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Notes: Original in 7-inch tape, master copy on CD. Produced by Roger McPherson. THESE TAPES WERE PRODUCED AS A PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM NOW DEFUNCT AND WERE BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

The recording begins with Rocky Boy Dancers drumming and singing.

Don Wright introduces Emil Notti, past Alaska Federation of Natives President, who is going to say a few words to the convention. He congratulates Emil for the work he has done in supporting the land claims and for the support Wright has got from him during his being the president.

Wright continues that he has ran into demands from villages and regions, but that he has always been able to talk to Notti, who, in turn has helped him make his mind. Leadership is a difficult task and leaders don't have the opportunity to satisfy everyone. They do the best they can to be fair to village and regional groups, and to the State and Nation. Their decisions are not reflecting their personal feelings, but rather their sense of duty towards the majority. [Applause for Emil Notti.]

3:34 Emil thanks Don and tells that he is going to reflect on things that happened in the past 5 years, and mentions John Borbridge's story on how the first Native leaders went to Washington in 1899. He's always amazed how early and how long their fight has been.

He first began taking a part after reading Willie Hensley's book, What Rights to Land Alaska Natives Have [Hensley, William, 1966: What Rights to Land Have the Alaska Natives?: The Primary Question.], which he wrote as a graduate student

at the University of Alaska. Nick Gray, whose dream was to have a state-wide group, was an inspiration for him too, and in 1967, when Bob Bennett was sworn in as the commissioner of the Indian Affairs, he gave a report to Senator Jackson in which he said that the BIA are “drawing up a final solution to the land problem in Alaska.”

5:19 Around July in 1967, Emil and others thought that if there was to be a solution to the land problem, the Native people should have a say on it. They wrote letters across the state for people whom they had only heard about, like Gerome Trigg, Willie Hensley, Walter Soboleff, just to mention a few.

One of the early supporters was Howard Rock. He received a letter [from Emil and others?] and headlined their statewide meeting, keeping it in news weekly until the meeting came about. It was his effort in Tundra Times that created interest in the meeting.

Then there was Albert Clow [sp?] and Tyonek, who helped the meeting with resources of their people. They let the meeting use Tyonek Building and gave thousands of dollars towards it.

Emil also wants to remember one of their first secretaries Wilma Kessler, and says that those early secretaries were overworked and underpaid.

7:25 Emil tells more about the meeting in which Udall and Hickle met and where Willie Hensley said they went uninvited. Emil tells that they weren't quite uninvited, because Emil had called Bartlett who told them to come in. At the time, they had no money. They had a meeting and various individuals gave them money. They raised \$1,200 dollars that got Emil and Willie Hensley to Washington, D.C.

They held many board meetings in 1967-1968, where people had to pay their own way into meetings, and pay for their own hotel rooms, while taking time off from their jobs.

Emil remembers Udall, who first proposed 10% on the continental shelf, which the Native people weren't satisfied with. Then Udall instituted a mini land freeze that prevented the State from selecting more land. Later, he instituted the total freeze in Alaska.

9:08 One of their early supporters was the owner and editor of Anchorage Daily News, Larry Fanning. It was the only major newspaper in Alaska that supported the land claims and never wavered. They were the only paper in support of 2%.

The difference that gave the land claims credibility was made when they got Arsa [Arthur Joseph] Goldberg on board. He was a former Supreme Court Justice, former Secretary of Labor, and a former United Nations representative, and when he spoke on behalf of Alaska native people in the Senate, the Senate listened. The first person to contact him was John Borbridge. Arsa Goldberg was a democrat and he associated Tom [Thomas] Kuchel, the republican former senator from California, who brought in Ramsay Clarke. They had the finest legal brain in the Nation to fight for their land claims.

[Wally] Hickel was a controversial figure, and Emil remembers a statement that he made once about how it doesn't give a person a right to the land if their ancestors had chased a moose across the country. Yet, that same man put together a task force, and funded it out of state funds. He supported the land claims to some extent, and supported them on 40 million acres.

11:36 Emil Notti reviews the previous bills: First one in 1966 and it was made by a famous Indian lawyer, Marvin Sonosky. It was known as the S20-20. That bill would have put the people in the court of claims, and if it would have passed, the court would have had to grant them a title to all land that hadn't gone to third parties. That would have made Alaska Natives a legal owner of most of Alaska. Of course, the bill didn't get out of the committee because it was politically impossible. Then there was the Department of the Interior Bill, Hickel's Task force Bill, Senator Jackson's bill, and another Department of the Interior Bill. Federal Field Committee Report was significant for one line it has in it, that says that it's conceivable that the Native people can prove ownership to all of Alaska. That report was commissioned by Senator Jackson. Emil lists people who were involved in writing the report: Joe Fitzgerald, Bob Arnold, Dave Hickok, Arlon Tussing, and Esther Wunnicke.

13:50 There was a low point in AFN history when the board of directors were almost dissolving. That was when the pressures on the board of directors were tremendous. That was during the time of Hickel's nomination to be the Secretary of

the Interior. They had a meeting in Anchorage where the board voted unanimously to send people to Washington to hold the land freeze at any cost. John Borbridge, Willie Hensley, Evan Hobbs and Emil himself went back to D.C. on short notice, and spent two weeks there. Local attorneys, at the time, thought that Hickel's nomination was more important than the land freeze.

15:50 Emil talks about Charitable Trust that was established to get tax-free money. AFN couldn't get any, because they were involved with politics. The report was due "this October" but they didn't want to write a report that would be keyed to a bill that didn't exist yet so they delayed the report until November. It'll be an 8 part series.

Robert Nathan Firm, whom they contracted, is based in Washington D.C. They are international economists who have studied underdeveloped foreign countries. Lee Gorsuch has been to Alaska for about 4 years, but he's been involved much longer. Emil introduces Lee.

17:40 Lee thanks Emil and talks about how they were developing an overall development plan that would answer the question of how they could have economic development in the bush, in the villages. It was very difficult to address such issues without knowing how much land and money they would have to work with. They reoriented themselves and started looking at specific things like enrollment and how it could be most effectively done so that all Alaska natives would get the benefits that they are entitled to.

The second paper they are working on deals with land selection and how villages would go on about organizing themselves to select the lands they are entitled to.

Third paper deals with financial management and what the Native people need to take into an account when they start thinking about how to manage and invest the money.

Fourth paper deals with organization and training, and what kinds of groups they need to create in order to be entitled to receive the monies. They also discuss what kind of training the Native people should have in order to make their own decisions, and to benefit from employment in the organizations once they are established.

Another paper deals with decision making and planning process, and the last paper deals with resource analysis of what the available resources are, other than Native people's own land and own money.

20:45 The purpose of the guidelines isn't to provide answers, but to point out some of the considerations. The responsibility of how the money is going to be used is "yours" [the Native people's]. They can hire consultants, but only "you" [the Native people] can determine goals on how the money should be applied.

Lee hopes that they could sit down and discuss the papers with the representatives of Native associations. The papers are coming out in following months, and Lee welcomes feedback on the papers, so that they can be more helpful to the Native people who are preparing themselves for the tremendous job that lies ahead.
[Applause.]

22:07 Emil Notti thanks Lee Gorsuch and speaks for the unity of Native people.

Don Wright asks the secretary to read the motion: She reads Tim Wallace's motion that is to approve the President signing the bill. It was seconded by Roger Samuelson. Don Wright asks people to vote. The secretary goes through all the regions and records their votes. Final count is 511 yes, and 56 no.

27:53 Don Wright announces that President Nixon will give a message through the speaker system at 1pm, and asks people to remain quiet during that time.

Nixon's voice tells that he has just signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement act, which is a milestone in Alaska's history, and in how the government deals with Native people. He congratulated Don Wright, Wally Hickel, and Senator Ted Stevens.

29:20 Don Wright introduces Wally Hickel who is the former governor of Alaska, and a former Secretary of the Interior. [Applause.] Hickel starts his speech by addressing AFN, and saying that the American Government and "you people" won the battle that was fought because it was right and human. He tells that he always said that Native people didn't have a legal claim, but a moral claim. Their victory is a victory to show the world that if one cares about people, the problem can be solved.

Don Wright resumes the convention and reminds people that they have tremendous amount of work to do in implementing the bill that was just made into law. He says that the people can stay as a convention as long as they would like. They have a capable board of directors and implementation of the bill can be handled by their regional chairman, their regional president, their village presidents and by the administrative staff of AFN. They have plenty of time to thoroughly study, but they are starting the post-settlement era.

32:34 Wright says he has been informed by the people in Congress who fought hard for them, like Henry Jackson, Lloyd Meades, their own delegation, Nick Beggich, Mike Gravell, Senator Kennedy, and others, who recognized that the legislation isn't perfect. They have an opportunity to introduce corrective legislation to any provisions of the bill that aren't workable, but to do that effectively, they must stay united. They have to continue to have a working relationship with the National Tribal Chairmen's association that represents all land-based Indians in the United States, and with National Congress of American Indians, who represent all American Indians and Alaska Natives. In order to do that, they have to stay united and appropriate funds from each region and village, so that their voices will be heard.

Wright says he made a statement to the press in which he said that it would be reasonable for Alaska Native people to ask for voluntary assistance from business, social, and political leaders in the state to guarantee that they get best advice possible without paying for it. The business community is confronted with a very powerful organization of Alaska Natives who have the money and land, and Wright thinks that they will want to cooperate. It's important to listen to advice, but make independent decisions.

35:38 Everybody needs to take the bill and discuss it in the villages so they can find problems that are particular to their regions. The problems should be brought to AFN who can then act on people's behalf.

[End of the recording.]