the DOI—they would have to submit Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain the records. This requirement was confirmed to the author by DOI records specialists. On a related note, however, U.S. census records are released for public access 70 years after their official reporting date, at which time they become public records and are not subject to Privacy Act restrictions. Thus, U.S. census records compiled in 1950 or earlier are now public records.

Student identification searches can also be complicated by the fact that the closure of certain Alaska boarding schools led to their students being relocated to other boarding schools in the state. Examples of such transfers

include the following: Tyonek Orphanage students to Eklutna Vocational School; Holy Cross Mission students to Copper Valley School; Pilgrim Hot Springs students to Akulurak Mission. Several Carmel Mission students were relocated to the Carlisle Indian School (in Pennsylvania). Students at some boarding schools were transported outside of Alaska to be part of public displays at exhibitions and, rather than being returned to Alaska, were then enrolled in boarding schools far removed from their homelands (see Teller Reindeer Station discussion below).

One student's case is worth mentioning here because it touches on several of the issues just discussed. The student—a young Central Yup'ik girl—is identified as "M. Dosithee" in a 1907 class photograph taken at Akulurak Mission (Fig. 2), a Roman Catholic Church boarding school in the Yukon River mouth area. Derivation of the surname Dosithee is unclear but was possibly linked to the Catholic saint Dositheus—or Ursuline Sister Dosithée Leygonie, who served at Akulurak Mission in its early years of operation. A 1910 census of "St. Marys Mission 'Kousilvak' Village" [Akulurak Mission] listed the student as "Mary Dosenten," age 13 (Mielke n.d.). She subsequently moved to the Catholic Church's Pilgrim Hot Springs Mission, where she died in 1923 and was buried in the mission cemetery (Renner 2005:510). Collectively, these details indicate Mary Dosithee was in the Alaska boarding school system for at least 16 years, but unless her Yup'ik name and home village were documented in church records from when she first entered the system, it is unlikely her natal identity will be determined.

Finally, it is also known that students from Alaska attended Canadian residential schools.[5] Canadian First Nations students from Yukon Territory reportedly also attended the school at Pius X Mission in Skagway (Lee Clayton, pers. comm. with the author, August 2024).

Figure 2. Central Yup'ik girls in class at St. Mary's Mission Boarding School, Akulurak, 1907 (Renner 2005:4). Image no. JOPA-104-12. Oregon Province Archive. Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis. Accessed 28 June 2024.

SELECTED DATA ON SIX ALASKA BOARDING SCHOOLS

This section discusses six former boarding schools, most of which have not been categorized as such by the DOI. The selected schools were chosen because information based on their individual histories and/or physical settings illuminates a range of problems that pose serious obstacles to potential on-site research projects, particularly those concentrated on cemeteries. Each school had at least one associated cemetery, and details about them are emphasized in the discussion.

Other data presented about the schools provide cultural and historical context concerning their dates of establishment and duration of operations (see Fig. 3, Table 1) and related events. These examples offer researchers of Alaska boarding schools a sense of data types that might be available to them, as well as interpretive difficulties they may encounter. Collectively, they underscore the problematic nature of certain objectives of the boarding school initiative with respect to Alaska. Some of the issues described may also be relevant to boarding school research in other parts of the country.

AKULURAK MISSION (YUKON RIVER MOUTH, ALASKA)

Akulurak Mission was situated "in the center of five Eskimo villages, all within a radius of two or three miles"

Table 1. Six Alaska boarding schools.

School	Indigenous Name (Language)	Other Names	Location	Operator: Years of Operation	Cemetery	Current Land Ownership
Akulurak Mission	Akuluraq (Yup'ik)	St. Joseph's Mission; St. Joseph's Boarding School; St. Mary's Mission School–Akulurak	Kwikhpak Pass (Yukon River mouth area, near Alakanuk, AK)	Roman Catholic: 1894–1898; 1905–1951	Yes	Private
Holy Cross Mission	Ingrirralleq (Yup'ik) Deloy Chet (Deg Hit'an) Nel'eekk Denh (Koyukon)	Mission of the Holy Cross; Kosorefsky	Middle Yukon River (at Holy Cross, AK)	Roman Catholic: 1888–1956	Yes (two)	Private
Carmel Mission*	"Kanulik" (Yup'ik)		Nushagak Bay (near Nushagak, AK)	Moravian Church: 1887–1906; school opened in 1888	Yes	Private
Kokrines*	Łoyh Denlekk'es Denh (Koyukon)	St. Stanislaus/St. Paul the Apostle Mission	Upper Yukon River (near Ruby, AK)	US BOE/BIA: 1908–ca. 1945; Protestant: 1945–ca. 1948	Yes (two)	Private
Pilgrim Hot Springs*+	Uunaatuq (Iñupiaq)	Our Lady of Lourdes Mission and Orphanage; Pilgrim Springs Mission and Orphanage	Seward Peninsula (northeast of Nome, AK)	Roman Catholic: 1918–1941	Yes	Private
Teller Reindeer Station*	Nuuk, or "Salinak" (Iñupiaq)	Teller Reindeer Training School	Port Clarence (Brevig Mission, AK)	U.S. government: 1892–1900	Yes	Private

* Indicates that, as of June 2024, the institution has not been officially recognized as a former Alaska boarding school by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

\+ Indicates the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition listed the institution as a boarding school in August 2023, but qualified its inclusion with the statement "no evidence of federal support."

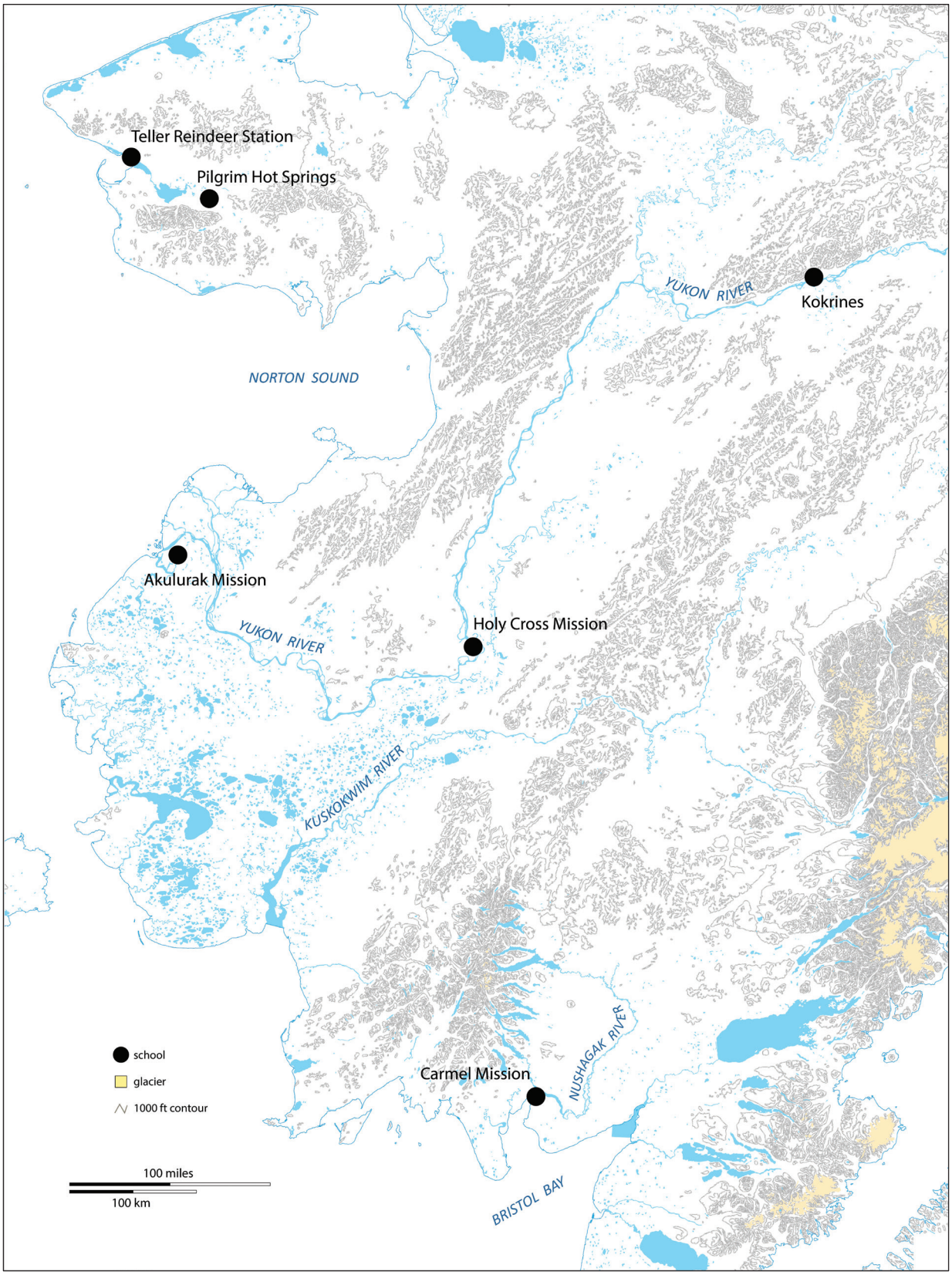

Figure 3. Selected Alaska boarding schools. Map by Matt O'Leary.

(Cantwell 1992:72). The Catholic mission opened "a day school for children and adults of the nearby villages" in December 1894, and it became a combination day and boarding school soon thereafter (Cantwell 1992:72–74).

The former Akulurak Mission (Fig. 4) poses especially difficult problems with respect to connecting individuals buried at the site with past boarding school students and specific burial features. Near-surface permafrost throughout the site area meant that all burials here were placed on the ground surface. Over time, the annual cycles of permafrost freezing and thawing actions (combined with the wet tundra nature of the site setting) caused many surface burials to sink beneath the ground surface. Burials were not, however, the only human-made features impacted by these characteristics of the local environment. As noted by Renner (2005:5):

> The tundra terrain . . . on which the mission buildings stood, gave the whole complex anything but stability. Buildings were forever shifting, sinking into the tundra, with the result that wide cracks were constantly opening up, leading to major heat loss. During thaws and the summer months, lakes formed under the buildings.

Also, contemporary residents of the Yukon River mouth area retain strong attachments to Akulurak (see Pratt 2022b:200–207), based on either their personal connections with the former boarding school or the fact that close family members are buried at the site. So "new" burials regularly occur at the site. Thus, although Akulurak Mission was abandoned in 1951, the site is still an active cemetery area more than 70 years later. Renner (2005:2) reported: "As a rule, children stayed at St. Mary's [Akulurak] for an average of about five years. Some, especially orphans, stayed as long as ten to sixteen years."

In 2017, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) researchers visited the site and noted surface evidence of at least 60 to 70 graves, including several that dated to earlier that same year (Fig. 5), but numerous older graves undoubtedly have sunk beneath the ground surface over time and are no longer visible (e.g., see Fig. 6). Some such burials were undoubtedly associated with the original Yup'ik site of *Akuluraq*, which predated the mission and school. Even assuming Catholic Church records about the mission include cemetery plats with personal names of the interred, identifying those grave sites today may be impossible for several reasons. First, older burials whose surface evidence disappeared may subsequently have been overlain with new burials. Second, the marshy, wet tundra environment of the site area likely precludes a GPR survey that might identify possible sunken burial features. Finally, although LiDAR imagery of the site is being procured, the technology's "near surface" character

Figure 4. St. Mary's Mission, Akulurak. Ursuline Sisters Laurentia and Dosithée and Father John L. Lucchesi, S.J., are in the foreground (Renner 2005:3). Image no. JOPA-152.1.02. Oregon Province Archive. Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Figure 5. Close-up of "new" burial at Akulurak, August 2017. Plywood coffin wrapped in tarp, with horizontal wooden cross and plastic flowers. Decedent's date of death: 1 April 2017. Coffin placed on ground due to near-surface permafrost in site area. Photograph by Kenneth L. Pratt, ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Calista Region Digital Photographs (Akulurak – Image no. P1010054), Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.

may not penetrate deeply enough to reveal sunken graves (e.g., see Guarnera 2023).

A compilation of census information on "Alaska Village Orphanages, Missions, Schools and Hospitals" (Mielke n.d.) reports 15 residents at "St. Marys Mission Kousilvak Village" in 1910, and at "St. Mary's Mission, Akulurak Village" 92 residents in 1930, 63 in 1940, and 103 in 1950. The names and estimated ages of the residents are included.

When the Pilgrim Hot Springs/Our Lady of Lourdes Mission closed in 1941, its students were transferred to Akulurak. In 1951, the Akulurak Mission closed and moved (with its students) upriver to Andreafsky, where it became St. Mary's Mission. The Akulurak Mission and school buildings (Fig. 7) were subsequently dismantled and the lumber reused for other purposes (Renner 2005:6)—including to build churches at Alakanuk, Emmonak, Sheldon Point [*Nunam Iqua*], and Kotlik (Joseph 1985). Thus, surface remains of the mission buildings no longer exist at the site (see Fig. 8). The former mission site is apparently still owned by the Roman Catholic Church.

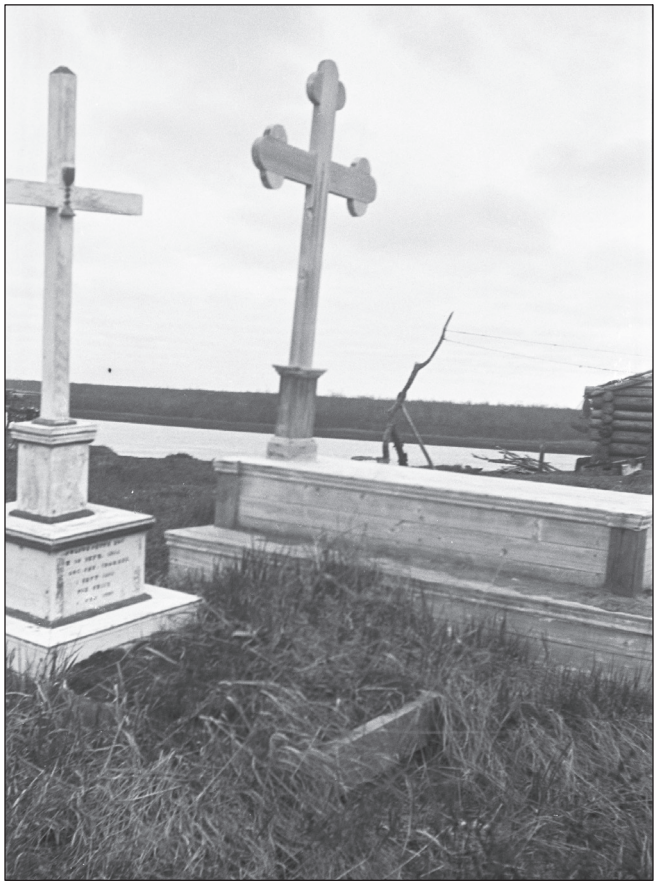

Figure 6. Graves of two unknown Roman Catholic clergy at Akulurak, ca. 1930s. An August 2017 visit to Akulurak yielded no surface evidence of these substantial graves or similar graves of other clergy buried at the site. They most likely sunk below the ground surface over time. Photograph designated "Akulurak cemetery 001 B&W" courtesy of David Kingma, archivist, Oregon Province Archive, Gonzaga University, Spokane (March 2017).

CARMEL MISSION (NUSHAGAK BAY, ALASKA)

A 1910 map by H.C. Fassett (inspector of fisheries in Alaska) titled "Alaska, Nushagak Bay District, Bering Sea" identifies the site as "Nun-nung-y-na-hök or Kan-nu-lik or Carmel Mission" (cf. VanStone 1971:73). *Kangilek* may be the correct spelling of the Yup'ik name "Kanulik." VanStone (1971:75–81) described the location of Kanulik village (Fig. 9 [ca. 1890s]) and Carmel Mission as being less than 7 km above the village of Nushagak and "up a narrow slough just south of the lower end of Grassy Island."

Kanulik was the site of the first cannery construction on Nushagak Bay, in 1883 (Branson 2012:109). Three years later, the DOE gave the Moravian Church a grant of $1,500 toward establishing and operating a school in

Figure 7. St. Mary's Church, Akulurak (Renner 2005 [facing p. 1]). Image no. JOPA-152.1.02. Oregon Province Archive. Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Figure 8. South aerial view of Akulurak, with cemetery area visible at left center, August 2017. Mission and school buildings formerly stood in the large area of grassy, disturbance vegetation in foreground. Photograph by Kenneth L. Pratt, ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Calista Region Digital Photographs (Akulurak – Image no. IMG-0081), Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.

Figure 9. Kanulik Native Village ca. 1890s (Branson 2012:117). Moravian Archives (Bethlehem, PA). Courtesy National Park Service, Alaska Region, Anchorage.

the Nushagak area (Henkelman and Vitt 1985:112). Part of the Carmel Mission, established in 1887, the school was completed in January 1888. Situated "200 yards west of Kanulik" (Branson 2012:115), the school included students from Kanulik, Nushagak, and Togiak (about 67 km to the west), as well as two young boys who the Moravians took in as boarders (Branson 2012:118–119; see also Henkelman and Vitt 1985:115–116). Thus, the Carmel Mission school functioned as both a day school and a boarding school.

Two sod huts were eventually built to house Native boarding students (Branson 2012:130; Henkelman and Vitt 1985:118). "In 1889, the school at Carmel had an enrollment of 30 students, 20 were boarders from upriver [Nushagak] villages or Togiak" (Branson 2012:148). In January 1891, the school had 11 students, all of whom were boarders (Branson 2012:149). An average of 18 students attended the school in 1892 and 23 in 1893, "most of whom were boarders" (Henkelman and Vitt 1985:131). School attendance averaged 26 in 1894, 37 in 1895–1896, and 28 in 1897–1898 (Henkelman and Vitt 1985:133–134). Thirteen resident children were reported at the "Moravian Mission Carmel Village" in 1900 (Mielke n.d.).

When Carmel Mission closed in 1906, at least two students ("Henry" and "Ephraim") were transferred to the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Both died and were buried there. This information was provided to Ken Pratt (BIA ANCSA) by Courtenay Carty (tribal administrator, Curyung Tribal Council) on May 23, 2022. A third apparent Carmel student ("Walter") had also been transferred to Carlisle Indian School, but he survived and returned to Alaska (Carty 2023).

In 1969, James VanStone briefly surveyed the Kanulik site during an archaeological and ethnographic research project in the Nushagak River region. Kanulik was traditionally occupied by local Yup'ik people for summer fishing, at a minimum; but the Carmel Mission (Fig. 10 [ca. 1895]) and a cannery of the Arctic Packing Company

Figure 10. Moravian Carmel Mission Complex, 1895 (Branson 2012:202). Photograph by Dr. Lincoln Cottren. Moravian Archives (Bethlehem, PA). Courtesy National Park Service, Alaska Region, Anchorage.

(established in 1883) later became part of or essentially absorbed the site (VanStone 1971:75–81; see also Henkelman and Vitt 1985:135). Those changes turned Kanulik into a multiethnic village, which included Yup'ik as well as English and Chinese residents. VanStone evidently did not see any surface evidence of graves, but the Kanulik area probably included a large cemetery.

A Yup'ik woman named Dahlia Peterson died at the site from tuberculosis in November 1888 and was buried there (Branson 2012:115, 131; Henkelman and Vitt 1985:118–119); her son, Chris (Fig. 11), ended up attending the mission school. In 1899, influenza reportedly killed "every child under two" years of age at the "Moravian mission at Carmel" (Fortuine 1989:213). It was further noted that the same "epidemic swept into Bristol Bay, causing heavy mortality at Carmel, the Moravian Mission there" (Fortuine 1989:225; see also Schwalbe 1951:60). In other words, the epidemic's victims were not limited to infants and toddlers.

Given the site's history, it may be difficult to locate a cemetery there today. If a GPR survey took place at Kanulik and revealed evidence of potential graves, however, correlating them with former Carmel boarding school students might not be possible. A cemetery likely existed at the Yup'ik village of Kanulik before the mission's establishment; there was also a Moravian cemetery at Carmel, and "nearly every cannery had their own cemetery" (Branson 2012:140). Thus, there may have been three different cemeteries in near proximity to the Carmel Mission. VanStone's observation that the mission, cannery, and Kanulik village sites eventually merged into one suggests the occupants of any graves identified at the locale could be (at a minimum) either Yup'ik, English, or Chinese.

Figure 11. Two boys at Carmel Mission, early 1890s (Branson 2012:115): Chris Peterson (right) and Nicholi. Reitz Collection, Moravian Archives (Bethlehem, PA). Courtesy National Park Service, Alaska Region, Anchorage.

The former mission site is reportedly now privately owned by the Saguyak Corporation of Clarks Point, Alaska.

HOLY CROSS MISSION (MIDDLE YUKON RIVER, ALASKA)

In 1887, Jesuit Father Aloysius Robaut was searching for a suitable site to establish a new mission when a boy from the village of Kosorefsky showed him "an area avoided by the Indians who feared the presence of spirits there since it was near an Indian burial ground" (Cantwell 1992:268*n*23; see also Renner 2005:541). For various reasons, Father Robaut decided it was where the mission would be built. The site was wooded and had a suitable source of drinking water; there also was room "for a village to grow along the slough and the priest dreamed that the Koserefski Indians would, little by little, lose their fear of the site and move close to the mission" (Cantwell 1992:268*n*23). That is what eventually happened.

The Lower Koyukon ("Nulato Indians") reportedly called the native village at the mission *Nělě'ĭrkĕn*, *Nele'irkten*, or *Nělělĕirktēn*, "Goblins Place" (de Laguna 1947:77).[6] VanStone (1979:141) thought the location "may have been the site of the former village of Anilukhtakpak, mentioned by Zagoskin and other sources during the Russian period, but not referred to by later visitors to the area" (see also Cantwell 1992:268*n*23; de Laguna 1947:77; Zagoskin 1967:193).

> Before Holy Cross Mission was established in 1888, the site was, according to the mission's founder, Father Aloysius J. Robaut, S.J., "a perfect wilderness." Wrote Father Robaut: "There was not, nor seemed to have ever been, any Indian or White settlement in that place, it being nothing but a perfect wilderness, not a soul living there, nor the least sign of anyone having ever lived there." He wrote that in 1909, in a moment of enlightened self-interest, one suspects, in a statement dealing with the land on which the mission was located. If the one-time village of Anilukhtakpak was not located on the actual mission site, it was located very near it. (Renner 2005:259)[7]

Figure 12. Children of Holy Cross Mission, ca. 1900–1916 (photographer unknown). Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection, Reproduction Number LC-USZ62-133494; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

The boarding school of "Kosorefsky," listed on the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) website, applies to the Holy Cross Mission (Fig. 12). In 1895–1896, there were reported to be "79 boarders in the mission school and 26 day scholars" (Jackson 1897:1446). Kosorefsky (*Nel'eekk Denh*) was an Athabascan village on the left bank of the Yukon River about one mile upstream and across from Holy Cross, which is on the Yukon's right bank (see Osgood 1958:20, fig. 2). Kosorefsky village was reportedly destroyed by ice in 1894 (Cantwell 1992:270*n*46), but another account (Renner 2005:259) states the village remained in use until about 1915. In either case, a Native settlement that was developing next to the mission by the early 1890s was called "Kosorefsky, after the Russian name of the old village across the river," and in 1899 a U.S. Post Office at the locale was opened under the same name (Orth 1967:426). The mission complex (Fig. 13) then also became known as Kosorefsky. The mission and post office names were changed to "Holy Cross" in 1912 (Orth 1967:426; Renner 2005:259). Still, some records continued to identify the mission as Kosorefsky through at least 1920.

At least two cemetery areas were present in the vicinity. Renner (2005:264–265) mentions "the mission cemetery on a hill behind the mission" and identifies 10 individuals who were buried there—all of whom were Sisters of Saint Ann, Jesuit Brothers, or Jesuit Fathers. Another description of the cemetery implies Native individuals were also buried there: "Up on a sloping hill was a cemetery, where many victims of epidemics were buried. Wooden fences surrounded graves, including those of two sisters [i.e., Sisters of Saint Ann]" (Cantwell 1992:142).

Some individuals who died at the old village of Koserefsky (probably between ca. 1888–1894) may also have been buried in the mission cemetery. This possibility was tied to concerted Jesuit efforts:

> to baptize newly born babies in the village of Koserefsky across the river and also to secure the bodies of those who died, particularly children, for burial in the mission cemetery. This latter effort was vigorously resisted by the Indians who believed that the transfer of a corpse across the river would have a detrimental effect on future salmon runs. (VanStone 1979:151)

Figure 13. Holy Cross Mission on the Yukon, ca. 1900–1930 (photographer unknown). Note cemetery on hill at extreme left center. Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection, Reproduction Number LC-USZ62-133493; Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

The burial ground Father Robaut learned about while seeking a site for the mission may be a second cemetery within the Holy Cross Mission complex, or near enough to it to potentially be considered associated. This seems likely considering published interpretations about the reported village of Anilukhtakpak and its location relative to both the mission and nearby Ghost Creek. Archaeological investigations of the latter yielded evidence of numerous graves, house remains, and artifacts (de Laguna 1947:77; Hrdlicĥka 1973:62–66), and yet another cemetery was found by Hrdlicĥka (1973:64–65) upriver from Ghost Creek toward the mission. Finally, a 1975 interview with three residents of Holy Cross village produced the following information: "In discussion of Ghost Creek area ('HR1'), mention is made of Dr. Hrdlicka and an assistant, Dr. O'Malley, followed by recollection that 'light blue and brick red with white beads in grave where *mission* is now'" (Andrews and Hansen 1975:68–69 [emphasis in original]).

At least 12 children at the Holy Cross Mission reportedly died in 1900 from influenza, measles, and/or tuberculosis (see Fortuine 1989:222–223; Wolfe 1982:112–113). Church records may contain information about where these children were buried; they might also indicate whether boarding school students who died while at the mission were ever interred at the Holy Cross village cemetery. Brief accounts about Native students who died at the mission are provided by Cantwell (1992:155) and Harpak (1975).

There were apparently about 27 boarding school students at the mission in 1889 (Cantwell 1992:67). A compilation of census information concerning "Alaska Village Orphanages, Missions, Schools, and Hospitals" (Mielke n.d.) reports 72 resident children at "Holy Cross Mission—Koserefsky Village" in 1900 and 79 children in 1910. Another compilation of census information for "Holy Cross Village Alaska" (Mielke 2023) reports the number of residents at the "Holy Cross Childrens Mission" as 108 in 1920; 175 in 1930; and 114 in 1940. In each census, the names and estimated ages are included for the enumerated individuals.

The Catholic Church closed this mission in 1956 and replaced it with the Copper Valley School. Some students and staff from Holy Cross Mission were transferred to the Copper Valley School (Renner 2005:115–117). The former site of Holy Cross Mission is believed to now be owned by the Native Village of Holy Cross.

KOKRINES (UPPER YUKON RIVER, ALASKA)

Jesuit priests from the Nulato Mission made periodic visits to the (Upper) Koyukon village of Kokrines until a church was formally established there in 1904, after which there was a full-time Jesuit presence (Jetté 1909–1912:345–346). An Episcopalian missionary also built a church at Kokrines in 1904, but when he died in 1906, the church closed (Jetté 1909–1912:345–346). The Episcopal Church was purchased in 1907 by Jesuit Father Jules Jetté, who "converted it into a Catholic Church and residence" (Renner 2005:354; see Fig. 14).

The BOE built a school at Kokrines in 1908 and appointed Father Jetté as the schoolmaster. He served in that role from 1909 to 1912 (US BOE 1914:16; see also Renner 2005:354). The BIA built a new school at the site in 1930 (US BIA 1991:6–8). James Johnson (b. 1909) lived in Kokrines when he was young and learned English at the BIA school, where lessons were given in English and translated into Athabaskan (Koyukon) by a girl who knew English (Johnson 1986).

After the BIA school closed (ca. 1945), Clara Honea, one of its former students, was sent to the Eklutna Industrial School (Honea 1986).

In 1945, Presbyterian missionaries took over some buildings at Kokrines and operated a boarding school there until about 1948 (Honea 1986; US BIA 1991:8). At least two young kids from the village of Ruby—about 40 miles upriver from Kokrines—are known to have attended this boarding school: Martha Barron and Helen Notti (Honea 1986).

Two known cemeteries at Kokrines collectively contain at least 121 graves (US BIA 1991; Fig. 15). It is presently uncertain if any graves are tied to the BOE/BIA and/or Presbyterian boarding school(s).

The ownership status of Kokrines is complicated. Most of the site was formerly encompassed by two Alaska Native allotment parcels, both of which were later inherited by or sold to non-Native individuals. The most upriver and downriver portions of the site have been conveyed to Doyon, Limited, under Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA. And the final (and smallest) site remnant remains under federal management as a "school reserve."

Figure 14. St. Paul the Apostle Church, Kokrines (Renner 2005:354). Image no. JOPA-510.34. Oregon Province Archives. Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis. Accessed 28 June 2024.

Figure 15. Graves at Kokrines (Feature 79 in foreground). View to southeast, August 1986. Photograph by Lawrence Carbone. Doyon, Limited, Case File F-22780/F-22781 (B&W Roll 1, Frame 21). ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage.

PILGRIM HOT SPRINGS/OUR LADY OF LOURDES MISSION AND ORPHANAGE (SEWARD PENINSULA, ALASKA)

The original Our Lady of Lourdes Mission was established in 1907 at the village of Mary's Igloo (about five miles northwest of the hot springs), but it did not include an orphanage or boarding school. It was downgraded to a "station" after 1916, and when a new mission was established at Pilgrim Hot Springs in 1918, the name "Our Lady of Lourdes" was transferred to it (see Renner 2005:64–66 [Father Bernard], 369–371 [Father LaFortune], 417–419 [Mary's Igloo]).

Pilgrim Hot Springs (*Uunaatuq*) had been the site of a "ranch" and "popular resort" prior to being deeded, in October 1917, by James F. Halpin to Father LaFortune as a gift to the Roman Catholic Church (Renner 2005:507). In April 1918, Father LaFortune moved from Mary's Igloo to "the Hot Springs ranch to turn it into a mission center and orphanage" (Renner 2005:507; see Fig. 16). Further details about this transition follow.

> In October 1917, the Pilgrim Hot Springs ranch on the Pilgrim River, some 60 miles north of Nome, became the property of the Nome parish. Intentions were to convert it into a mission center with a boarding school and orphanage. Little did anyone at the time realize that just one year later there would be, owing to the great influenza epidemic of 1918, orphans in abundance. The first of many sick and orphaned began to arrive at the improvised mission hospital and orphanage in the late fall of 1918. The need for adequate personnel to care for them, and for the many more soon to come, was quite desperate. Throughout the first eight months of 1919, orphans kept arriving at the Pilgrim Hot Springs Mission. (Renner 2005:653–654)

The site contains a substantial cemetery. According to a plat in Catholic Church records, it includes 61 victims of the 1918 influenza (41 "Catholics" and 20 "non-Catholics"). The mission was not yet in operation when the influenza struck, so these influenza victims were not mission residents; instead, they likely resided in outlying villages and camps. The "Catholic" victims must have been baptized by local clergy at some point, so it may be possible to find their names in Catholic Church records. The cemetery plat also shows 25 additional burials: 22 burials identified with the names of the interred and dating between 1919–1932, and three marked burials of clergy who died between 1923–1938.

Figure 16. At the Pilgrim Hot Springs Mission, June 1922. Ursuline Sisters Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, Theresa, Rose, and Thecla pose with children, most of them orphans (Renner 2005:508). Image no. JOPA-177.01. Oregon Province Archive. Jesuit Archives & Research Center, St. Louis. Accessed 28 June 2024.

In 2022, a GPR survey at the Pilgrim Hot Springs cemetery (Urban 2022) revealed a total of at least 89 "likely burials." The results confirmed information recorded on the cemetery plat—which indicated the presence of 86 burials—and added three more possible burials. Two of the latter appear to be within the "Catholic" grouping of the 1918 influenza victims.

The GPR survey report (Urban 2022:7–8, 13–15) describes the influenza-related burials as "mass graves" but does not define the term. The report text and GPR imagery, however, suggest they are two groupings of *individual* coffin burials. Characterizing the burials revealed by the GPR survey as "mass graves" is misleading, because the term is normally understood to mean a nonindividualized mass of bodies in a common grave (e.g., a pit, trench, or pile). This misuse of terminology is highly problematic, especially in the contemporary political context. The reported presence of "mass burials" at this former boarding school site could easily lead to assumptions that the Catholic Church was either responsible for the people's deaths or disrespectful to them after death. Neither is true. Second, it also implies that a well-documented mass burial tied to the 1918 epidemic and known to be located *somewhere* in the Pilgrim Hot Springs vicinity has now been found. That also is not true, as evidenced by the definitive account of William Oquilluk (1973:205–208).

The known mass burial just referenced was described in detail by Oquilluk (1896–1972), an Iñupiaq resident of the village of Mary's Igloo during the 1918 influenza epidemic. His first-person account describes how the mass burial came about and explains that it contains influenza victims from Mary's Igloo—all of whom died in late 1918 but could not be buried until January 1919.[8] Oquilluk was directly involved with removing the victims' bodies from their homes in Mary's Igloo and burying them at Pilgrim Hot Springs. He did not provide a body count, but other published accounts concerning the influenza's impact on Mary's Igloo suggest the burial may contain the remains of 60 to 70 people (see Ganley 1998; Pratt 2022a:110, 112).

At the time of the influenza, the Mary's Igloo school teacher was H. D. Reese (Oquilluk 1973:205), with whom Oquilluk coordinated his efforts relative to helping the survivors and dealing with the dead. There is no mention whatsoever of Father LaFortune, the Pilgrim Hot Springs Mission, or the Catholic Church in Oquilluk's account of the pandemic. This suggests the Catholic Church had no role in the January 1919 mass burial at Pilgrim Hot Springs.

Details about the 1919 mass burial are provided in Oquilluk's words, below.

> After December, early in [1919], there were many dead bodies still in some of the houses. These had to be taken from [Mary's] Igloo to Pilgrim Hot Springs for burial. It was still very cold and the ground was frozen. At Pilgrim Hot Springs the sand was not frozen close to the springs. Here the people could be buried.
>
> In 1917–1918, a mail carrier named Peter Jeager ran mail from Nome to the mining country at Kougarok. He had many strong dogs in his team. He needed sixteen to twenty dogs to pull a big, long, thirty-foot sled. He agreed to haul all the dead bodies from Mary's Igloo to the hot springs. First a deep and wide trench was to be made in the sand by the springs. Each body was placed in the trench and covered with sand. This was done in three or four layers, laying one body on top of the sand-covered body of another. (Oquilluk 1973:207)

He added, "Two round trips were needed to carry all the dead over the nearly seven miles between Mary's Igloo and Pilgrim Hot Springs" (Oquilluk 1973:208). As the above passage makes clear, the supposed "mass burials" described in the 2022 GPR survey report do not even remotely match Oquilluk's description of the 1919 mass burial at Pilgrim Hot Springs. Thus, the actual location of the 1919 mass burial remains uncertain.

It is worth reiterating that the individuals in the 1919 mass burial were *not* former residents of the Pilgrim Hot Springs mission or orphanage.

Three Alaska Natives who died and were buried at the mission cemetery are identified as "Baby Angela" [d. Jan 14(?), 1920], "Mary Dositheе" [d. 1923], and "Emma" ["a poor orphan" (d. 1919)] (Renner 2005:510).[9] Three clergy members are also buried at the site: John F. Hansen, SJ—d. Jan. 29, 1938 (Renner 2005:241); Sister Irene Arvin—d. July 25, 1934 (Renner 2005:395, 654)]; and Father Frederick A. Ruppert, SJ—d. between Dec. 14–18, 1923 (Renner 2005:551–556)].

A compilation of census information concerning "Alaska Village Orphanages, Missions, Schools and Hospitals" (Mielke n.d.) reports 34 children at "Pilgrim Springs Mission" in 1930 and 51 at "Pilgrim Springs Orphanage" in 1940. Names and estimated ages of the residents are included.

When the mission closed in 1941 current students were transferred to Akulurak Mission. The site was purchased from the Catholic Church in 2009 by Unataaq

LLC, a consortium of Alaska Native Corporations. It is jointly managed by Kawerak, Inc. and Bering Straits Native Corporation.

TELLER REINDEER STATION/ TELLER REINDEER TRAINING SCHOOL (PORT CLARENCE, ALASKA)

Teller Reindeer Station was established in 1892 for the education of children of Sami families who had come to Alaska to train local Native people in the art of reindeer herding; however, Native children also became students and residents of the school (Figs. 17 and 18). Teller Reindeer Station arguably constitutes a type of "boarding school." It was funded by the government, and Native apprentices in training remained in residence—at the government's expense—for between two and five years, after which time they could potentially return to their home villages (Olson 1969:19–32; see also Koutsky 1982:65–68; Ray 1967:225; Sheppard 1983:77–79; Stern et al. 1980:24–36).

This was one of several reindeer herding training stations in Alaska. Contextual information concerning the establishment of these stations has been summarized as follows:

> Domesticated reindeer were introduced to Seward Peninsula in 1892. Sheldon Jackson, Agent for Education in Alaska, promoted this idea to prevent the Eskimos from starving by introducing what he thought would be a reliable, domesticated food supply. Initially, Siberians were brought to Alaska to teach herding to the Eskimos. When using Siberian teachers did not work out, Jackson sought to bring Lapp herders to Alaska to serve as teachers. In 1894, six Lapps arrived on Seward Peninsula; later, in 1898, a larger contingent of 67 Lapp families arrived at newly established Eaton Station on the Unalakleet River. Some Lapps remained as instructors at Eaton Station, while others were dispersed to teach herding at villages in northwest, southwest, and interior Alaska. (William L. Sheppard 1981, in US BIA 1983:33)

Figure 17. "The dug out at Reindeer Station Port Clarence, 1892." Sheldon Jackson, 1834–1909, Archives; RG 239, Box 12, Folder 24, Image no. 453. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

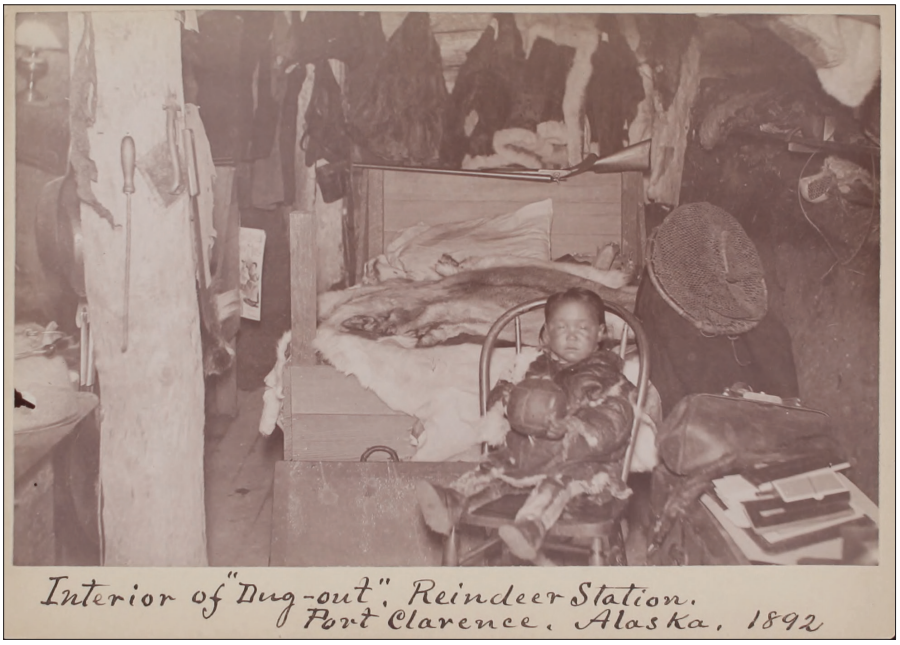

Figure 18. "Interior of dug-out, Reindeer Station. Port Clarence, Alaska, 1892." Sheldon Jackson, 1834–1909, Archives; RG 239, Box 12, Folder 24, Image no. 454. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

In 1893, Miner Bruce (superintendent of the Teller Reindeer Station) took an "Eskimo Troupe"—a group of 11 Alaska Natives—on tour to American cities, where they performed various acts and were shown off as exotics.[10] The group members (Fig. 19), all of whom were Kiñugumiut [Wales people], performed at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta in 1895, and Madison Square Garden in New York. They met with Mrs. Grover Cleveland for tea at the White House and attracted a lot of attention at the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, DC (Ray 1975:223*n*71; see also Nelson 1983 [1899]:Plates I, IV–X).[11] Although dancing and singing were mainstays of the

Figure 19. Kiñugumiut group from Port Clarence, Alaska. Front row, left to right: Koksuk (age 23), Zaksriner (age 3), Kerlungner (age 16?), Ungerkeekluk (age 22). Middle row, left to right: unidentified child, Artmarhoke (age 3), unidentified child. Back row, left to right: Sukuuk (age 25), Kyokuásee (age 16), Iserkyner (age 20), Komikse'ner (age 23). Photograph by William Dinwiddie, 1894. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Identifier 523819 (https://catalog.archives.gov/id/523819).

group's performances, one of its members, "Rina [or Zaksriner, a three-year-old child adopted by Bruce]," would fold her hands behind her back "bow forward and rest her head upon the floor, a feat unequaled as a contortion act" (Ray 1975:223*n*71). Miner Bruce "left Rina and her twin sister, Artmarhoke, behind in the United States to be educated until they were sixteen years old" but returned the rest of the group to Alaska in the summer of 1895 (Ray 1975:223*n*71). Rina evidently died in New York City in 1899 (Ray 1975:223*n*71); it is unknown what became of her twin sister.

Bruce was dismissed as superintendent of Teller Reindeer Station in 1893. William T. Lopp and his wife, Ellen Lopp, then managed the station and school until April 1894; thereafter, Lutheran missionary Toreef L. Brevig took over (Ray 1975:223–224).

As reported by Ray (1975:224–225), "In the fall of 1897, five [*sic*] of the [school's] best pupils were taken on the *Bear* to Seattle where they were sent to the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania" (Fig. 20). She goes on to say, "It was reported in Education Report 1901 that one of the pupils, Tumasock, had died in Carlisle (p. 1766)" (Ray 1975:225*n*75). Sheldon Jackson described her death as follows:

> It is appropriate to call attention to the death of Tumasock, who died of consumption at the Indian School, Carlisle, PA, on April 8. She was one of a band of young people taken from this station [Teller Reindeer Station] in the fall of 1897. She was greatly beloved by her associates and died rejoicing in Jesus. (Jackson 1901:13–16; US BOE 1901:1766)

The "Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center" (Dickinson College n.d.) lists the students as Tumasock ("Tomiclock"), Annie Coodlalook, Anna Buck ("Aneebuck"), Esenetuck, Cooki Glook ("Kokiglook"), and Laublock. They entered the school on November 14, 1897. Tumasock, Cooki Glook, and Laublock died at Carlisle and were buried at the school's cemetery.[12]

Teller Reindeer Station, which was probably both a day and boarding school, reportedly had 20 students in 1892–1893 (Ray 1975:222) and the same number in 1893–1894 (Ray 1975:224). But in 1894–1895, "the school had an enrollment of fifty-six, many of whom came from the nearby Eskimo [Iñupiaq] village that had a population of sixty persons under twenty-one years of age" (Ray 1975:224). The "nearby" village referenced here was *Sinġaq* ("Sinramiut"), about eight miles northwest of the reindeer station, which Bruce (1894) estimated contained 100 residents in 1892 (Ray 1964:75–76*n*43; see also Koutsky 1981:14–15*n*9, 19–20).[13]

The Reindeer Station included a cemetery (see Fig. 21), and at least some of the graves were probably those of former boarding school students. Thirty students were

Figure 20. Alaska Native children brought to Carlisle Indian School. Sheldon Jackson, 1834–1909, Archives; RG 239, Box 12, Folder 2, Image no. 288. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

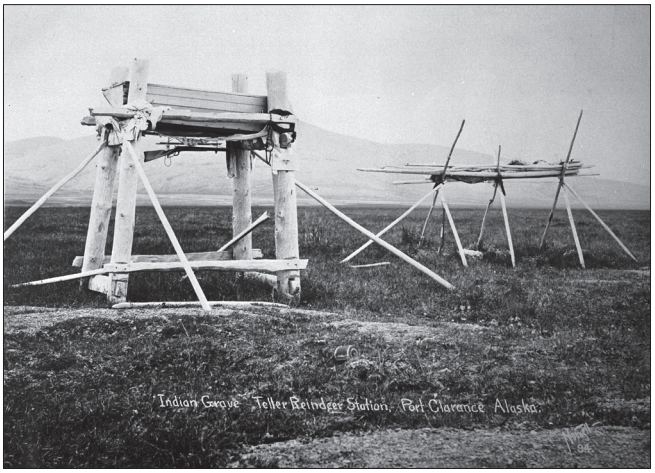

Figure 21. Native graves, Teller Reindeer Station, Port Clarence, Alaska. Taken in 1906 by Frank H. Nowell, the photograph shows two platform graves. Note the lever-action rifle on the grave in the foreground. Frank H. Nowell Photograph Collection, 1901–1908. ASL-PCA-48 (Image no. ASL-P48-020). Alaska State Library – Historical Collections, Juneau.

enrolled at the station school in 1900, all of whom were Alaska Natives. The teacher, T. L. Brevig, noted that:

> During the epidemic last summer [1899]…in the near vicinity about 30 [people] died. I buried 20 in all, who died in the buildings or in tents pitched around the buildings for sick natives. Many orphans were left. The mission took in 12 orphans, 2 widows, each with a child, and 3 young men, who have been cared for. (US BOE 1902:1467; see also p. 1484)

With respect to potential on-site work in the future, the site selected for the Teller Reindeer Station had previously served as "the water station which had serviced the whaling fleet on the northwest corner of Port Clarence" (Koutsky 1981:76). Cultural deposits from that prior use may be present in the site area, which apparently has never been the subject of an archaeological investigation. That said, it is possible that the Teller Reindeer Station site has been looted by residents of the modern villages of Brevig Mission and Teller. It is well-known in the Bering Strait region that people from these villages have looted archaeological sites (and graves) throughout the Port Clarence area and beyond for many years—and continue to do so (e.g., Thomas 2017). Thus, sites within or immediately adjacent to the looters' home villages have probably been targeted as well.

Finally, information concerning "Teller Reindeer Station" and "Teller Mission" is confusing. This is especially true relative to the exact physical locations of the two operations; however, it appears they were at the same place—which coincides with modern-day Brevig Mission (see Orth 1967:955). The modern village of Teller was established ca. 1900 and lies five to six miles southeast of Teller Reindeer Station (Brevig Mission). This further complicates the problem of ascertaining which "Teller" locality is being discussed in some accounts. Variant names reported for Teller Reindeer Station include Mrs. T. L. Brevig Eskimo Mission and Orphanage, Teller Mission Orphanage, Old Church, Teller Mission, and Brevig Mission.

Following the station's closure, T. L. Brevig established the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Mission at the same site in the fall of 1900 (Orth 1967:955; Ray 1975:225*n*75). Thereafter, Eaton Reindeer Station—established on the Unalakleet River in 1897–1898—essentially became the successor of Teller Reindeer Station. The former site of Teller Reindeer Station is evidently now owned by the Native Village of Brevig Mission.

SUMMARY

Each of the Alaska boarding school sites just discussed had a history *prior to* the establishment of the schools, and those histories directly bear on the interpretations of records about and any physical remains found at the sites. One purpose of these discussions is to illustrate the importance of using multiple sources of information (some of which will not be accessible through internet searches) when trying to document institutions that operated 50 to 100 years ago. As with most historical endeavors, the associated research findings include inconsistencies and other puzzles that may be difficult to rectify but sometimes lead to important insights. Another purpose is to emphasize the value of research experience related to and geographical knowledge of the region being studied.

ALASKA BOARDING SCHOOLS, 1867–1969

The following 63 schools are listed below in alphabetical order by their names, with their locations noted on Fig. 22 in the numerical sequence of their appearance (i.e., 1–63). A highlighted number (e.g., 26) indicates that—as of August 2024—the school has not been recognized as a boarding school by the DOI. Native place names are included for most of the school sites to broadly identify the Indigenous peoples within whose territories they were located.

Afognak Mission [1]: Afognak, AK—American Baptist Church school, boarding school, and agricultural experiment station, 1886–?. In 1886, there were reportedly 146 students in the school (US BOE 1887:36). The Sugpiaq name for Afognak is *Ag'waneq*.

Sheldon Jackson wrote:

> In the fall of 1887, at the expense of Mrs. Elliot F. Shepard, of New York, I brought to Eastern schools Frederic Harris, Henry Phillips, Minnie Shotter, Flora Campbell, and Florence Wells, native children, and Olga Hilton (Russian) from the industrial school at Sitka, and Blanche C. Lewis, native, from Fort Wrangel. (US BOE 1889–1890:1258)

The two boys were placed in the Indian training schools at Carlisle, Pa., and the five girls at the young ladies seminary, Northfield, Mass.

Akulurak (Kwikhpak) Mission [2]: Akulurak, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission, boarding school, and orphanage (1894–1898; 1905–1951). See extended discussion above. The Central Yup'ik site name is *Akuluraq*. Also

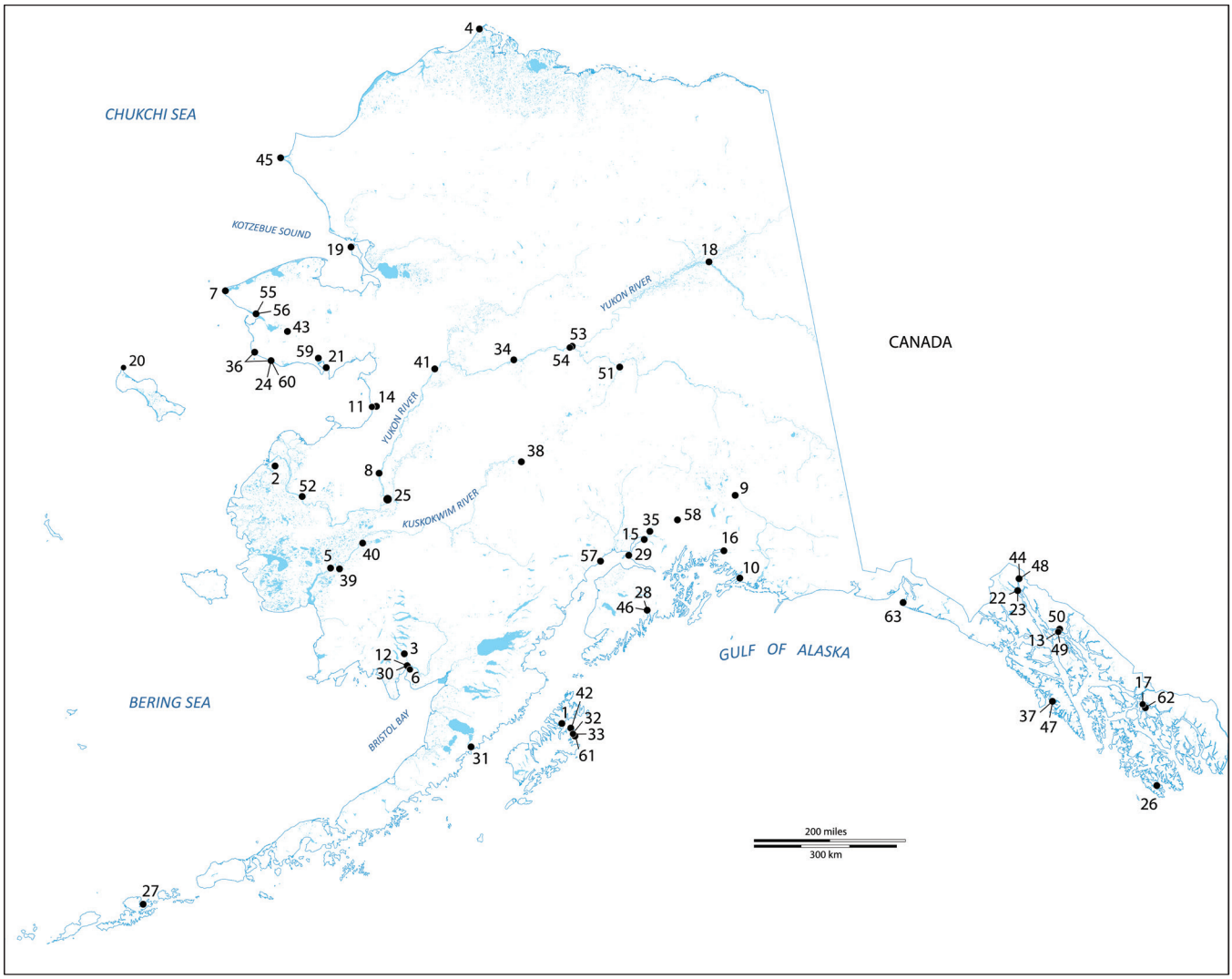

Figure 22. Alaska boarding schools, 1867–1969. Map by Matt O'Leary.

known as **St. Joseph's Mission** and **St. Joseph's Boarding School**. An associated cemetery is present. Following Akulurak's 1951 closure, the operation moved upriver on the Yukon and became **St. Mary's Mission**.

Aleknagik Mission School [3]: Aleknagik, AK—Seventh-Day Adventist Church, ca. 1938–1960s. The Central Yup'ik site name is *Alaqnaqiq*.

Barrow School [4]: Barrow, AK—Presbyterian Church boarding school. Dates of operation not yet determined. The Iñupiaq name of Barrow is *Utqiaġvik*.

Bethel Mission Station [5]: Bethel, AK—Moravian Church mission and boarding school, ca. 1883–1945. Also known as **First Mission House** and **Bethel Indian School**. An associated cemetery is present. In 1891, the cemetery contained about 10 graves; its location relative to the school was said to be "about 400 yards down the [Kuskokwim] river, but on high ground" (Henkelman and Vitt 1985:125–126). Bethel is *Mamterilleq* in Central Yup'ik.

Carmel Mission [6]: Kanulik, AK [eastern shore of Nushagak Bay]—Moravian Church mission and school, 1887–1906. See extended discussion above. An associated cemetery is present. *Kangilek* may be the correct spelling of the Central Yup'ik site name "Kanulik."

Cape Prince of Wales Mission [7]: Wales, AK—Presbyterian Church mission and school, 1890–?. Wales is *Kiŋgigin* in Iñupiaq.

Christ Church Mission/Anvik Mission [8]: Anvik, AK—Episcopalian Church mission and boarding school, 1886–1950s. An associated cemetery is likely present. The Deg Hit'an name for Anvik is *Gitr'ingith Chagg*.

Copper Valley School [9]: Glennallen, AK—Roman Catholic Church, 1956–1971. This school was the successor of **Holy Cross Mission**.

Cordova School [10]: Cordova, AK—Presbyterian Church boarding school. Dates of operation not yet determined. *Arwartuliq* is the Alutiiq name for Cordova.

Covenant Mission [11]: Unalakleet, AK—Swedish Evangelical Covenant Church mission and school, 1887–1991. Also known as the **Swedish Evangelical Covenant Mission**, **Swedish Mission Covenant**, and **Covenant School** (1954–1985). *Uŋgalaqliq* is the Iñupiaq name for Unalakleet.

Dillingham Mission [12]: Dillingham, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission and boarding school, 1948–1966. Also known as **Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of Fatima**, and **Holy Rosary School**. An associated cemetery is present. *Curyung* is the Central Yup'ik name for Dillingham.

Douglas Island Friends Mission School [13]: Douglas, AK—Quaker Church, ca. 1888–1926. Also known as **Orthodox Friend Mission Home**. *Sayéik* is the Tlingit name for Douglas.

Eaton Reindeer Station [14]: On the Unalakleet River about eight miles upstream from Unalakleet, AK—U.S. government school, 1898–ca. 1912. Arguably constitutes a type of "boarding school": i.e., funded by the government and apprentices in training remained at the school for two to five years, after which they could potentially return to their home villages (Olson 1969:19–32; see also Ray 1967:225). The station may also have served as an orphanage following the 1899–1900 epidemic of measles and influenza (Jackson 1901:12–15). The Iñupiaq site name is "Naplathlasit."

Eklutna Vocational School [15]: Eklutna, AK—Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, 1924–1946. Also known as the **Eklutna Industrial School**. *Eydlughet* is the Dena'ina name for Eklutna. Originally established as a government orphanage at Tyonek Village ca. 1919 (the **Tyonek Orphanage**) to house children who lost their parents in the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic, it was moved to the **Eklutna Vocational School** ca. 1924. An associated cemetery is present.

El Nathan Children's Home [16]: Valdez, AK—Evangelical (D. L. Moody Bible Institute) orphanage, 1934–1962. Also known as **El Nathan Orphanage**. Residents included Alaska Native children, and the operation received funding support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Fort Wrangell Tlingit Industrial School [17]: Fort Wrangell, AK—Presbyterian Church boarding school, 1877–ca. 1907. Apparently first known as the **McFarland Girls' Home**. May also have been known as **St. Rose of Lima Church**. The site is within the modern city of Wrangell, the Tlingit name of which is *Kaachxan.áak'w*. An associated cemetery is present. Locally known as the "Native Cemetery," it is near but not at the former school site. Note: This is *not* the **Wrangell Institute**.

Fort Yukon Mission School [18]: Fort Yukon, AK—Episcopalian Church mission, established by 1905(?) and operated through at least 1940. Also known as **St. Steven's Mission** and **Hudson Stuck Mission**. The **Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital** was presumably also affiliated with the Episcopalian Church mission. *Gwichyaa Zhee* is the Gwich'in name for Fort Yukon.

Friends High School [19]: Kotzebue, AK—Quaker Church, 1887–?. The Iñupiaq name for Kotzebue is *Qikiqtaġruk*.

Gambell School [20]: Gambell, AK—American Baptist Church boarding school. Dates of operation are not yet determined. The Siberian Yup'ik name for Gambell is *Sivuqaq*.

Golovin Mission School/Children's Home [21]: Golovin, AK—Swedish Evangelical Covenant Church, 1893–?. The Central Yup'ik name for Golovin is *Cingik*, and the mission site itself is *Tuqluaqturwik*.

Haines Home/Haines House [22]: Haines, AK—Presbyterian Church boarding school, 1895–1907. Served as a training school for nurses until 1918 and used as a sanitarium during the influenza epidemic. Reopened in 1922 as an orphanage and boarding facility for rural students attending the BIA/government school. Closed in 1960. *Deishú* is the Tlingit name for Haines.

Haines Mission and Boarding School [23]: Haines, AK—Presbyterian Church, 1881–1921. Also known as **Presbyterians Haines Mission School**. *Deishú* is the Tlingit name for Haines.

Holy Cross Hospital [24]: Nome, AK—Roman Catholic Church, Sisters of Providence hospital and school, 1902–1918. The Sisters of Providence were Catholic missionaries from Canada. In 1918, the hospital was contracted by the government to house 80 children orphaned during the influenza epidemic, at a rate of $10 per orphan (Pratt 2022a; U.S. Congress 1919). The orphans' stay at the hospital was temporary: they were steadily transferred to the Catholic Church's **Pilgrim Hot Springs Mission and Orphanage**.

Holy Cross Mission [25]: Holy Cross, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission/boarding school and orphanage, 1888–1956. See extended discussion above. Indigenous

names for the site include *Ingrirralleq* (Central Yup'ik), *Deloy Chet* (Deg Hit'an), and *Nel'eekk Denh* (Koyukon). Also known as the **Mission of the Holy Cross** and **Kosorefsky**. Associated cemeteries are present. The Catholic Church closed this mission in 1956 and "replaced" it with the **Copper Valley School**. Some students and staff from **Holy Cross Mission** were transferred to the **Copper Valley School**.

Jackson Mission [26]: Howkan, AK—Presbyterian Mission established in 1881 by Rev. Sheldon Jackson (Orth 1967:468). "There is a home for girls and a native church at Jackson [aka Howkan]" (Jackson 1888–1899:6). Howkan's Tlingit name is *Katgáawtan*.

Jesse Lee Children's Home [27]: Unalaska, AK—United Methodist Church orphanage, 1890–1924. Associated cemetery likely present. *Iluulux'* is the Unangam Tunuu name for Unalaska. After the orphanage's 1924 closure, the operation was moved to Seward.

Jesse Lee Children's Home [28]: Seward, AK—United Methodist Church Orphanage, 1925–1965. An associated cemetery is present. Seward's Dena'ina name is *Tl'ubugh*. The Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964 damaged the orphanage buildings so badly that all the children in residence were permanently transferred to Anchorage.

Jesse Lee Children's Home [29]: Anchorage, AK—United Methodist Church Orphanage, 1964–1970.

Kanakanak Orphanage and Kanakanak Industrial School [30]: Dillingham [also "Choggiung" (*Curyung*)], AK—U.S. Bureau of Education, 1919–1930. On the western shore of Nushagak Bay. The Central Yup'ik site name is *Kanaqnaq*. An associated cemetery is present, including a mass burial from the 1919 influenza pandemic (see Troll 2021:98).

Kanatak Vocational School [31]: Kanatak, AK—U.S. Bureau of Education (BIA?), 1924–ca. 1950. The Alutiiq site name is *Kanataq*. An associated cemetery is present.

Kodiak Baptist Mission [32]: Kodiak, AK—American Baptist Church, 1940–present. Evolved from the **Woody Island Mission** when that institution moved to the mainland. It served as a boarding school for an uncertain duration and still operates today, but not as a boarding school or focused on Indigenous children. The Sugpiaq name for Kodiak is *Sun'aq*.

Kodiak Aleutian Regional High School [33]: Kodiak, AK—State of Alaska, 1967–1973. Established just before the effective end date of the 2021 boarding school initiative, the DOI recognizes this boarding school as one that operates "without historical assimilationist intention or practices" (US DOI 2024:14).

Kokrines [34]: Kokrines, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission, 1904–1915 (**St. Stanislaus/St. Paul the Apostle Mission**); Episcopalian boarding school, 1904–1906; U.S. Bureau of Education and BIA school, 1908–ca. 1945; Presbyterian boarding school, 1945–ca. 1948. See extended discussion above. Associated cemeteries are present. The Koyukon site name is *Łoyh Denlekk'es Denh*.

Lazy Mountain Children's Home [35]: Palmer, AK—Evangelical (D.L. Moody Bible Institute) orphanage, 1947–1972.

Methodist Episcopal Orphanage [36]: Sinuk and Nome, AK—Methodist Church orphanage and hospital, 1909–late 1920s. The Iñupiaq site names are *Siŋġak* [Sinuk] and *Sitŋasuak* [Nome]. Apparently also known as the **Lavinia Wallace Young Mission**. An associated cemetery is likely present.

Mt. Edgecumbe [37]: Sitka, AK—Presbyterian Church mission, boarding school (high school), 1947–present. Operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1947 to 1983. *Sheet'ká* is the Tlingit name for Sitka.

Nikolai School [38]: Nikolai, AK—Assembly of God (later, Bureau of Indian Affairs) boarding school, 1948–?. The Upper Kuskokwim site name is *Nikolai*.

Nunapitsinghak Moravian Children's Home [39]: On Kwethluk River, three miles upstream from Kwethluk, AK—Moravian Church orphanage and boarding school, 1926–1973. The Central Yup'ik site name is *Nunapic'ngaq*. Also known as the **Kuskokwim Orphanage and Training School** and the **Alaska Children's Home**. An associated cemetery is likely present. Two children are known to have died at the site during an influenza epidemic in 1927 (Henkelman and Vitt 1985:329).

Ougavik Mission School [40]: Uknavik, AK (on Kuskokwim River near Lower Kalskag)—Moravian Church school, 1893–ca. 1906. The Central Yup'ik site name is *Uaravik*. An associated cemetery is present (see Henkelman and Vitt 1985:168–173).

Our Lady of the Snows [41]: Nulato, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission and school, 1887–1969(?); boarding school opened in 1899. The Koyukon site name is *Noolaahe Doh*. Also known as **St. Peter Claver Mission**. Associated cemeteries are present (see Cantwell 1992:109, 126).

Ouzinkie School [42]: Ouzinkie, AK—American Baptist Church boarding school. Dates of operation not

yet determined; however, there were reportedly 12 children residing at the mission in 1940 and 12 in 1950. The Alutiiq name for Ouzinkie is *Uusenkaaq*.

Pilgrim Hot Springs/Our Lady of Lourdes Mission and Orphanage [43]: Pilgrim Hot Springs, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission and orphanage, 1918–1941. The Iñupiaq site name is *Uunaatuq* ("hot"). Also known as **Pilgrim Springs Mission and Orphanage**. A boarding school operated at the site from 1923 to 1941. An associated cemetery is present. At the time of its closure, current students were transferred to **Akulurak Mission** on the lower Yukon River. See extended discussion above.

Pius X Mission [44]: Skagway, AK—Roman Catholic Church, 1932–1959. The Tlingit name for Skagway is *Shgagwéi*. Also known as **St. Pius X Mission Home**.

Point Hope/St. Thomas' Mission [45]: Point Hope, AK—Episcopalian Church mission and school, 1890–1924. The Point Hope school was administered by the U.S. BOE from 1924 to 1931, at which time it was transferred to the BIA (Anderson and Eels 1935:215). *Tikiġaq* is the Iñupiaq name for Point Hope.

Seward Sanitarium [46]: Seward, AK—Methodist Church, 1946–ca. 1953. The Sugpiaq name for Seward is *Tl'ubugh*.

Sheldon Jackson School/Sheldon Jackson College [47]: Sitka, AK—Presbyterian Church, 1878–2007. Also known as the **Presbyterian Boy's Boarding School** and the **Sitka Industrial Training School**. The Tlingit name for Sitka is *Sheet'ká*.

Skagway Sanitarium [48]: Roman Catholic Church—sanitarium for displaced Aleuts with tuberculosis, 1945–1947. The Tlingit name for Skagway is *Shgagwéi*.

St. Ann's School [49]: Douglas, AK—Roman Catholic Church, Sisters of St. Ann boarding school, 1896–1920. The Tlingit name for Douglas is *Sayéik*.

St. Ann's Hospital and School, St. Ann's Academy [50]: Juneau, AK—Roman Catholic Church, Sisters of St. Ann, 1886–1968. Each of the three facilities served as a boarding school at some point. The Tlingit name for Juneau is *Dzánti K'ihéeni*.

St. Mark's Mission [51]: Nenana, AK—Episcopalian Church and Anglican Church mission and boarding school, ca. 1907–1955. Also known as **St. Mark's Episcopal Mission School**. Bank erosion caused by the Tanana River has reportedly destroyed the original mission site. The Lower Tanana name for Nenana is *Toghotili*.

St. Mary's Mission [52]: St. Mary's, AK—Roman Catholic Church mission/boarding school and orphanage, 1951–1987. Directly linked to the **Akulurak Mission**, which was relocated to the village of St. Mary's (Andreafsky) in 1951. Associated cemeteries are present. *Negeqliq* is the Central Yup'ik name for St. Mary's. The St. Mary's Mission complex was sold to Ciunerkiuvik Corporation (St. Mary's Native Village Corporation) in 2003. The main cemetery (which contains 100+ graves) was turned over to the City of St. Mary's; a far smaller cemetery (with about four graves) is on the land purchased by Ciunerkiuvik Corporation (Blanchard 2020).

St. Timothy's Mission [53]: Tanana Crossing, AK (on Tanana River, about three miles upriver from modern Tanana, AK)—Episcopalian Church mission and boarding school, 1912–1927; U.S. BIA school, ca. 1933–1960. The Upper Tanana site name is *Tats'áltey* ("trail crosses water") (Simeone 2023:160–161). Also known as **Tanana Mission**, **Mission of Our Savior**, and **Episcopal Mission**. Included a hospital, sawmill, rectory, school, and cemetery.

Tanana Orphanage [54]: Tanana, AK—U.S. BIA, 1929–1934. The Koyukon name for Tanana is *Hohudodetlattl Denh*. "The Episcopal St. James Hospital was transferred to BIA administration in 1925, as a TB [tuberculosis] Hospital. In 1929, funds were allocated for schooling for the children there, and for its use as an orphanage. By 1935, orphans were transferred to Anvik [Mission], and to Eklutna [Industrial School]" (Haige n.d.).

Teller Lutheran Orphanage/Teller Mission [55]: Brevig Mission, AK—Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1900–1933. Also known as **Teller Mission Orphanage** and the **Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Mission**. *Nuuq* is the traditional Iñupiaq name for the site now known as Brevig Mission.

Teller Reindeer Station/Teller Reindeer Training School [56]: Port Clarence [Teller Station], AK—U.S. government school, 1892–1900. The Iñupiaq site name is *Nuuq*. See extended discussion above. Established for the education of children of Lapp families who had come to Alaska to train local Native people in the art of reindeer herding, but Native children also became students and residents of the school. An associated cemetery is present. Among the alternate names for Teller Reindeer Station found in the literature are **Mrs. T. L. Brevig Eskimo Mission and Orphanage**, **Old Church**, **Teller Mission**, **Teller Mission Orphanage**, and **Brevig Mission** (mindat.org/feature-11427236.html).

Tyonek Orphanage [57]: Tyonek, AK—U.S. government orphanage, ca. 1919–1924. Established in response

to the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic, the **Tyonek Orphanage** was moved to the **Eklutna Vocational School** ca. 1924 (sites.rootsweb.com/~coleen/Tyonek.html). *Tubughnen* is the Dena'ina name for the old Tyonek site.

Victory Bible Camp/Victory High School [58]: Mile 94 Glenn Highway, AK—Evangelical (D. L. Moody Bible Institute) camp/school/boarding school, 1947–1982.

White Mountain Boarding School [59]: White Mountain, AK—BOE and BIA boarding school, 1926–1934. Also known as the **White Mountain Industrial School**. The Iñupiaq name for White Mountain is *Natchiġvik*. When the school closed in 1934, most of the remaining students were transferred to the **Eklutna Industrial School**.

William E. Beltz Boarding School [60]: Nome, AK—State of Alaska, 1966–present. Established just before the effective end date of the 2021 boarding school initiative. The DOI recognizes this boarding school as one that operates "without historical assimilationist intention or practices" (US DOI 2024:14).

Woody Island Mission [61]: Chiniak Bay about 2.5 miles from Kodiak, AK—American Baptist Church orphanage, school, and hospital, 1893–1937. Also known as **Longwood School**. *Tangirnaq* is the Alutiiq name for Woody Island. After the main building burned down in 1937, the mission was relocated to Kodiak, AK, where it operated until 1939. An associated cemetery is present, including a mass grave tied to the 1918 influenza pandemic (Pullar 2010:17). Some erosion of the cemetery area has been reported.

Wrangell Institute [62]: About five miles from Wrangell, AK—State/public K–8 boarding school, 1932–1975 (Presbyterian Church and Bureau of Indian Affairs). Also known as **Shoemaker Bay Industrial School**. The Tlingit site name is reportedly *Keishangita.áan* ("red alder village"). Definitive evidence of an associated cemetery has not yet been found; however, at least one former student has reported that students died while attending the school and their bodies were buried or otherwise disposed of in the site area (Ben Jacuk, pers. comm. with the author, August 2022). Note: This is *not* the **Fort Wrangell Tlingit Industrial School**.

Yakutat Mission [63]: Yakutat, AK—Swedish Evangelical Covenant Church, 1889–1958. See Johnson (2014). The Tlingit name of Yakutat is *Yaakwdáat*.

SCHOOLS AND "RUSSIAN AMERICA"

This section distinguishes Russian-operated schools from others in Alaska that are directly applicable to the 2021 U.S. DOI Boarding School Initiative. Information on schools during the Russian America period of Alaska's history is presented in Table 2 (see also Fig. 23). It is primarily based on data from Fedorova (1973:242–246; but see also Fortuine 1989:111–115; Luehrmann 2008:113–132) and should not be considered comprehensive.

The earliest boarding school in what is now Alaska dates to the mid-1780s and was in Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island. The students were Native boys who were being held as hostages in the Russian settlement (Fedorova 1973:243). This school, operated by a merchant trading company, was "where young boys taken as hostages (and later a number brought by fathers who wished their sons to acquire the foreigners' knowledge) were taught Russian language and literacy, mathematics, and navigation" (Black 2004:110).

After the ca. 1803 death of its long-standing teacher, this school struggled to remain in operation: in 1804, the difficulty of finding a new teacher resulted in the students teaching each other (Tikhmenev 1978:83). The boys' school was officially "reopened" in 1805, and in autumn of the same year a girls' school—the Home of Mary's Beneficence—was also opened (Tikhmenev 1978:92–93). These actions were taken at the direction of Nikolai P. Rezanov, the son-in-law of Natalia Shelikov—wife of Grigorii I. Shelikov, who is credited as the person responsible for the original establishment of the boys' school.

> During [Matvei I.] Murv'ev's governorship of the colonies [15 September 1820 to 14 October 1825 (Tikhmenev 1978:507)], the directors instructed him to reopen the *Kad'iak* girl's school. He ordered a building set aside for this purpose for girls from five to ten years of age, principally the daughters of Russians who had left the children behind in the colonies without means of support. As the head of this school, Murav'ev appointed one of the promyshlennik's wives, who was a good housekeeper well versed in needlework. Murav'ev also ordered the reopening of the widows' shelter for homeless, elderly widows, particularly those whose husbands had died in the company's service. The colonial reports show that in 1827 there were three boys' schools in the colonies: in New Archangel [Sitka], in Kad'iak, and in Unalashka. In 1839 the girls' school was moved to New Archangel. All of

Table 2. Russian America era schools (pre-1867).

Location	Date Established	Organization	Comments
Three Saints Bay, Kodiak Island	1784–1786	American Northeastern Company	Boys' school
Kenai Peninsula	by 1794	Lebedev-Lastochkin Company	
Three Saints Bay, Kodiak Island	1805	Russian-American Company	Girls' school; "Home of Mary's Beneficence"
St. Paul's Harbor, Kodiak Island	1805(?)	Russian-American Company	
Novo-Arkhangel'sk (Sitka)	after 1805	Russian-American Company/ Russian Orthodox Church	Boys' school
St. Paul Island	ca. 1820	Russian-American Company	
Unalaska	1824	Russian Orthodox Church/ Russian-American Company	Boys' school
Novo-Arkhangel'sk (Sitka)	1839	Russian-American Company/ Russian Orthodox Church	Girls' school; relocated from Kodiak Island
Nushagak	1843	Russian-American Company	
Novo-Archangel'sk (Sitka)	1841	Russian Orthodox Church	Ecclesiastical school ("Bishop's House"*; later a day school(?); also called "Russian Mission Orphanage"
Amlia Island	prior to 1860	Russian Orthodox Church	

* The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition identifies the "Russian Bishop's House" as a boarding school in its August 2023 list of "Indian Boarding Schools in the United States." That identification is questionable.

Sources: Fedorova 1973:242–246; Fortuine 1989:111–115; Luerhmann 2008:113–132; Smith 1980:121.

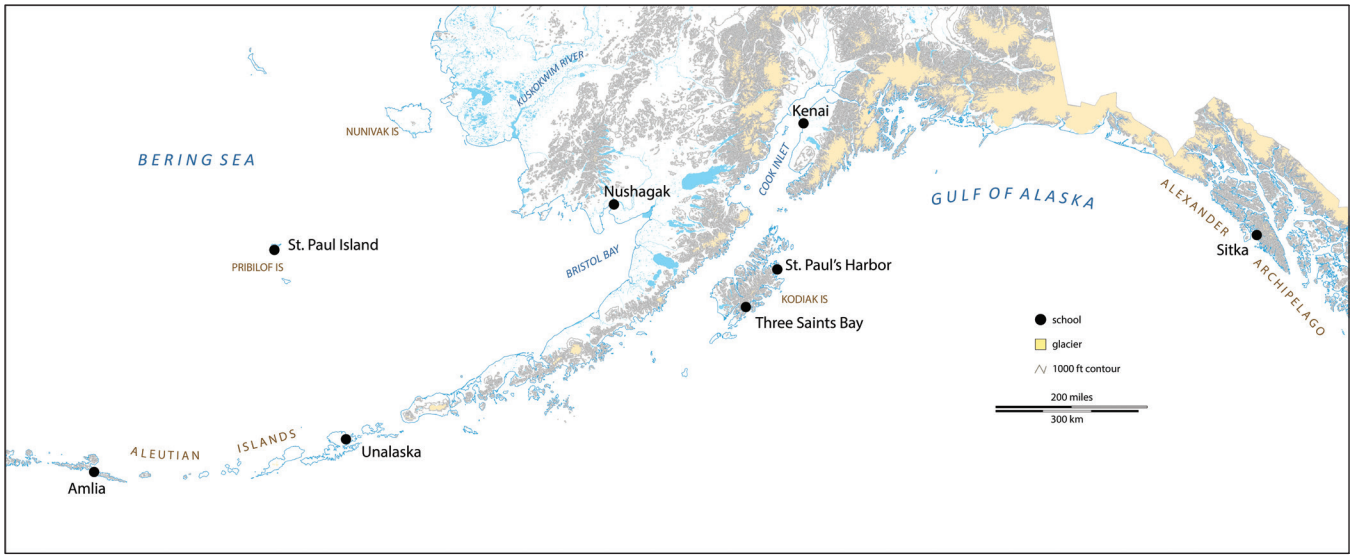

Figure 23. Schools in the Russian America era (pre-1867). Map by Matt O'Leary.

these schools and homes were maintained at the company's expense. (Tikhmenev 1978:195).

By 1840, there were eight schools in the colonies for Native children: "four schools for one hundred boys and the same number of schools for girls" (Tikhmenev 1978:195). In 1841, the Russian Orthodox Church established an ecclesiastical school in Sitka; it probably operated in the building now known as the "Bishop's House"—which later served as a day school (see Fig. 24).

After Russia sold "Alaska" to the United States in 1867, the Russian Orthodox Church continued to operate schools in the Territory of Alaska (see Luehrmann 2008:123–132; Smith 1980:6–8). In fact, "The Russian state treasury continued to support schools and [Russian Orthodox] clergy in Alaska up to the overthrow of autocracy by the Russian Revolution" in 1917 (Smith 1980:6). For instance:

> in an 1887 report to Congress, A.P. Swineford (Governor of the Alaska Territory), stated that the Russian Government "appropriates annually for the support of the Greco-Russian Church in Alaska the sum of $40,000; for schools and other extraordinary expenses, $20,000. (Smith 1980:19*n*24; Swineford 1887:715)

The Russian Orthodox Church, supported by the Russian government, maintained 17 schools in Alaska in 1887 (Table 3; see also Fig. 25). Commenting on this educational effort, Governor Swineford said:

> The efficiency of these schools in the past is evidenced by the fact that large numbers of the Aleuts are able to read either in Russian or in their own language, for which last an alphabet and grammar was devised by [Father Ioann] Veniaminov (the most zealous of the early missionaries), the Russian characters being used, while not a few of the natives of southeastern Alaska speak and read the Russian language, only a few, however, being able to write. (Swineford 1887:716)

Smith (1980:20*n*35), noted that "[a]lthough the reports of the U.S. Agent for Education, Sheldon Jackson, made no mention of these schools in the 1890s, the Russian Orthodox American Messenger listed and described regularly schools maintained by the Orthodox Church from 1896–1904."

Figure 24. "Russian School, Sitka, Alaska." The building pictured here is the "Bishop's House." The school has also been called the Russian Mission Orphanage. Photograph by Edward DeGroff, 1889. Edward DeGroff Photograph Collection, ca. 1886–1890. ASL-PCA-91 (Image no. ASL-P91-49). Alaska State Library Historical Collections, Juneau.

Table 3: Russian-operated schools in the District of Alaska, 1887.

Reported Location	Corrected or Modern Name	Average Daily Attendance
Sitka		57
Kadiak (St. Paul)	Kodiak	22
Kenai		15
Nushagak		8
Saint Michaels	St. Michael	7
Ekogumte	Iqugmiut; Russian Mission	12
Saint Paul Island	St. Paul Island	60
Saint George Island	St. George Island	29
Ounalaska	Unalaska	59
Unga		30
Belkofsky	Belkovski	25
Kashin	Kashega	5
Chernovsky	Chernovski	9
Mackooshaf	Makushin	6
Unimak	Morzhovoi (?)	18
Borka	Biorka	13
Akontan	Akutan	16

Source: Swineford 1887:715–716

Only one of the post-1867 schools referenced above—the Kodiak Russian Orthodox Orphanage and School—may accurately be described as a boarding school, but it does not qualify as such under the 2021 DOI Boarding School Initiative if it was funded solely by the Russian government. For a general summary of education efforts during the Russian America period, see Brooks (1953:464–474) and Tikhmenev (1978:387–390).

CONCLUSIONS

Like the six Alaska boarding schools discussed in detail above, most Alaska boarding schools were likely built on or adjacent to previous cultural sites, so it is critical that researchers not rely exclusively on official school records when assessing implementation issues tied to the 2021 DOI Boarding School Initiative. Failing to search for and consider all available data sources may result in overlooking or unknowingly disregarding crucial details about former school sites, including details about associated cemeteries and student burials. The extra time required to complete related research tasks should produce more substantive, defensible findings and thereby increase the attainment of project objectives.

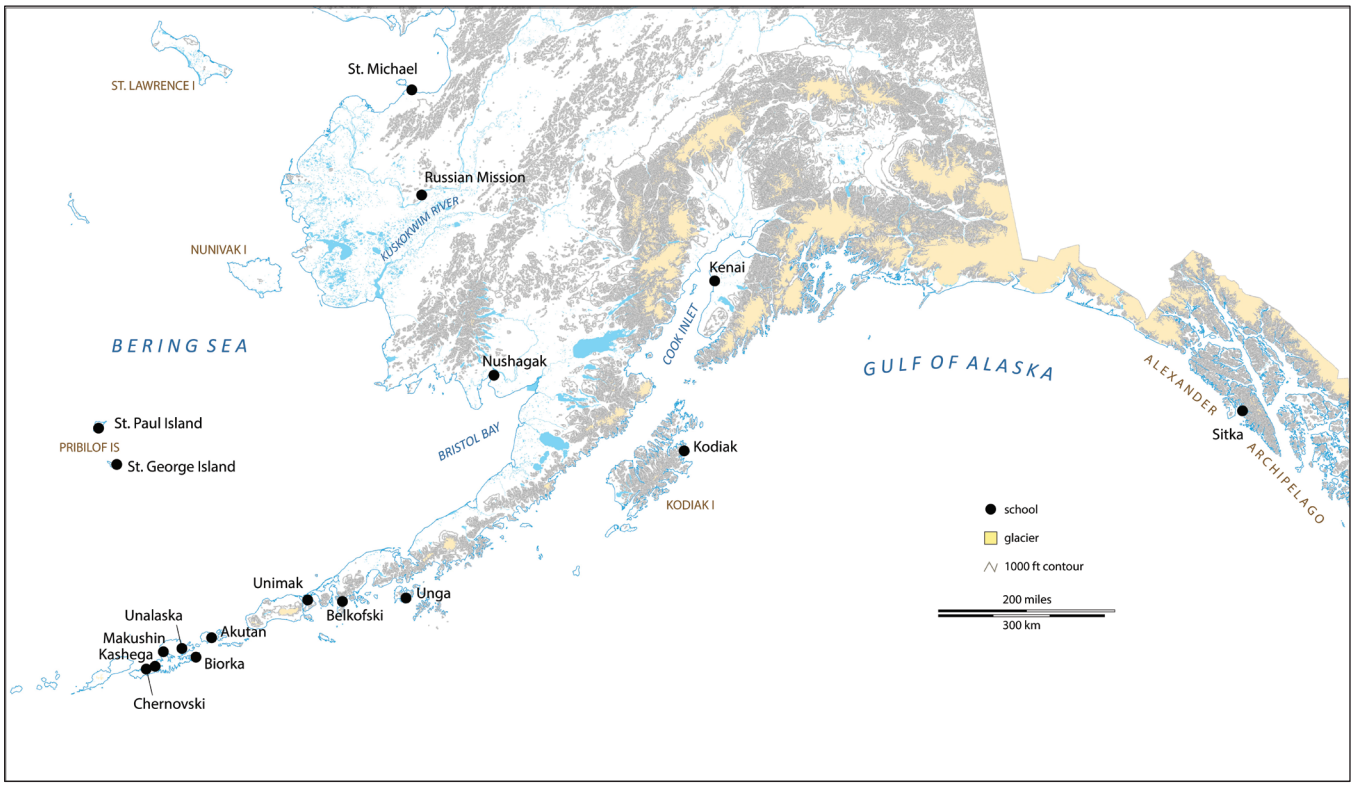

Figure 25. Russian schools in the District of Alaska, 1887. Map by Matt O'Leary.

It should go without saying that Indigenous peoples, tribes, and organizations must be direct participants in Alaska boarding school research efforts. They are the holders of family and tribal histories and genealogies. Indigenous oral history accounts should be recognized as primary sources relative to the presence of student boarders and burials at a given school site and individual student experiences while at boarding schools. Further, Indigenous peoples continue to suffer generational traumas connected to the American boarding school system. They have deeply vested interests in seeing that the necessary research is conducted respectfully, honestly, thoroughly, and with sincere commitment.

To the author's knowledge, however, the DOI has not formally or deliberately reached out to Indigenous tribes across the country to seek their research assistance in gathering and compiling information necessary to advance the initiative's goals. Although the DOI hosted four tribal consultations in late 2021, they were "listening sessions"—not calls to action of any sort. The DOI also has not invited or required its constituent agencies (which notably include the BIA and National Park Service) to take active, supporting roles in boarding school research. It is evident that (as of August 2024) the DOI has no plan in place for how to achieve most objectives of the Boarding School Initiative. It has worked to identify former boarding schools documented in federal records and launched an oral history project to record the experiences of boarding school survivors, both of which are important efforts. However, the DOI has directed little or no attention toward research essential to supporting on-site work, student repatriations, or other types of boarding school projects that tribes may feel should be prioritized.

As emphasized in this article, successful implementation of the 2021 DOI Boarding School Initiative in Alaska requires sifting through and analyzing myriad facts and accounts about the state's history, geography, and Indigenous peoples. That effort requires specialized research by people who possess broad knowledge of Alaska, plus proven experience and ability working cooperatively with local Indigenous peoples and communities. Farming out such research to people who lack Alaska expertise and existing connections with its Indigenous communities will only frustrate and impede the initiative's implementation. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the DOI has done to date (see Pratt [Introduction], this volume). This validates the decision by numerous Alaska tribes and tribal organizations not to wait on the DOI—either for guidance or funding—before undertaking boarding school projects they considered important and necessary.

Grassroots Alaska tribal efforts resulted in over 20 separate boarding school–related projects being funded between 2022 and September 2024. They include but are not limited to: creation and installation of a "healing totem pole" honoring all former Alaska boarding school students; GPR surveys of or LiDAR imagery for five boarding school sites or cemeteries; two repatriation projects; designs for memorial markers and healing gardens; funding for out-of-state archival research; development of a boarding school exhibit; documentation of boarding school oral histories; and organizing multiple community meetings to discuss boarding school issues. The Alaska Native Heritage Center (working in close partnership with Kawerak, Inc.) took the lead on many of these projects; most were supported by special funding secured by the BIA Alaska Region. As in Alaska, tribes in other states may not see meaningful progress on the DOI Boarding School Initiative unless or until they control the effort, a scenario DOI leadership has not overtly encouraged but one that is wholly appropriate in cultural and historical context.

In closing, a strong argument can be made that the 2021 DOI Boarding School Initiative was issued prematurely, without sufficient consideration given to the complexity of its scope and how the initiative could be successfully implemented across the country—or in any given state. Such an action was so long overdue, however, that a rushed launch of the initiative was probably justified. Tribes and other parties committed to implementing the initiative must now put their combined shoulders to the wheel and push hard for traction, to include seeking funding support from Congress. But this must be done with sober recognition that the research process has only just begun and, in fact, has yet to be formulated.

NOTES

1. My colleague Ben Jacuk is actively compiling a list of former Alaska boarding schools that draws heavily on archival records held by ecclesial institutions. It will be a more comprehensive list than this author's and should be accessible through the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) in Anchorage. Alaska researchers have identified substantially more former boarding schools in the state than the DOI has officially recognized because their ef-

forts have been far better informed about Alaska and the history of its Indigenous peoples, and their searches for relevant information have been much broader in scope. Thus, whereas this article tallies 63 Alaska boarding schools, the 2022 DOI *Federal Indian Boarding Schools Investigative Report* counted only 21 (US DOI 2022:82–83) to 24 such schools (attachment to US DOI 2022 titled "Official List and School Summary Profiles" [pp. 1–3]). Twenty-five Alaska boarding schools were identified in the second DOI investigative report (US DOI 2024), but confirming that count required carefully cross-checking different parts of the report. Thus, while Pius X Mission was identified as a newly designated boarding school in the text (US DOI 2024:13), it was not included in the report's boarding school listings (DOI 2024: appendix A and appendix B). Also, appendix A of the report listed one Alaska boarding school twice: Longwood School/Woody Island Mission and Orphanage.

2. Although the 2022 DOI investigative report finally explained how the department was defining boarding schools (US DOI 2022:6), it did not resolve the matter for Alaska tribes.
3. Morningside Hospital was the topic of a presentation by First Alaskans Institute at the Alaska Boarding Schools Meeting convened by the ANHC in August 2022. In that presentation, it was reported that a minimum of 1,532 Native and non-Native Alaskans who were patients at the hospital are known to have been buried in Portland Metro cemeteries in Oregon. An online compilation of census information about "Alaska Village Orphanages, Missions, Schools and Hospitals" (Mielke n.d.) reports the following numbers of Alaska patients at Morningside Hospital: 1920 census = 27; 1930 census = 35; and 1940 census = 88.
4. For example, a recent newspaper article (Horwitz and Hedgpeth 2024) reported that 77-year-old Jim LaBelle was sent to the Wrangell Institute in Southeast Alaska when he was eight years old. He was there for six years, during which time he was forbidden from using his Iñupiaq name (*Aqpaiuq*) "and was instead identified by number, a new one assigned each year."
5. For instance, two Natives from the Eagle, Alaska, area attended an Anglican Church boarding school in Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada (Demer 2016). The school was apparently **St. Paul's Hostel**, which operated from 1920 to 1943. Between 46 and 48 students from Alaska attended **St. Ann's Academy** (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada), a Roman Catholic school operated by the Sisters of St. Ann from 1858 to 1923. Twenty-four other Alaska students attended **St. Ann's Convent** (Cowichan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada), another Roman Catholic facility operated by the Sisters of St. Ann from 1864 to 1923. An Alaska student from Sitka died at the convent in September 1885 (Cantwell 1992:264–265). As a word of caution, researchers who encounter references to an Episcopal Church boarding school at **Metlakatla** should not assume it was located on Annette Island in Southeast Alaska. The **Metlakatla Indian Residential School** (1891–1962) was instead in Metlakatla, British Columbia, Canada (see Patterson 1986).
6. *Nel'eekk Denh*, legendary name of Koserefsky on the north bank of the Yukon River, 40 miles below Anvik, *lit*. 'where spirits are present' (Jetté and Jones 2000:31). As suggested by de Laguna (1947:77–78), this place name may "have been transferred to Holy Cross with the shift of population when Koserefsky was abandoned." But it may also have been a preexisting name for the "Indian burial ground" avoided by Koserefsky people prior to the mission's establishment (see also Hrdlička 1943:219; Orth 1967:381 ["Gost Creek" entry]).
7. Referring to the mission's establishment in 1888, VanStone (1979:141) observed: "There is no indication that the Indians of Koserefsky were paid anything for the mission site, nor was there a formal agreement of any kind with them at this time." His source of information on this point was a letter to Father Paschal Tosi S.J. contained in the Oregon Province Archives (OPA), Holy Cross Mission (HCM) component: "Negro to Tosi. OPA/Tosi; HCM diary, June 19, 1892—Nov. 27, 1896. OPA/HCM, box 2" (VanStone 1979:166*n*82).
8. Oquilluk (1973:205–207) incorrectly reported that the pandemic struck Seward Peninsula in 1917–1918, rather than 1918–1919.
9. The 2022 Pilgrim Hot Springs GPR report (Urban 2022:13, Fig. 11) mistakenly lists "Emma" as "Emina" in a diagram that is partially based on the cemetery plat in Catholic Church records.
10. Wikipedia, s.v. "Kerlungner," last updated July 11, 2024, 12:15 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerlungner. This type of exploitation of Indigenous

peoples was not uncommon at the time (e.g., see Beck 2016; Hellmich 2023).

11. The group portrait (Fig. 19; Nelson 1983 [1899]:Plate I [facing p. 19]) was taken by William Dinwiddie of the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology. Individual portraits of seven group members were also taken, all of which were published by Nelson (1983 [1899]:Plates IV–X), with phonetically spelled personal names and estimated ages. The group members not shown in individual portraits were four young children, two of whom have been identified elsewhere as three-year-old twin sisters named Zaksriner and Artmarhoke. Personal information about the other two children has not yet been located.
12. In the Carlisle cemetery/Dickinson College database, the three graves are designated "E-19" (Tumasock [d. April 8, 1900]), "C-14" (Cooki Glook [d. January 4, 1904]), and "A-09" (Laublock [d. September 15, 1899]) (Dickinson College n.d.).
13. Bruce's 1892 population estimate for *Singaq* is puzzling: the village had only 36 residents at the time of the 1880 census (Petroff 1884:11), and there is no obvious explanation for why its population might have tripled in just over a decade. Residents of other areas may have been at *Singaq* during Bruce's population estimate—possibly people gathering for trade at Port Clarence or observing the initial landing of reindeer there in July 1892 (VanStone 1980:4). The latter event may have drawn a large crowd, in part because the reindeer were accompanied by four Siberian Chukchi men who were brought along to teach local Natives how to care for the reindeer (Willis 2006:283–284). The Chukchi were traditional enemies of the local Iñupiaq.

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