

A SYSTEM OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
FOR THE ALASKA TASK FORCE

For over two years, the Alaska Task Force of the National Park Service has been communicating visually through the use of illustrated reports, slide shows, slide briefings, photo exhibits, and releases upon request to publications and the media. Photographs for these services came largely from our five study teams in the field and from three professional photographers who worked through all areas under study, according to the dictates of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

In order to arrange these many photographs for release to the tight schedules of reports required by the Act, we devised a team effort that fed libraries in both Anchorage and Washington. The system also offered a foundation for <sup>the</sup> permanent protection of what may become an historic collection of pictures. In working out this system, we developed some principles of operation, which may be worthy of record. In brief, they are:

1. The system must offer a standard of permanency for photography created by a temporary organization.
2. The system must be available simultaneously in both the field of study and Washington and so organized that it may be expanded beyond these outlets as the need arises.
3. Due to the similarity of photos from more than one study area, photo captions must be checked for accuracy at two or more steps in the process of creating the library. Extreme care is likewise required in posting catalog numbers.

4. Seasoned outdoor photographers must be hired to complement the reportorial work of the study teams. (This does not mean that certain members of teams did not turn in on occasion professional quality work. Some did, but their presence was transient to the project.)

5. An outstanding photo laboratory must be contracted in order to justify the employment of top-notch photographers. This laboratory must offer a combination of quality, service, and high production capabilities.

6. Within a given bureau, the systems of communications between government accounts and the private laboratory, i.e. orders, billings, and payments, should be handled by a central procurement officer under a single system of accounting. This officer should be trained to at least the point where he can communicate effectively on a technical level with the laboratory.

7. In order to carry out the principles listed above, the system must have the full interest and support of the Task Force leaders. Such support creates a team effort, one that is girded by the authority and understanding of the Director, the Finance Officer, the Procurement Officer, and the Personnel Officer.

Thus we discovered that the success of the effort was due as much to the support and cooperation of Management as it was to the skill of the photographers. In this respect, the hand of Ted Swem, Al Henson, Keith Trexler, and Harvey Davies of the National Park Service; and Ken Lieberman, Executive Vice President of K & L lent the administrative<sup>on</sup> essential to our visual communications. Perhaps this commitment is an administrative first for New Area Studies.