

Mekoryuk

Current Population:	200
Incorporation Type:	2nd Class City
Borough Located In:	Unorganized
Taxes:	Sales: 2%; Property: None

Location and Climate

Mekoryuk is at the mouth of Shoal Bay on the north shore of Nunivak Island in the Bering Sea. The Island lies 30 miles off the coast. It is 155 miles west of Bethel, and is part of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. It lies at approximately 60° 23' N Latitude and 166° 11' W Longitude. The area encompasses 7.4 sq. miles of land and .0 sq. miles of water. The Bering Sea which surrounds Nunivak Island strongly influences the climate of the island. Average precipitation is 15 inches; annual snowfall is 57 inches. Summer temperatures range from 37 to 54; winter temperatures run 3 to 20.

History, Culture and Demographics

Nunivak Island has been inhabited for 2,000 years by the Nuniwarmiut people, or Cup'ik (Choop'ik) Eskimos. The first outside contact was in 1821 by the Russian American Company, who recorded 400 people living in 16 villages on the Island. An epidemic in 1900 decimated the population, leaving only four surviving families. In the 1930s, the Evangelical Covenant Church was built by an Eskimo missionary at the present site, followed by a BIA school. Reindeer were introduced for commercial purposes in 1920 by an Eskimo-Russian trader; the operation was purchased by the BIA in the 1940s and it is now run by the village IRA council. 34 musk ox from Greenland were transferred to the Island in 1934 in an effort to save the species from extinction. Today, the herd numbers around 500, and calves from this herd have been relocated and introduced to other areas of Alaska. A post office was opened in 1940, and an airstrip built in 1957 made travel to and from the Island easier. A high school was constructed in 1978. 99.4% of the population are Natives. A federally-recognized Native organization is located in the community. This entirely Eskimo village maintains reindeer and musk ox herds, and practices a subsistence lifestyle. The sale, importation or possession of alcohol is banned in the village. During the April 1990 U.S. Census, there were 67 total housing units, and 4 of these were vacant. 45 jobs were estimated to be in the community. The official unemployment rate at that time was 16.7%. 59.1% of all adults were not in the work force. The median household income was \$14,792, and 31.5% of residents were living below the poverty level.

Facilities, Utilities, Schools and Health Care

Water is derived from a well, is treated and stored in a tank. A new water treatment system was recently completed. A flush haul system is currently being implemented in Mekoryuk; about half of the homes are now being served, and funds have been provided to complete the remaining 40 homes. The school has its own well, and needs a new water treatment system. The washeteria has piped graywater disposal to the lagoon. Electricity is provided by AVEC. There is one school located in the community, attended by 54 students. The local health clinic is Mekoryuk Health Clinic.

Economy and Transportation

Employment by government agencies, commercial fishing, construction projects, and services prevails. The Bering Sea Reindeer Products Co. is a major employer. Trapping and crafts, such as knitting qiviut (musk ox

underwood), provide income to many families. 51 residents hold commercial fishing permits, most for halibut and herring roe. The village operates a freezer for commercial and subsistence catches. Almost all families engage in subsistence fishing and half have fish camps; seal meat and oil are important staples. The 1992 Community Development Quota (CDQ) program has increased the pollock groundfish quota for small communities like Mekoryuk. Mekoryuk relies heavily on air transportation for passenger, mail and cargo service. A State-owned 3,270' runway allows year-round access. Barges deliver goods from Bethel once or twice each summer. Boats, snowmachines and ATVs are used for travel within the community.

Local Organizations

City - City of Mekoryuk, P.O. Box 29, Mekoryuk, AK 99630, Phone 907-827-8314, Fax 907-827-8626
Village Corporation - Nima Corporation, P.O. Box 52, Mekoryuk, AK 99630, Phone 907-827-8313, Fax 907-827-8427
Village Council - Native Village of Mekoryuk, P.O. Box 66, Mekoryuk, AK 99630, Phone 907-827-8828, Fax 907-827-8133

Regional Organizations

School District - Lower Kuskokwim Schools, Box 305, Bethel, AK 99559, Phone 907-543-4800, Fax 907-543-4908
Regional Native Corporation - Calista Corporation, 601 W. 5th Avenue #200, Anchorage, AK 99501, Phone 907-279-5516, Fax 907-272-5060
Regional Health Corporation - Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp., P.O. Box 528, Bethel, AK 99559, Phone 907-543-6300, Fax 907-543-6006
Regional Development - Lower Kuskokwim Ec. Dev. Coun., P.O. Box 2021, Bethel, AK 99559, Phone 907-543-5967, Fax 907-543-2255
Housing Authority - AVCP Reg. Housing Authority, P.O. Box 767, Bethel, AK 99559, Phone 907-543-3121, Fax 907-543-2270

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Updated 6/1/97

For more information contact:

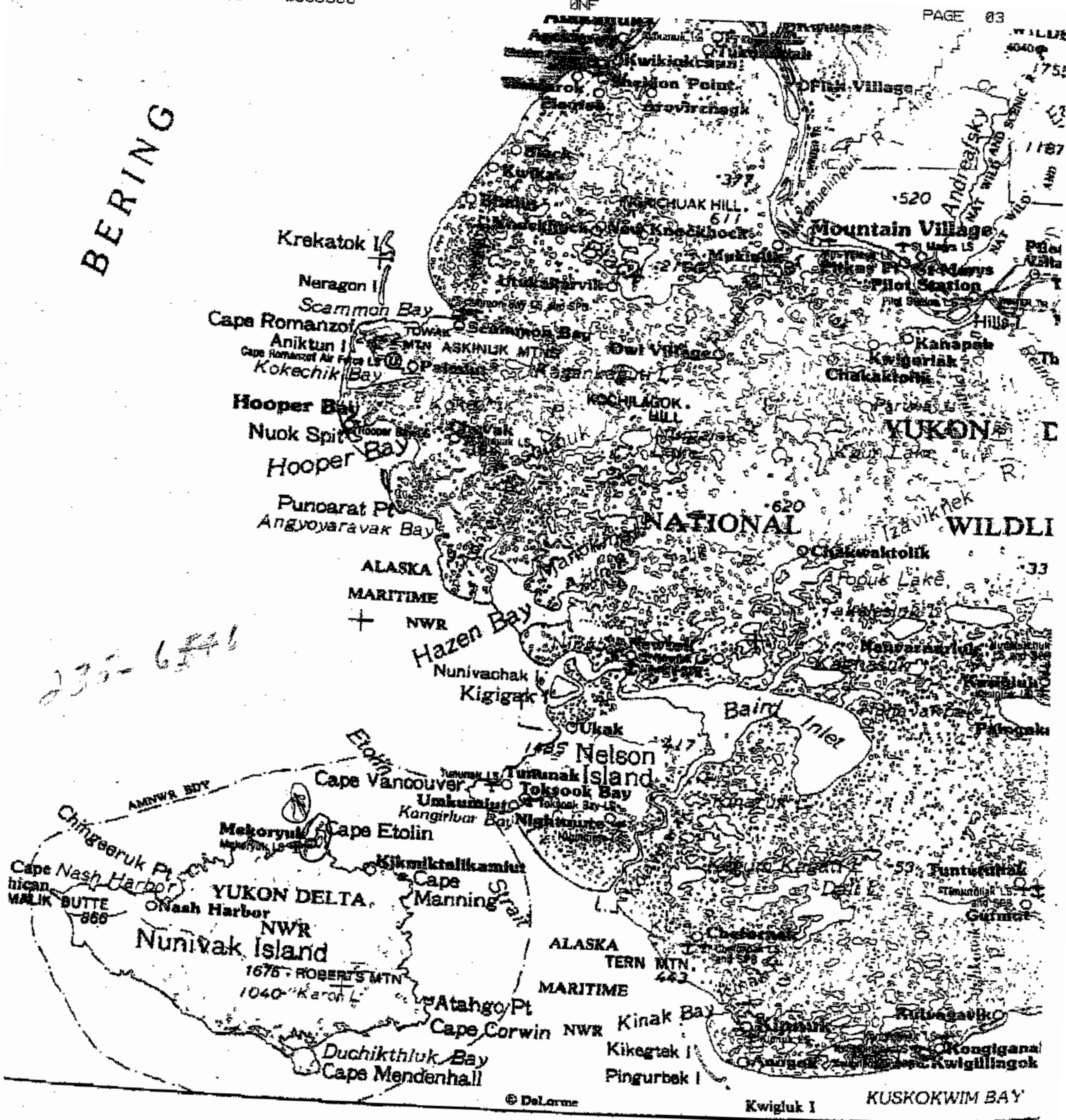
Department of Community & Regional Affairs

Research & Analysis Section

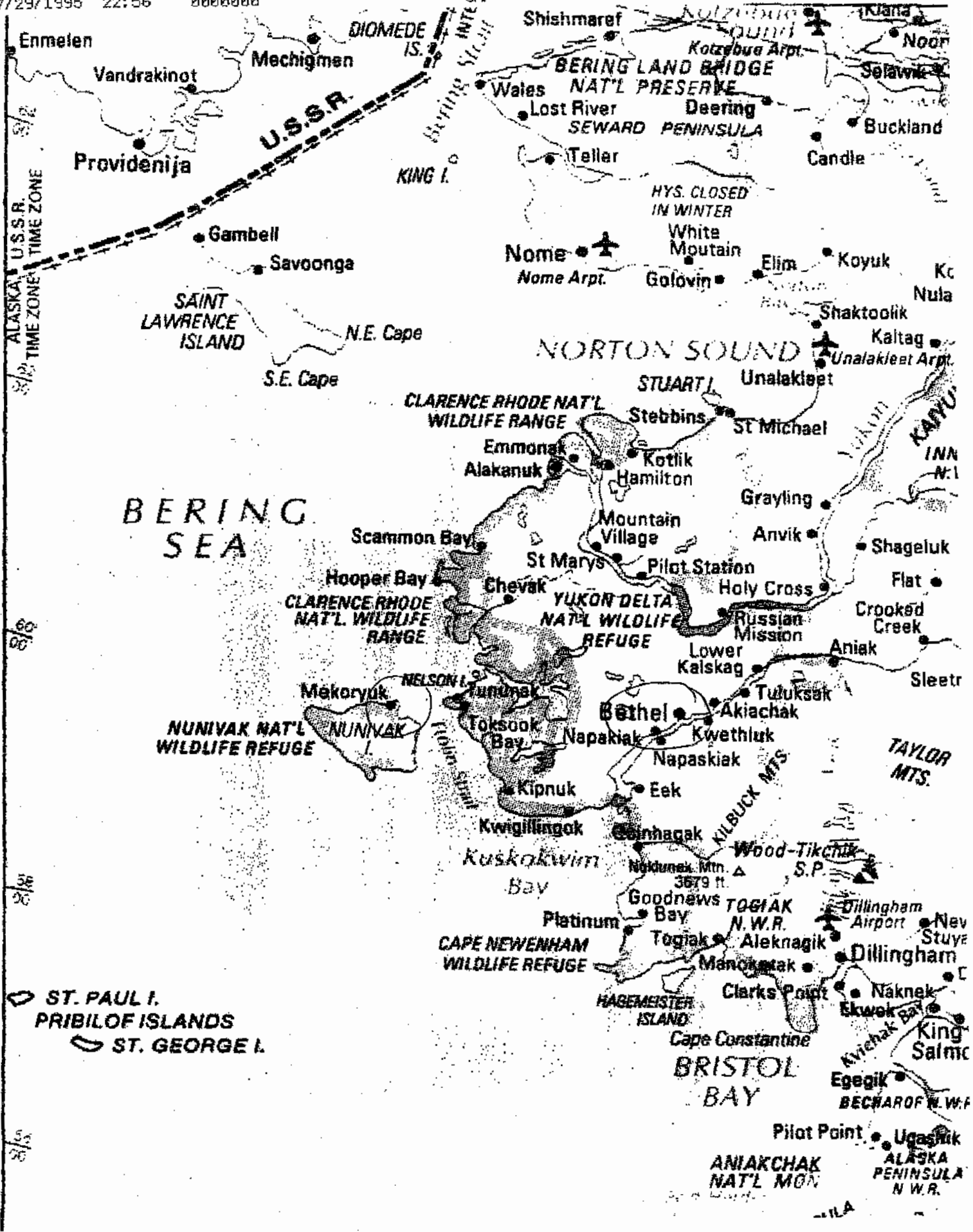
Phone: 907-465-4750 Fax: (907) 465-2948

e-mail: Michael Cushing MCushing@ComRegAf.state.ak.us

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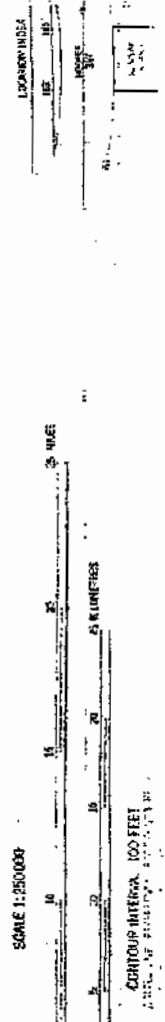
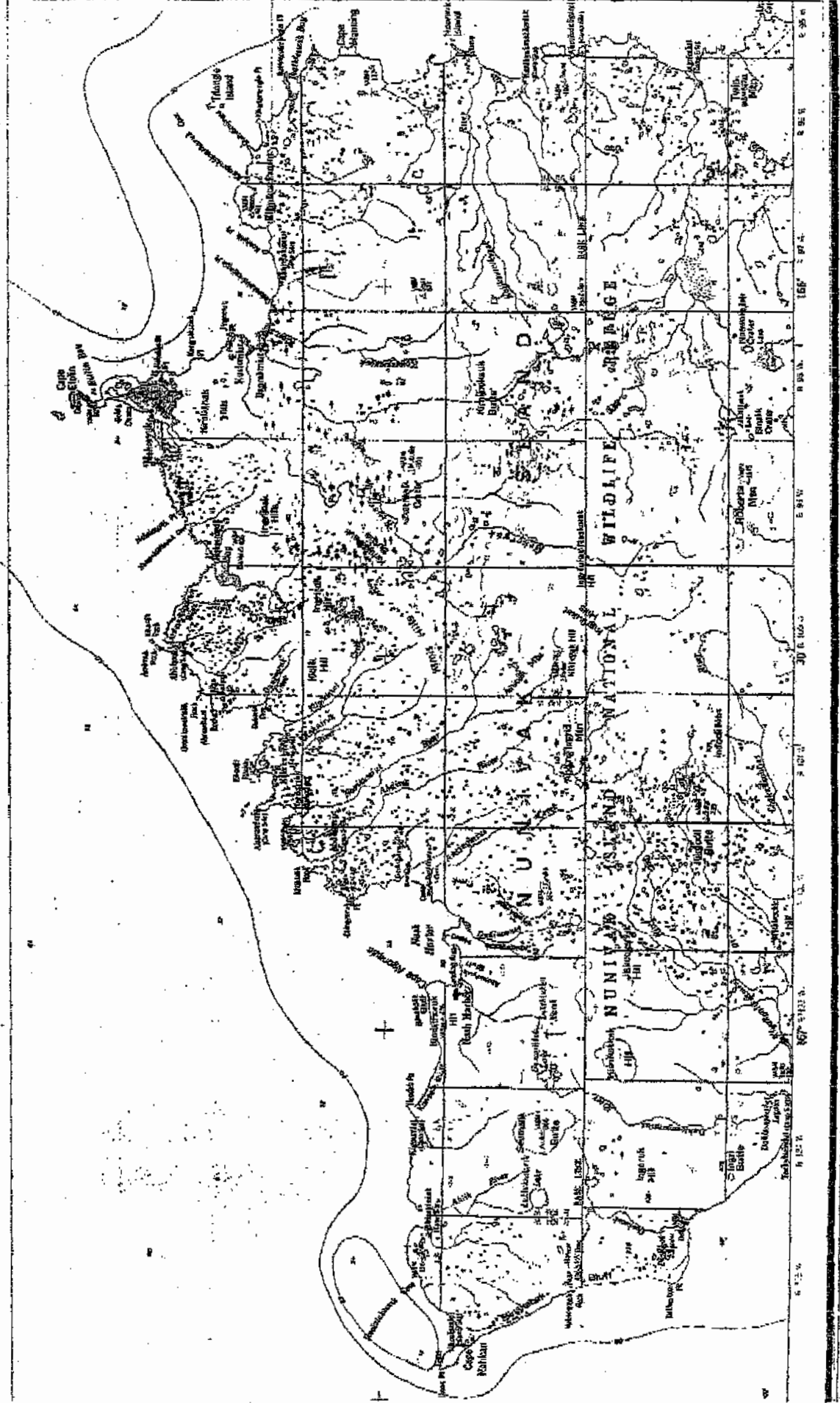


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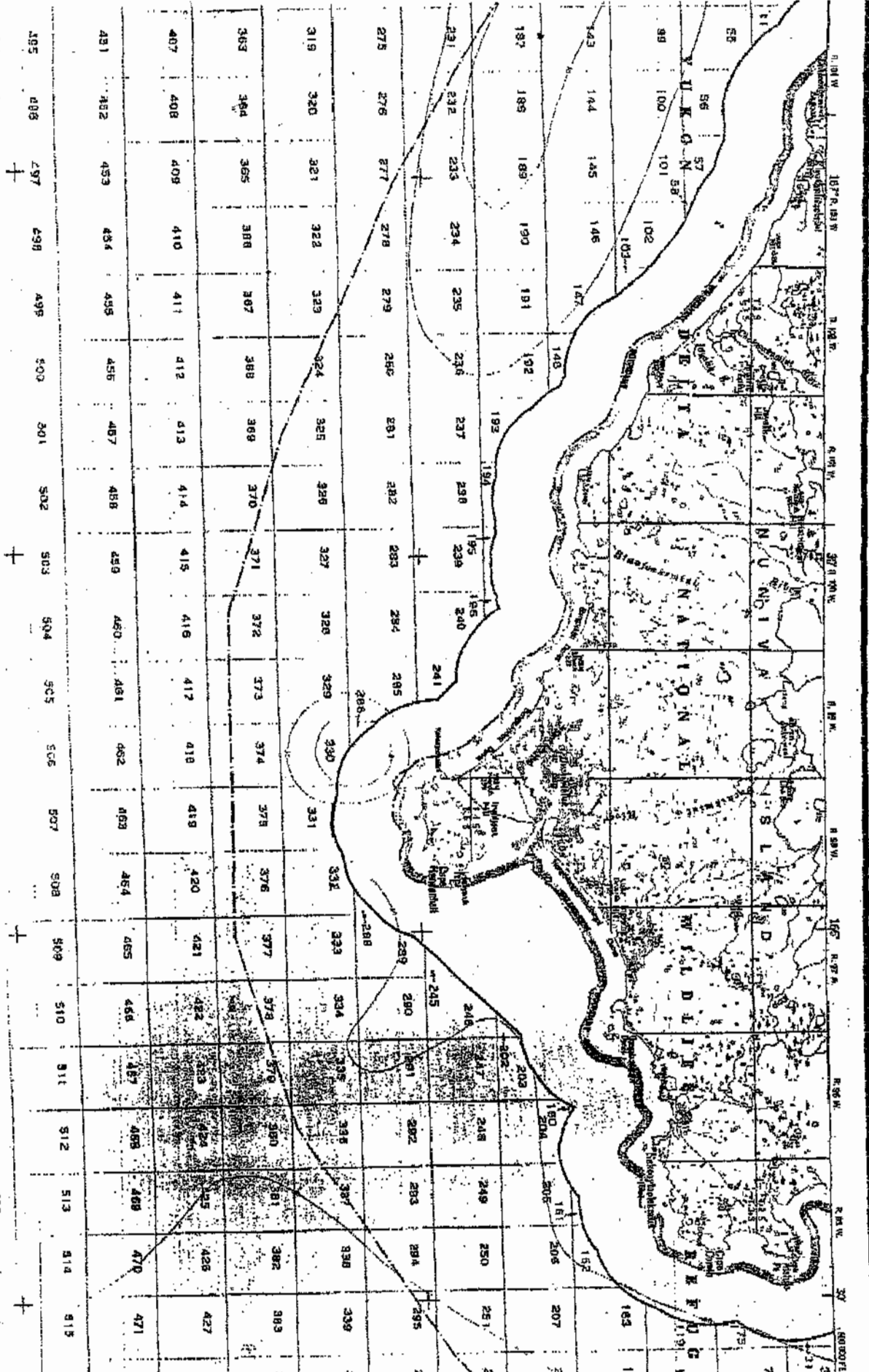
NORTON SOUND

ST. PAUL I.
PRIBILOF ISLANDS
ST. GEORGE I.

ANIAKCHAK NAT'L MON
ALASKA PENINSULA N.W.R.



CAPE MENDENHALL



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