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In 1948 when I first viewed Knik and homesteaded there, several old buildings and homes were still standing in the old townsite. Most of these were later torn down and burned for wood by the Natives in the area. There were also signs of old graves, both white and native, but none were kept up. The graveyard for the townsite was on top of the hill, overlooking Knik Arm, where it still exists today. The cemetery now claimed by the Natives consisted of a few very old graves, sunken into the ground, with a few spirit houses decayed and fallen in disrepair. Other graves were scattered about the townsite, some of which have now been covered by the new highway.

When I traveled the Iditarod Trail behind the roadhouse, (now the Museum), no graves were visible. Since 1950 there have been several of Theodores' family buried in what they now call the Native Cemetery. Bailey told me he chose this area because he could see it from his house. In 1967 the Iditarod Trail Committee encouraged the Natives to paint the spirit houses and repair the cemetery, and furnished them the lumber and paint to do so. That was the first improvement done at that location. Several local young people, at that time part of the YACC program, also cleared brush and debris from the original townsite cemetery on the bluff, where it was noted one side of it was a white area and the other side had Native graves. This was no doubt the cemetery mentioned in early reports.

Bailey Theodore's father, Theodore Wasilla, was not even buried in Knik, as there was no established plot at that time, and he was even considered their chief. How can they now claim the Iditarod Trail passed right through their cemetery, when even today it goes to the side of any graves, and went through that very same area since before 1900? Certainly none was ever buried right in the trail! If they want to preserve their heritage, what better way than to help establish, maintain and preserve the old historic trail, that they claim follows some of their own trails in many areas? The Iditarod Trail has been worn into the tundra for nearly a hundred years by natives and whites alike. It has finally been designated a National Historic Trail, and is cherished by many of us who have traveled it for years, and by others who hope to travel it, and now everyone is blocked from using it by just a few who refuse to even discuss the situation, and choose to block off a section of the trail right at one of its most significant, picturesque and accessible areas.

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