

► My View North

Right: In this photo taken by my mom when we lived along the Iditarod trail at Farewell Lake in 1974 and '75, musher Ken Chase takes a break from the race to chat with us and rest his dogs. An Athabascan from Anvik, Chase ran the Iditarod 16 times, most recently in 2002. He placed in the top 10 three times. Hear his recollections about racing on photographer Jeff Schultz's Faces of Iditarod site: faces.iditarod.com/ken-chase.



WHO'S IN A NAME?

REAL PEOPLE ARE IN ALL THOSE UNNAMED PHOTOS

SOMETHING THAT HAS ALWAYS made me uncomfortable as an editor is using photos of people without naming them. Historical photos of Alaska Natives are notoriously nameless; the caption typically reads along the lines of "Native man in a boat," or "Tlingit shaman in full costume." So I'm particularly excited to share this issue in which nearly all of the images of individuals include names of Alaskans living (or who did live) authentic, complex lives.

I attribute it to astute historical and contemporary photographers who either knew their subjects well or took the time and effort to record details. That's not to say that unnamed pictures are products of lazy artists—anyone who's photographed an event or even a family portrait in a public space knows it's practically impossible to gather the names of everyone on stage for a performance or to run after the unsuspecting passersby in the background of your cruise ship shot and jot down their particulars. These days, too,

most of us are probably a blurred apparition (at best) or stuffing our faces with street food (at worst) in someone's travel snapshot posted on social media. Best to remain anonymous in those instances.

But I offer kudos to professional photographers who treat their subjects as real people and not as mere symbols of a specific culture or as curiosities across a social divide as so often happened in the past and still runs rampant in travel photography today. While the rules of journalism don't require naming everyone in a photo for strictly editorial use, naming adds a richness to an image and denotes respect for the person shown.

Since 2013, the Anchorage Museum has brought historical photos of Indigenous Alaskans from their collections to a booth at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual convention in the hopes that delegates could help identify relatives, friends, or neighbors; they could in about half the prints. Alaska, as the saying goes, is a small town. This effort is a positive step in Natives reclaiming cultural identity and stories and making Alaskan life more interesting for all of us.

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