

**The following is excerpted from the 2024 Basic Preservation grant application submitted by The Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association. The archive has graciously allowed the NFPF to make it available online as an example for new grant applicants.**

The Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association (AMIPA) proposes to preserve three short films from the SKYRIVER Lower Yukon Project series of our Community Enterprise Development Corporation of Alaska (CEDC) collection (CED): (CED 007) *Andy Kelly: Local Store Owner*, (CED 022) *Council Meeting: Public Officials Visit Villages*, and (CED 024) *Fisherman's Co-op Meeting*. These films are not documentaries – SKYRIVER, rather, was an early (1970-73) experiment in using media production as a vehicle for community development. The community, in this case, was the Yup'ik village of Emmonak, on the delta of the Yukon River, in western Alaska.

### **a) Research significance**

The purpose of the SKYRIVER Lower Yukon Project (1970-73) was, in the words of the project director, Timothy Kennedy, “to create a non-directive participatory development process in which video and film played a role.”

SKYRIVER was directly inspired by the Fogo Island Project, a participatory process developed in 1967-68 on an outer island in Newfoundland – a collaboration between Donald Snowden, from the extension service of Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the National Film Board of Canada’s legendary cinematographer, Colin Low. Kennedy came into contact with Snowden while working to develop a fish marketing cooperative in Emmonak, Alaska – a Yup’ik village with a population of (at the time) approximately 450 people. While meeting with Snowden in western Canada, on fishing cooperative issues, Kennedy learned of the successes of Fogo Island; how a participatory process that made use of film had been used to organize a community in remote, rural circumstances, and helped them to communicate effectively with far-removed seats of power.

Kennedy, who had been a VISTA volunteer in another village in rural Alaska prior to working on the co-op project in Emmonak, was immediately excited by the Fogo Island Project. He’d been frustrated by War on Poverty programs that characterized village subsistence life as entirely problematic. To Kennedy, one of the most appealing aspects of the Fogo Island Project was that it looked at the community as a whole – the positive as well as the negative.

Snowden and Low were then hired by the War on Poverty-era Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to bring the Fogo Island process to a number of economically disadvantaged communities in the Lower 48. During this time, they gave a presentation on the Fogo Island Project in Anchorage, to a room filled with War on Poverty administrators and Alaska Native leaders. The concept was well received, and the OEO soon committed \$200,000 to an experimental project that would leverage the lessons of

the Fogo Island Project for community development in rural Alaska; the funds to be administered by the Community Enterprise Development Corporation of Alaska (CEDC). Kennedy, an employee of the CEDC, was hired to direct the project.

Since Kennedy was already familiar with the community of Emmonak, he thought that it made sense to consider it as the location for the project. He took the idea to the community, and gave them time to consider it. Within a few weeks, they got back to him, expressing their interest in committing to the project. In Kennedy's words, the experiment would enable the people of Emmonak,

“... to present their community as they saw it, without interpretation through an intermediary. In the past, meetings with government officials were held on the officials' terms, conducted in a bureaucratic sub-language and in a formal environment that was intimidating to them. Involvement in this new project would allow interaction with government officials on their terms, for the first time” (Kennedy, 2008).

With community involvement and buy-in at all stages, a process was developed and defined that identified issues of common interest or concern (using video), and allowed individuals or groups to craft their positions on the issue, and create an approved statement of the position (using video). The community would then develop a consensus position, and identify a spokesperson for the position. This spokesperson (in some cases, there was more than one spokesperson) would be filmed communicating the statement. This person would be allowed to choose where, when, and how they wanted to deliver the statement, as well as in what language, and whom they wanted to be speaking to. Prior to filming, the speaker was introduced to all of the members of the production crew, and had all of the equipment explained to them. After the interview was completed, the speaker reviewed the audio. When they were satisfied, the film was sent out to Seattle for processing. When the film returned, the spokesperson, and other agreed upon opinion leaders on the subject, had the final word on how the film was edited. The edit would then be shown to the entire community. When the entire community had approved a film, then it was possible to show it to any outside parties that the community had agreed should see it. After the film was presented to an outside party, they were able to craft a response to the community (on video), which would be presented back in Emmonak. The community could then either accept the response, or pursue a previously agreed upon next course of action.

The specific films being proposed are:

- (CED 007) *Andy Kelly: Local Store Owner* (1971). Young Emmonak resident Andy Kelly describes the challenges in establishing the first locally owned and operated grocery store in the region, where the business had been otherwise been controlled by the then Seattle-based Northern Commercial Company.
- (CED 022) *Council Meeting: Public Officials Visit Villages* (c.1972). The Project shot four films of four different meetings of the Emmonak Tribal Council, when different topics were being addressed. In this meeting, the relationship between Emmonak residents and the public officials who visit villages on government business is discussed. Specific suggestions for changes are recommended.

- *(CED 024) Fisherman's Co-op Meeting* (c.1972). Established in 1967, the Yup'ik owned and operated Yukon Delta Fish Marketing Cooperative had a dramatic effect on the local economy. It was this co-op, referred to above, that Project Director Kennedy had been working to establish when he met Don Snowden, and learned about the Fogo Island Project. This film documents a meeting of this important institution, relatively early in its development.

See attachment A for a brief article – with photographs – about SKYRIVER, from the September 1971 edition of a regional newsletter.

### **b) Uniqueness of AMIPA's copies**

This project makes use of the SKYRIVER Lower Yukon Project's original, unique production elements (negative, magnetic full coat, etc.), which were gifted to AMIPA in 1998 by Alaska Village Initiatives (formerly CEDC, the regional agency that had managed the federal funding for SKYRIVER).

The nature of SKYRIVER was such that very few prints were made of the approximately 30 films produced – and the few prints that were produced were heavily used. AMIPA holds a number of the surviving legacy prints – and has documented the whereabouts of a few more (e.g., at the University of Alaska Fairbanks).

### **c) Physical description**

Unlike the very few, well-worn prints that were originally struck, the production elements for the SKYRIVER Lower Yukon Project films – including the 11 units of motion picture film and magnetic full coat described below – seem to be in good to very good condition.

Up until 1998, these materials were housed at the offices of the CEDC (now known as Alaska Village Initiatives). Since 1998, they've been at AMIPA, in temperature- and humidity-controlled storage.

#### **Production elements for *Andy Kelly: Local Store Owner* (CED 007):**

**CED 007 - A** is 16mm, B&W negative. The A-roll for CED 007. The length is approximately 576 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 14 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0.0

**CED 007 - B** is 16mm, B&W negative. The B-roll for CED 007. The length is approximately 576 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 12 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0.0

**CED 007 - C** is 16mm, magnetic full coat. The original magnetic sound for CED 007, used to produce the optical sound master (CED 007 - D). The length is approximately 600 ft. Shrinkage is unknown. April 2024 A-D test score: 0.0

**CED 007 - D** is 16mm, B&W. The optical sound master for CED 007. The length is approximately 600 ft. Shrinkage is unknown. April 2024 A-D test score: 0.1

**Production elements for *Council Meeting: Public Officials Visit Villages* (CED 022):**

**CED 022 - A** is 16mm, B&W negative. The A-roll for CED 022. The length is approximately 452 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 5 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0

**CED 022 - B** is 16mm, B&W negative. The B-roll for CED 022. The length is approximately 452 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 9 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0

**CED 022 - C** is 16mm, magnetic full coat. The original magnetic sound for CED 022, used to produce the optical sound master (CED 022 - D). The length is approximately 500 ft. Shrinkage is unknown. April 2024 A-D test score: 0.1

**CED 022 - D** is 16mm, B&W. The optical sound master for CED 022. The length is approximately 500 ft. Shrinkage is unknown. April 2024 A-D test score: 0.0

**Production elements for *Fisherman's Co-op Meeting* (CED 024):**

**CED 024 - A** is 16mm, B&W negative. The A-roll for CED 024. The length is approximately 1124 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 49 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0.1

**CED 024 - B** is 16mm, B&W negative. The B-roll for CED 024. The length is approximately 1124 ft. (based on the original timing card). Shrinkage is unknown. There are approximately 42 legacy hot cement splices in the reel (based on the original timing card). April 2024 A-D test score: 0.1

**CED 024 - C** is 16mm magnetic full coat. The original magnetic sound for CED 024. The length is approximately 1200 ft. Shrinkage is unknown. April 2024 A-D test score: 0.2

#### **d) Description of work and cost estimates**

AMIPA is proposing that the original elements for each of these three films be used to produce:

- 16mm answer prints
- 16mm negatives
- 16mm optical soundtracks
- 2K scans

Estimates from Vendor X for this work are attached. The total estimated lab cost is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

#### **e) Shipping costs**

Based on recent comparable shipments, FedEx overnight would come to approximately \$200, which will be paid by AMIPA.

#### **f) Storage**

AMIPA is co-located in the UAA/APU Consortium Library. It has two temperature- and humidity-controlled vaults, one for motion picture film, and the other for videotape and audio recordings. Both vaults are also equipped with air filtration systems.

Any film elements produced under a Basic Preservation Grant would be stored in the film vault, which is kept at 40° F. and 35% RH.

## g) Access plans

AMIPA's access priority for this content would be to deliver reference DVDs to organizations with strong institutional and/or cultural connections to the community of Emmonak. These materials would also be available for reference to the general public, from a DVD access copy, at AMIPA's UAA/APU Consortium Library location during normal operating hours, or by appointment.

- A reference DVD of the SKYRIVER films preserved under this grant will be delivered to local, regional and statewide organizations with a connection to the community of Emmonak:

### *Local:*

- **Emmonak Corporation** (the ANCSA village corporation for Emmonak)
- **Emmonak Tribal Council** (the traditional council for the Village of Emmonak)
- **Native Village of Chuloonawick** (the traditional council for Chuloonawick, another village close to Emmonak)

### *Regional:*

- **Association of Village Council Presidents** (a regional Alaska Native non profit organization)
- **Calista Corporation** (the ANCSA regional corporation for the part of Alaska where Emmonak is located)
- **Calista Education and Culture, Inc.** (a regional Alaska Native non profit organization, affiliated with the Calista ANCSA corporation)
- **Calista Elders Council** (an advisory group, consisting of Elders from the Calista ANCSA region)
- **Kuskokwim Native Association** (a regional Alaska Native non profit organization)
- **KYUK Public Media** (the public broadcaster – both radio and television – for the part of Alaska where Emmonak is located)
- **Yup'it Piciryarait Cultural Center** (a regional Alaska Native non profit organization, affiliated with the University of Alaska Fairbanks)

### *Statewide:*

- **Alaska Native Heritage Center** (a statewide Alaska Native non profit organization)
- **Alaska Village Initiatives** (the statewide non profit organization that inherited the SKYRIVER film elements from the CEDC, and later gifted them to AMIPA)

Other outreach efforts and productions and that have made use of AMIPA films preserved under NFPF grants include:

- An occasional series, between December 2022 and July 2023, in AMIPA's social media feeds featuring images of Southeast Alaska maritime history during the 1930s, drawn from home movie footage in the Richard I. Miller collection (preserved under a 2020 NFPF Basic Preservation Grant). These images were augmented with additional images from other institutional collections, and research AMIPA's archivist performed in the process of developing metadata for the footage. Reference DVDs of this restored footage were also delivered to the Clausen Memorial Museum in Petersburg, AK – the location where most of the footage was shot.
- *Attla* (2019), a feature-length documentary from the same filmmaker who made the short documentary *In Attla's Tracks* (see below), included footage from AMIPA's Clarence Erwin Rusch collection (preserved under a 2008 NFPF Basic Preservation Grant), in addition to footage from the Edna and Howard Cameron collection (preserved under a 2016 NFPF Basic Preservation Grant). This film premiered on PBS in December 2019, and was awarded *Best Documentary Feature* at the 2019 American Indian Film Festival.
- *In Attla's Tracks* (2015), a short film about legendary Alaska Native sprint musher George Attla, featuring footage from the Clarence Erwin Rusch collection, received its Alaska premiere at a screening AMIPA hosted on February 28, 2016. This screening also featured an excerpt from *East of Siberia* (ETS 007), which had been preserved under a 2008 NFPF Partnership Grant.
- *East of Siberia* was presented on December 7, 2014, at the Anchorage International Film Festival, during an archival screening program AMIPA curated, entitled, *Small Gauge, Great Land: Two Alaskan 16mm Productions from the Post-War Era*; this presentation of *East of Siberia* featured 16mm projection (with a xenon lamp).
- Excerpts from *Alaska Earthquake of 27 Mar 64* (DBD 003), preserved under a 2008 NFPF Basic Preservation Grant, and two earthquake-related reels that were restored under a 2013 NFPF Basic Preservation Grant proposal (AKJ 002 and DC 002), were screened in April 2014 for both Opportunities for Lifelong Education (OLE), and the Anchorage Downtown Rotary.
- *Alaska Earthquake of 27 Mar 64* was screened for the February 20, 2014 Cook Inlet Historical Society lecture program entitled, *Archives of the 1964 Alaska Earthquake*, the first of a three-part lecture program scheduled to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964.
- *East of Siberia* was screened at the Alaska Native Heritage Center on February 1, 2013, on the opening night of the 9th Annual Indigenous World Film Festival.
- AMIPA's Home Movie Day event on October 20, 2012, included both *East of Siberia* and *Alaska Earthquake of 27 Mar 64*.



## **h) Public service mission**

AMIPA's mission is to collect, preserve, catalog and provide public access to Alaska's sound and moving image material, and to encourage the ongoing documentation of Alaskans and Alaska events of historical importance; to provide knowledge and assistance to other archives, private collectors, producers, institutions, and the general public; to advocate on behalf of these materials; and to educate the public, government officials and civic leaders on the importance of preserving Alaska's sound and moving image heritage.

AMIPA's web site:

<http://amipa.org/>

## **i) Tax-exempt status**

AMIPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. AMIPA's federal tax identification number is: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **j) Supplemental funds**

AMIPA is committed to this project, and will provide funding to cover over budget expenses, if necessary.