

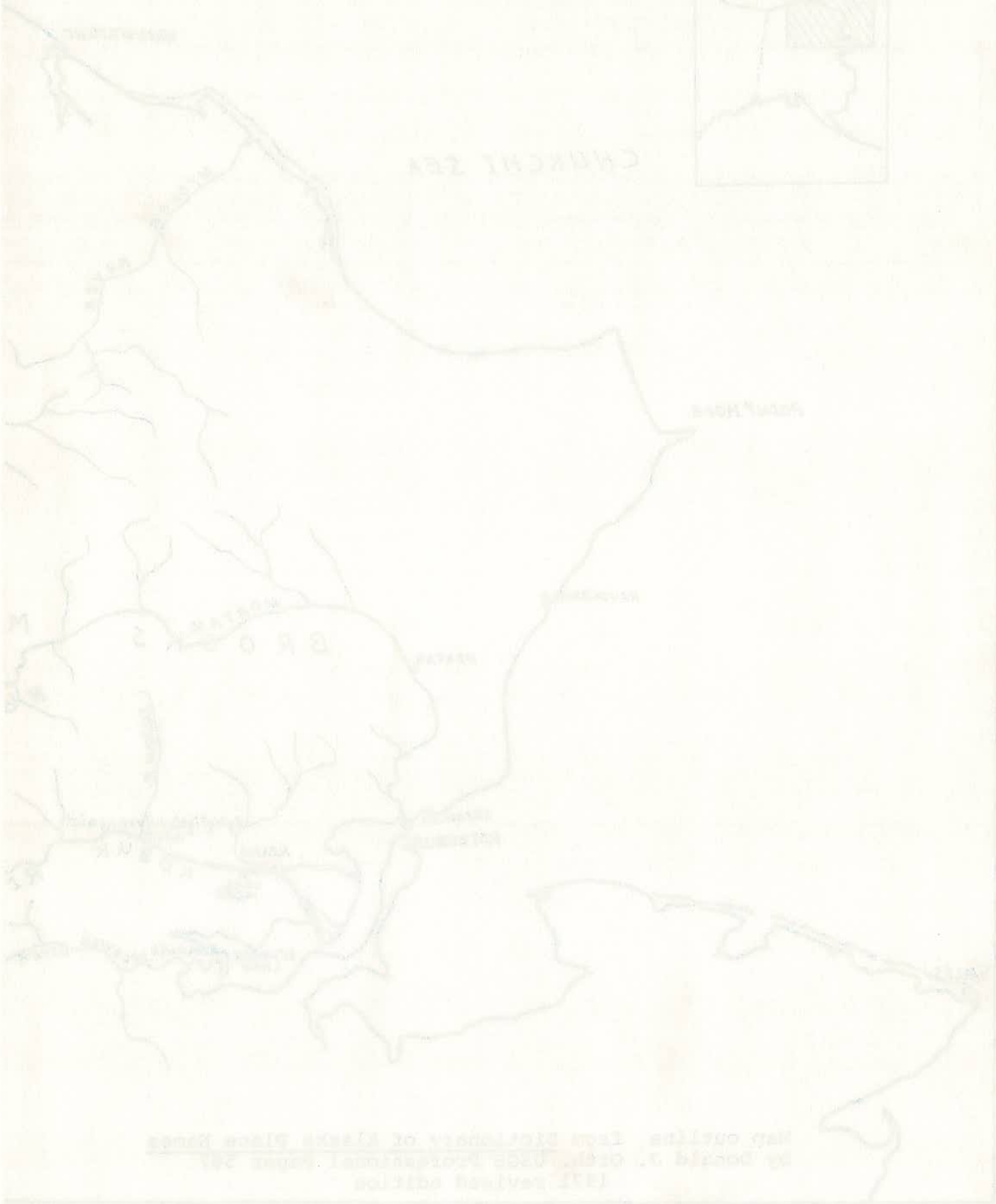
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MY LIFE and OTHER STORIES

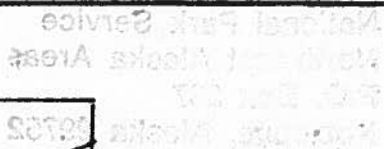


by
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Map outlines from Department of Alaska State Names
by David J. Smith, USGS Professional Paper 207
(1971 revised edition)



ARCTIC

WAINWRIGHT

CHUKCHI SEA

POINT HOPE

KEVBL3NA

NOATAQ

BROOKS

~~SESAMLIK~~
KOTZEBUE

KIANA

COAL MINE

FLAWLK SE

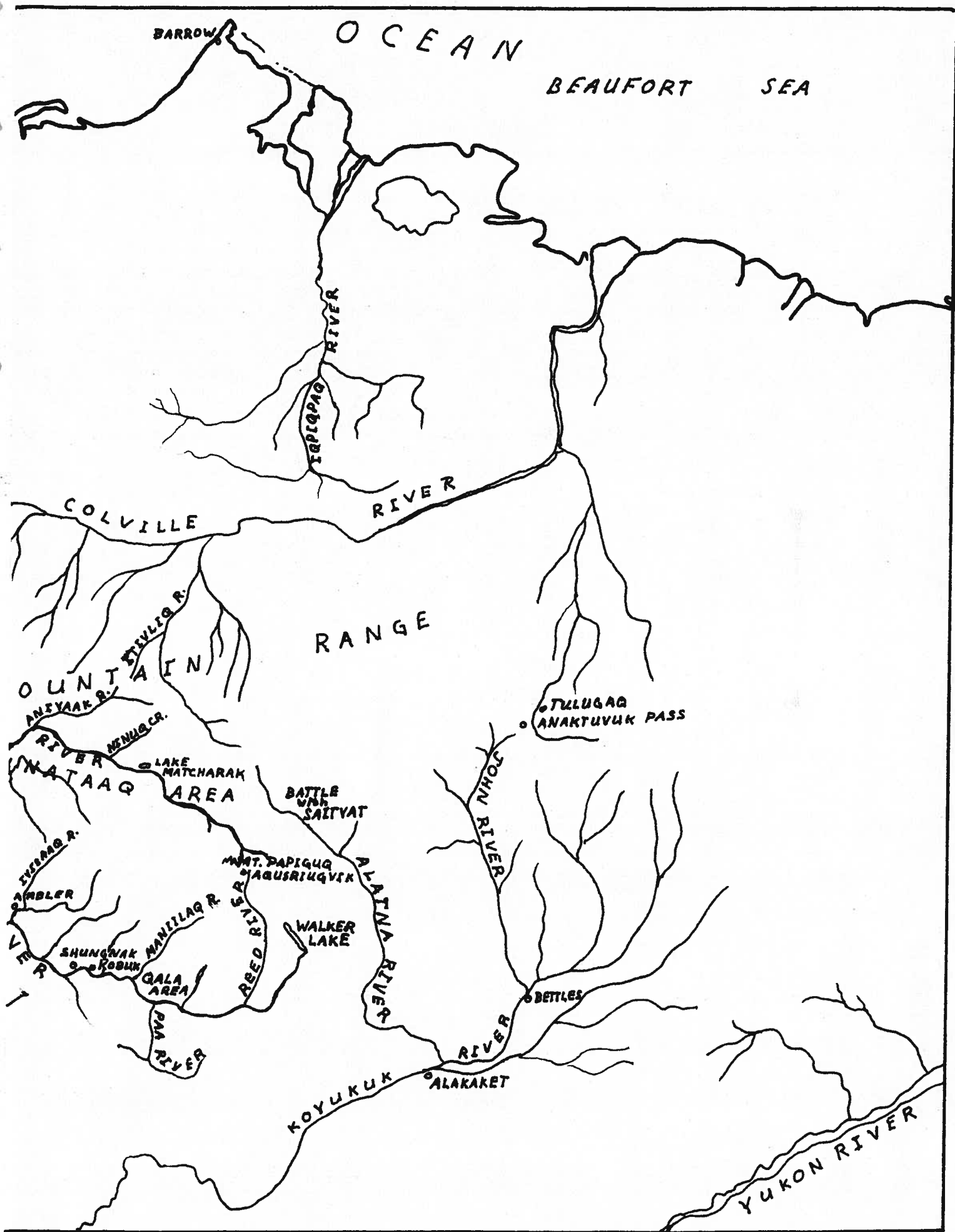
UFLA

SELA W 3K

RIVER

WALES

Map outline from Dictionary of Alaska Place Names
by Donald J. Orth. USGS Professional Paper 567
1971 revised edition



MY LIFE
and
OTHER STORIES

by
JOE SUN

Translated from the original Inupiaq Eskimo language
by
Susie Sun

Compiled from the English translations
by
David Libbey

This project has been funded by the NANA Museum of the Arctic
with a matching grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum.
Logistical support for an aerial site survey of the upper Noatak
River has been donated by the National Park Service.

March
1985

My Life
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Translated from the original Inupiat Eskimo language
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Copyright from the English translation
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1, THE ANCESTORS	5
CHAPTER 2, A TRIP TO THE OLD SITES, SUMMER 1983	14
CHAPTER 3, EARLY YEARS	20
CHAPTER 4, GROWING UP	26
CHAPTER 5, LIVING AT NUNATAAQ	32
CHAPTER 6, HUNTING	70
CHAPTER 7, TRADING	80
CHAPTER 8, MINING	93
CHAPTER 9, THE ELDERS CONFERENCE	110
CHAPTER 10, UNIPCHAAQ--OLD STORIES BUT TRUE	113
INDEX	126
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	137

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I. THE QUESTIONS	5
CHAPTER II. A TRIP TO THE OLD STATE, SUMMER 1904	14
CHAPTER III. EARLY YEARS	20
CHAPTER IV. GROWING UP	25
CHAPTER V. LIVING AT HUNTERTON	31
CHAPTER VI. HUNTING	37
CHAPTER VII. TRAVELING	40
CHAPTER VIII. MINING	47
CHAPTER IX. THE BERRY CONFERENCES	100
CHAPTER X. UNIFORMS—OLD STORIES BUT TRUE	117
CHAPTER XI. THE STATE OF THE UNION	120
APPENDIX	123

PHOTOS

NATIVE WOMEN NETTING FISH	after page 4
KOBUK CANYON	after page 13
JOE SUN AT HIS MOTHER'S GRAVE	after page 14
LUNCH BREAK ON HISTORIC SITES VISIT	after page 15
SHEEP BUTCHERING ROCK AT IPNAIGRUALIK	after page 18
BOATS AT SHUNGNAK	after page 18
OLD SHUNGNAK, NOW KOBUK	after page 21
SWING AT OLD SHUNGNAK	after page 21
SOD IGLOO	after page 58
PACK DOGS	after page 62
JOE SUN MAKES A MARTEN TRAP	after page 69
CAMP AT LAKE MATCHARAK	after page 92
MAPPING PLACENAMES AT LAKE MATCHARAK	after page 92
JOE SUN MAKES A GROUND SQUIRREL TRAP	after page 92
RAY BANE SAYS GOODBY TO JOE SUN AT CAMP	after page 92
DAHL CREEK DIGGINGS	after page 96
FRED JOHNSON AT DAHL CREEK	after page 96
OLD CABIN AT DAHL CREEK	after page 96
HAULING SUPPLIES UP AURORA MOUNTAIN	after page 109
MINE BUILDINGS ON ASBESTOS MOUNTAIN	after page 109
ASBESTOS MINE WITH WOODEN TRACKS	after page 109

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A	after page 1
APPENDIX B	after page 12
APPENDIX C	after page 14
APPENDIX D	after page 15
APPENDIX E	after page 20
APPENDIX F	after page 20
APPENDIX G	after page 21
APPENDIX H	after page 22
APPENDIX I	after page 23
APPENDIX J	after page 24
APPENDIX K	after page 25
APPENDIX L	after page 26
APPENDIX M	after page 27
APPENDIX N	after page 28
APPENDIX O	after page 29
APPENDIX P	after page 30
APPENDIX Q	after page 31
APPENDIX R	after page 32
APPENDIX S	after page 33
APPENDIX T	after page 34
APPENDIX U	after page 35
APPENDIX V	after page 36
APPENDIX W	after page 37
APPENDIX X	after page 38
APPENDIX Y	after page 39
APPENDIX Z	after page 40

MAPS

JOE SUN'S HISTORIC CAMPS	19
UPPER KOBUK RIVER TO TULUGAQ LAKE	86
IQPIQPAK RIVER	91
CALIFORNIA CREEK MINE	98, 99, 101
SIVUNNIUGVIK, THE PLANNING CENTER	111

All sketches and sketch maps by Joe Sun unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

I am going to tell about my growing-up years and life history from ever since I was able to get around to this white man here. I will start out with where I came from. I am descended from two different lines of people. From my father's side I am *Qalamiu* and from my mother's side I am *Amilgaqtuayaaq*. I was born down at **Coal Mine** on January 3, 1900. We lived there for a while and then moved upriver, probably around 1903. I remember a little bit about that trip with my parents.

My father's name was *Siqiñiq* and my mother's name was *Nasruk*. When we came from down there we stopped at a nearby camp called **Sun Camp**. I must have been about 3 years old because I remember a little bit about it. In all my 83 years I refer to that land where we stopped as the place I grew up; my parents raised me there. I've gone back there and stopped many times. Up until I was 12 years old I was not allowed around too many people. That is why I cannot write, though I can write a few things. When I was about 25 to 45 years old I was able to speak the language of the white man without any problem. But now I've gotten so old that I can't talk about things as well and I need an interpreter.

So my parents lived with us down there. They fed me and my younger brothers and sisters fish, rabbit and ptarmigan. I did not grow up eating white mans' food because there were no stores until about 1912 when stores were established. Our parents were not very young; I was born when they were getting old. They had no help like dollars or an income, but they worked hard and raised us with what they had. It was the same way with all the other kids my age then. There were lots of *ilutigiich*, people my age. I had a lot of *suunaags*, male friends my age, and even women my age. But they are all gone now. I am the only one left of all the people I grew up with. I don't know why; when we did things together I wasn't necessarily healthier or stronger than they were. I didn't even keep up with all of them. But I'm the only one left.

Our parents lived with us down there and when they decided to move beside a stream or make a sod house elsewhere they would do so. They took us places. We stayed at Sun Camp only in the winter and when summer came we moved up to the summer camp up there across from *Kuutchiām paananiit*. That was a summer camp. They kept drying racks for fish with a shade over it made out of logs or alder and moss, and a dry storage. The camp was situated high enough where the storage place and racks wouldn't float away during high water. That's how my parents raised me. Not only them but other families did that too, using summer and winter camps. In the fall, when winter was coming, they would move back to their winter camps, leaving fish that had been prepared in

different ways, dried salmon or whitefish, in their *saiyu* or storage place. They would box up some fish for *aiparuq*, raw fish that is stored in a box. They prepared it and put it away so that animals couldn't get at it. Then they would go back to get food from their dry storage whenever they ran out.

They would go back and forth getting food in the winter from their summer camps. Then when spring was coming we moved to our spring camp, in April and May, a place where we could set nets for fish. That's what our parents did. My father hunted for muskrats at *Uqquq'i*, a rivulet linking a lake to a river, too. Then, after July, our father would *qaki*, move to higher ground, for camping.

My father and all the other men went out to where there were caribou and dall sheep in the *Nunataaq* area to get sinew and fat for winter use because there were no moose or caribou near our camps. Then when they came back, if they had more than enough, they would exchange some sinew and fat with other people, people who didn't go hunting, for oil, rope, *atunaq* and seal skin hides.

We traded with three families who used to travel down river to Kotzebue--*Kanuaq* and his wife, *Uluqaaqruk* and his wife, *Siliagaq* and his wife and also with *Sauluq* and his family. When they came back they would have seal oil.

Those who went out hunting did not hunt for just those particular things; they also hunted for *siksrikpak*, marmot, for their skins and meat. They got these to trade. It was not unusual to see older people hunting marmot and ground squirrels a short distance away. Then they would take them home and trade the skins to those who stayed home.

That's how our forefathers lived. They really knew how to make a living. When the men came home from the *Nunataaq* they would all get together and go upriver to hunt bears in the falltime. It was a place where they would hunt bears for their fat and meat.

After coming back home, when fall had set in, the men would gather and go up to the other end of camp. They went up just before the sheefish run and set up stakes, *paugich*, to block off the fish, then they would seine for the sheefish or spear them.

That's how they used to work for a living in those days. After seining and spearing the sheefish, after the river froze up, they traveled back downriver to their winter camps. Then after settling down they would look for a place in the river with a gravelly bottom and block off that part of the river while the ice is still thin. They blocked it off with *napaaqtuqs*, trees, up to the river's edge, and then when the *qaaliqqiich*, whitefish with sharp-pointed heads, came through the opening they caught

them with dipnets. They put up a small tupiq, a tent, on the ice and someone would peek down through the ice to check for fish. When he sees the fish he would say "dip your nets in." A lot of times their nets would be so full of fish that they would have a hard time pulling them out. The fish were usually in areas where there was a gravel bottom. Umittaq, a camp a little way from here, is where they made dams to get whitefish. Once, a long time ago, there was a dam in front of our village. Now it would be impossible because of the qikiqtaq, the island, that has formed there.

After fishing with dams, etc. the women would start to snare rabbits. They tried to get the longer rabbits because caribou weren't around for them to take. The ptarmigan didn't come until right before fall. So they would try to snare the rabbits, long ones.

When the days are getting longer, right before spring, the ptarmigan come around and the women start setting ptarmigan snares. Also, when the days are getting long, the men went out together to form a rabbit drive. It was a lot of fun to be included in one of those rabbit drives. When we first began to hunt in this way there were not many .22s around. They would use a qagrupiaq, an arrow. I have been on those drives when I was a boy, using a bow and arrow, although I didn't get many rabbits.

The way of life in those days is no more. Everything is a lot easier now. There are more .22s around even though they were cheap when they were first being used. The use of bow and arrows is forgotten; everyone who knew how to use them is no longer living. That is why NANA and the schools are trying to help get the old ways of our culture to resurface. They are working hard to try to revive our traditional way of life, which was a good life, but is now being forgotten. That way of life has been here from time immemorial. This is what we're doing now.

When I started getting around and getting away, I tried to go to as many places as possible, moving from place to place. When I went to the Noatak area I would leave in the fall and come back in the spring. I went out there to hunt for kayuqtuq, fox, and amaguq, wolf. I started hunting qapvik, wolverine, long ago.

When living outside away from home a person had to live off the land. We had to get game, like caribou, for ourselves and our dogs. This was before we had to worry about game wardens. It's not like that anymore with the game wardens around to watch the young boys who are trying to learn how to hunt. I would go up into the hills in the winter and come down in the spring about three months later. I left about November and returned about March or April. And I took my children and wife. We used to be able to get a lot of caribou meat then without game wardens around.

Its not like that for anybody anymore. Only when the caribou migrate through the area in the fall then that's when everyone starts eating caribou. This coming fall if the caribou come the people may hunt, but we don't know, maybe the caribou won't come and nobody will hunt.

The caribou season will open again. Now there are moose seasons as well. But moose aren't plentiful when moose season is open because our immediate area is surrounded by outside white hunters who make a lot of noise and the Inupiat Eskimo usually end up with no moose. Even if a moose is seen among the willows and the hunter can see them the Inupiat come away with nothing when they travel by boat upriver because there are so many airplanes who get to them first.

It isn't only airplanes, more and more white people are coming through Walker Lake, canoeing downriver, leisurely taking whatever they can find. They arrive by float planes. They hunt from that area, killing moose and taking only what they can carry, leaving the rest of the meat behind. They also fish. That's why the Inupiat come away with nothing. Those people who travel by canoe will usually just wound a bear or moose and when it gets away they don't get out of their canoes to look for the bear and it dies out there. They just waste animals senselessly.



Native women dragging net near Shungnak [now Kobuk], Kobuk River, Kobuk District, Northern Alaska Region, Alaska. 1910. P. S. Smith. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver Colorado.

That's a birch bark boat there. I remember they were using those when I was 10 years old. There were only two families that had that kind of boat around 1910.

CHAPTER 1

THE ANCESTORS

I am going to start with my father's mother's parents. *Qupilġuuraq* was my father's mother's mom. I did not know her husband's name so of course I won't say too much about this but her husband's name was *Inuqtuaq*, I think.

Long ago my father's mother was selected from another family. Their family name was *Aulaqpatkut*. They wanted her for an in-law so they went and got her from her family. They went to where the *QaIamġu* lived, the place of my father's parents. They had messengers from *Siġalliñġmiñ* and the messengers started to take her out there. But *Qupilġuuraq* didn't want her daughter to go out there so she went and got her. One of those messengers who were supposed to bring her out perished in *Kuġluqtum Qanġani* in an avalanche and one survived. The survivor returned to his home base. *Qupilġuuraq* sensed this would happen. (*Qupilġuq* is derived from worms or insects. They are able to measure their ground, distances, etc.)

NANA is starting to call people from the villages to bring them together so they can have a good time in Kotzebue these days. That's how the messengers were in those days. They didn't have radios or mail then but they had messengers. Now, today, they use radios and telephones.

So that's where my paternal grandparents came from, *Qupilġuuraq* and her husband. And their daughter's name was *Siñaana*. The man who was to be her husband was one of those who perished in the avalanche. Then she married a *QaIamġu*. His name was *Aġarraaq*. They had children and my father was one of those children. His name was *Siġiñġiq*. *Siġiñġiq* had a female cousin, daughter of his father's brother, named *Qapuk*, *Pġliġġaq*'s mother. *Qapuk* had a husband by the name of *Tuuyuq*.

Now for my mother's side of the family, my mother's parents. My maternal grandmother was *Masruaġruaq*. My maternal grandfather was *Itiqsraq*, he was an *Amġlġaqtuayaaq* from Kiana. Those people who came from Kiana were descended from one woman who could speak *Iñupġaq*.

My mother was first married to a man named *Akiġuq*. All of my brothers and sisters from that marriage have died. When she remarried she married *Siġiñġiq*. I am the oldest child of that marriage. There are only two of us left. I have one younger

sister.

That is how it is with my mother's side of the family. My mother descended from the *Amilgaqtuayaaq* and my father was a *Qalamiu* from *Qala*, further up. They are the descending stock of people. So I am *Qalamiu* and *Amilgaqtuayaaq*.

Now for my father's parents. My grandfather's father's name was *QatugruaIuk*. Once, when he was getting old, he was living out on the other side of *Asriqsat*. They lived near a stream, *Ipnatchiaq*, on the other side of *Unaqtaam*, a hot spring on the edge of *Selawik*. They were making their living there by snaring small game for food because there were no caribou. Down toward *Selawik* *QatugruaIuk* heard that people were eating caribou. *QatugruaIuk* probably wasn't too proficient at hunting caribou and after a while he headed toward *Selawik* in the hopes of bringing back some meat. He intended to stay with his grand-nephew while in *Selawik*. He traveled for some time and at some point, maybe in *Siisqsiniligruaq*, he finally reached the people who were hunting. They saw him coming and thought he was an Indian and started running toward him with weapons; bows and arrows. The poor man stopped and just stood there. They prepared to shoot him with arrows and he was not equipped to fight or protect himself. At one point they stopped and moved to get a better angle, but before they could shoot he said, "Where is my nephew, *Aqa'agiuraq*?" *Aqa'agiuraq* was one of them. *Aqa'agiuraq* lamented, "So that is my poor uncle." He got on his uncle's side and prepared to fight his uncle's would-be tormenters. *Aqa'agiuraq's* former comrades knew *QatugruaIuk* was an aggressive person so they left him alone and began pleading for forgiveness instead. And his nephew, *Aqa'agiuraq*, took his uncle home. I have talked about my great-grandfather, but I am not familiar with his wife. They did not speak much of her.

So my father's mother was *Siñaana* who was taken from the *Qalamiu* for an in-law from the *Aulaqpatkut*; they were not spoken of favorably. When they sent the messengers for her the people below *Aulaqpatkut*, called *Nunataagmiut*, older folks no doubt, began looking for two messengers from their town to go get *Siñaana*. Some of the people were enthusiastic about being appointed as one of the messengers. But when *Siñaana's* mother heard they were taking her daughter she didn't want her to be among those way out there, so she went out and got her before they could take her away. That's the kind of experience that my grandmother, *Siñaana*, had.

Siñaana had a lot of younger brothers and sisters which I will talk about briefly. She had a younger sister by the name of *Qapuk*, and an older sister by the name of *Imqusriq*, *Qaksri's* mother. They had an older brother by the name of *Maniilauraq*, my father's uncle and my grandfather (great uncle). They were *Qalamiu*, my father's great-grandparents. They were always said

to be able to speak the Indian tongue because they were the descendents of Indians. That is why the Kuuvagmiut, people of the Kobuk, were always referred to as Itqiliaġruich, "Indian." They are hardly called that anymore because those who knew about it are all gone now. They called them Itqiliaġruich because they descended from the Indians.

That is my parents' ancestors' history. That's as far as I will speak on the subject. I will now talk about my grandfather Maniġġaq's teachings.

Maniġġaq was known for his ability to foretell the future. In those days, during Maniġġaq's time, their lifestyle was such that everything was forbidden. When a poor woman was ready to give birth to a baby the people would take her away from the village. She would have her baby on her own. Sometimes her mother would stay with her if she was having her first baby. And when a young girl reached puberty they would take her out of the village and let her stay for a whole year by herself with only her mother to watch her. Maniġġaq used to talk about these taboos and said that in the future these forbidden things would be wiped out. Young girls and women who were ready to give birth would not be singled out and sent out of the town but would be allowed to remain with the group as part of a cohesive unit. Maniġġaq said the time when taboos would be lifted was imminent. He spoke foremost on this particular subject.

He also foretold of the time when people who spoke a different language would come among us. He said when they came they would arrive on boats with wheels and they would just be sitting down. His prophecy was fulfilled with exact accuracy for boats, sternwheelers, started coming with these white people. They went to Utqiaġvik (Barrow) and Kotzebue, the coastal areas. After staying there for a while they then started coming up this way too, by river. There were a lot of white people up here about the time that Alaska was bought from the Russians. Maniġġaq also said that after a time people who traveled on land just sitting down and riding would come. It became that way quite a few years ago. Those were some of his predictions.

Maniġġaq said that after a time not only would people travel by land and water but visitors to the Kobuk area who traveled by air would also come. He said they would travel following the Kobuk River and a contraption with a person and another occupant would appear first. One time, shortly after I got married, a person flying with one other person knowledgeable in the area landed here, exactly as Maniġġaq said. From Alaasuppaaniġ, Alakaket, the pilot got a man named Nulaġyuk, a knowledgeable guide.

His predictions came through. But there are three predictions

which haven't yet been fulfilled. **Maniiĭaq** said that people up here will have an easy life for an extended period of time, without extreme suffering. But then there will come a time of hardship which has yet to be faced. Before summer comes, after spring, there will be another winter. The two consecutive winters will pass without a summer, and that will be the beginning of suffering. This has not happened yet.

And also it is said that **Ivisaappaat**, Ambler, would become a big city. At the time that **Maniiĭaq** said this Ambler wasn't even in existence. The newcomers, who spoke a different language, would settle there in great numbers. He said his name, **Maniiĭaq**, would emerge and become a part of the town. And in an area near **Ivisaappaat** the newcomers with a different language will find an extremely valuable resource which they desperately want and will go after. So they will settle in **Ivisaappaat**. I think this has started. The town is already growing steadily. And when that happens, in an area across from **Ivisaappaat**, an old fishing site with nets called **Isigakpak**, which literally means big foot, will emerge an **agviq**, a bowhead whale. It will surface regularly. This has not come to pass yet.

After this the third happening will occur. After some time it will begin to snow along the Kobuk River, so much that only the tips of the trees will show. Then in the spring when the ice breaks up and the snow melts the mountains behind us and across from us will be filled with water which will wash out the town. These three prophecies have not been talked about. I also forgot to mention one other prophecy. I will elaborate on it a little. But that is how it is.

A place "up there" is waiting with people who went out of their way, like "coming around the bend." These **Ivaqsaat** will come to claim people. This place is prepared for people who are striving to live right, those who accept the supreme being who watches over us. That is what **Maniiĭaq** used to say. Those who knew him well used to speak of him. A Noatak man by the name of **Kumak** said **Maniiĭaq** was among those living at **Sisualik** one time. After working throughout the day, every day, his chores became tedious. So he set a day to rest. His absence became noticeable. Whenever they checked on him they would find him just lying down resting, getting up only to eat. Much later, after Sundays were established, people began to comment, "So he was observing a day of rest, just like Sunday." They also said he was more perceptive than his peers and that God was watching over him and gave him this gift of prophecy. That's as much as I will say about **Maniiĭaq**. But I will relate one more incident.

One time in Kotzebue when people started gathering for the trade fair, after the white men came, two Selawik men, **Ayauniġruaq** and **Tuuyuq**, both well known and powerful shamen, went to Kotzebue. When these two men didn't think too highly of

someone they would start killing people, even an innocent passerby. They would kill the person by any means, however they felt like doing it. They would spear them enough to kill them although they wouldn't finish the act then and there.

Anyway, during this gathering in Kotzebue they both got drunk. So drunk that they were laughing and carrying on, holding hands the entire time. They were becoming a nuisance, getting in everyone's way. The people realized this and went to another area to get out of the shamen's way because they were afraid of these two men.

When *Maniīīaq* saw them he started to dare them to try something on him. He sat down on the trail on their path where they were sure to see him. When they reached the path and encountered him *Maniīīaq* said, "What do you two think you are doing?" The two looked at each other and one said to the other shaman, "If he tries to swallow us our cousin will be on our side." After that *Maniīīaq* let them through.

Later on that evening when the shamen went home they plotted to kill *Maniīīaq* because no one had ever taunted them before. They started to look for his soul to kill him but they were not successful. It is said that is what happened. It is said that when *Maniīīaq* said, "There is no one in this land who I am afraid of," he was speaking the truth. The two shamen were not able to hurt him. That was the type of man *Maniīīaq* was. But, as everyone says and knows, death claims everyone. It is the truth. *Maniīīaq* also died when his time came. That is as much as I'll say about him.

I am now going to talk about the *Alatkaññialat* at *Aqusriūgvik* which means "a place to look for beaver." When the following incident was talked about in those days people didn't explain why they were called *Alatkaññialat*, meaning "something that must not be looked at or checked," but I'm sure they had their own reasons from experiences which I am not aware of. The people who lived fairly close to that area did not go anywhere near *Aqusriūgvik*. It was totally avoided. They knew about the half and half animals that inhabited the area. They were half *sīksrikpak* or hoary marmot and half aqu or beaver. The torsos were marmot and the lower halves were beaver. They found out about these animals and avoided them, maybe from past experiences. They didn't say.

When the people closest to *Aqusriūgvik* went about their daily lives they did not get close to them or even climb mountains to look down at those animals because they were dangerous. Now, these people who lived close to the mouth of the Kobuk River were said to be an overbearing lot. They were called *Igliqtīqsiūgvigruagmiut*. They also had many shamen who were powerful. When other good shamen in other areas were practicing good deeds the *Igliqtīqsiūgvigruagmiut* would find out about them

and go up to them and enter their souls. When this happened the person would die regardless of their shamanistic powers. Those shamen were aggressive and difficult in everything. Their camping area is called *Aymaluagatkut* and was in the *Kalugruaq* area next to *Piguqsratchaat*. The people there were called *Igliqtisuiugvigruagmiut*. The river in the town's front had a lot of current so it was called *Kuugiiiaq* meaning "a river that is not good for fishing, travel," and that sort of thing, "not useful."

After hearing about the *Alatkañniaiat* the *Igliqtisuiugvigruagmiut* selected three of their strongest young men of the town and sent them up during the summer. They prepared them with gear and ammunition and sent them by kayak up the river. After traveling upriver for some time they came upon people who were living in different campsites along the way. The three young men told these people that they were on their way up to investigate all that they had heard about and that they were going up to reduce the population of those half and half animals. The people in the campsite warned them against going, but they wouldn't listen; the young men respected and feared those shamen who had sent them on their way so they were afraid to turn back for fear of death.

After traveling upriver they passed many more people. They finally got to the area where no one was in sight for miles around. They reached *Aqusriugvik* and started to enter. When we were growing up people always said the *Igliqtisuiugvigruagmiut* were capable of getting into difficult situations which they couldn't get out of.

To get to *Aqusriugvik* a stream must be followed that links the river to the lake. When it became impossible to go any further by kayak they left them behind and began walking, following the stream. The stream wasn't too long. They came to the mountains and between two lakes at the head of Beaver Creek near the Reed River sure enough the animals were there, surfacing the water, howling like marmots, and lurking on land, for after all they were part hoary marmots. The men were not leery of them and it wasn't long before they killed one of them. After killing the animal they skinned and prepared to cook it, for they had traveled a long way and were hungry. They cooked it, probably roasting it, or by other means, and ate heartily enjoying the meal. Both the *siksrikpak* and *agu* are delicious. Because the animal was actually two different kinds they cooked them both as one. After eating their fill they fell asleep. Traveling great distances and eating a big meal is liable to put anyone to sleep. That is how it is right now too.

After sleeping soundly two of the young men were jolted awake by a particularly loud noise. The two men got up but the third one didn't. Upon glancing at their companion they found only a

heap of bones where he had been lying. The animal, the one they had killed, had eaten him up and left only his bones. When the two men realized this they left in a great hurry. I think they even left the skin of that animal behind. They had intended on killing another animal so they could bring back the skins to show the people at home proof of their kill.

Whenever the two men got close to the stream the animals would surface and howl as if on purpose, whereas they had not behaved in that manner earlier. The animals started following them. When they got to their kayaks they paddled off downriver. Remember these were the strongest young men of the town. They traveled downriver, stopping only to sleep a little when they couldn't paddle anymore. The animals were surfacing and howling all the while.

The two men fell asleep. One of them awoke to a loud noise. He sat up and immediately glanced at his partner only to find a heap of bones like before. He was determined not to fall asleep and started downriver again. He passed all the people who had warned him earlier but they were afraid to offer any assistance. I'm sure they had shamen too but they were also afraid. Much further along he came upon an old lady whom they had passed earlier and she told him to stop. She took him to her place and gave him a little water, then a little food.

After feeding him the old lady told the young man to go to bed. She said for him to sleep as long as possible because the animals wouldn't bother him as long as he was there. She might have fallen asleep alongside him or stayed awake to keep an eye on him. He slept for quite some time for he had not slept from the time he left Aqusriugvik. When he woke up she gave him a little more food and some water using the same dipper. She told him to continue on saying, "No matter how tired you get don't fall asleep until you get home. When you get home tell them what happened."

After traveling downriver for some time he finally reached home and told of his predicament. Even though the shamen there worked hard there was nothing they could do to help him. With all their efforts to keep him awake, he fell asleep. Not much later the shamen found that there was nothing left of the young man but his bones. The animals had already devoured him. People talk about this particular incident warning the same plight for whoever falls asleep out there in Aqusriugvik.

I never heard about the people sending anyone else out there. Even though the shamen were powerful and overbearing they still did not have power over those animals -- they were too strong and aggressive. The third young man lived long enough to relate what happened. If the old lady had not helped him out there would have been no explanation. The Igliqtisugvigraugmiut would have

- 13 -

CHAPTER 2

A TRIP TO THE OLD SITES SUMMER 1983

Mrs. Sun's Grave Site

We just came downriver from Shungnak to my mother's grave site. I am going to speak of how she became ill although I personally was not with her when she was dying. I had brought my family to camp at Kuugruaq when she was not well. I came back from Kuugruaq with my dog team; at this time the trail was not good to travel on. I arrived at my parents' camp right when she had gotten really bad. Only my parents were there, there was no other person with them. I did not want to go back to camp when I saw how ill my mother was. My wife was expecting a baby soon and my mother told me to go on and take care of her. My mother assured me that there were other people nearby. When Mom spoke often of her niece, Tiriq (Mary Ward), who is Napoleon Black's mother, I went up to Nuurvik (Noorvik) to get them. Tiriq and Napoleon stayed with my parents.

This happened during the middle to last part of May. I stayed with them for a while, then went back to camp. Her grave marks the 14th of June, 1935, as the day of her death. The people that stayed at Black River also knew because someone went to tell them. Shortly after a lot of people found out and went to help my father. They carried her body quite a ways to bury her.

The roof and the grave post are still up in this year of 1983. This is July 20th. Maybe some year you will read this material in books. I am thankful though I will probably have passed on by that time.

Sun Camp

Long ago my parents would bring us up here to camp in winter. I was four years old then. My parents had always come here. I was barely aware of what happened because I was a young child.

I grew up in this cabin, an ivruilik or sod house, until I turned fourteen. When we first started camping here my father's mother, Siñaana, came and stayed with us for a while. Kisiuraq, an old man, also came and camped with us. These two people I remember well because I grew up with them being around. There



Looking into the lower end of canyon of Kobuk River from west side of river. Man and boat on river bank. Kobuk District, Northern Alaska Region, Alaska. 1901. W. C. Mendenhall. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver, Colorado.

That's a little above the mouth of the Reed River. I used to go up there a lot with a canoe. That's before outboard motors, just use two sticks. But that's a pretty big canoe. He's probably using a rope or a pole. I don't think that's birch bark. Long ago when the white men first came around they had boats like that. Looks like aluminum but they were regular tin, metal.



Joe Sun talks to his wife back in Shungnak while visiting his mother's grave downriver from the village. Libbey. July 20, 1983.



One man talks to his wife and a woman who is visiting his
sister's grave downriver from the village. Early July 1971

was also my mother-in-law's nephew, Tilaq, and my older brother, Anarraaq, in camp with us. Anarraaq was my older brother by my father and his first wife. These people were older than me. I watched them. Also my older brother, Tuksruk, and my older sister, Paaniikaaluk, they grew up before me.

When we were growing up I was the youngest. My older brothers and sisters watched me. Sometimes they were rough with me too, probably because I needed the scolding. This is my life, my immediate family. We stayed here every winter. When summer arrived my parents moved us across to Kuugaatchiaq. We stayed at Kuugaatchiaq for a while then traveled upriver to summer camp. When we reach that place I will speak about it.

Every fall I go up to the camp where my parents lived. I think all the people are like that, they like to go to the place where their parent's lived. I am like that and I come to the camp every fall. I set net and fish when I come here. When I come here I imagine my parents' daily life and I also recall my young life.

Fall Camp

This is our fall camp across from Kuutchiaq. There was everything here. There was a storage house, an atilisaqvik, to auri fish in -- that is to keep fish until it gets rotten but edible. There was also a place to trap mudshark. These houses and storage places have always been around since I can remember.

Sometimes we did not go back downriver because my father would be up north longer than he expected. Long ago, after my father came down from qakiq, the north, he would walk for long distances around our camp. When we didn't make it home early and the river freezes we stopped here and father would build a sod house. This was in late fall when we were late going home and there was ice we would stay here. We stayed here until the ice was thick enough, then we moved on down to winter camp and started fishing with a net.

Sometimes, after we're down there and daylight was getting longer my mother would want to set snares, so we moved back up here. We stayed here only for a while, until Mom was done snaring, and then we'd move back to winter camp.

One time in 1908, while we were doing this, you see our sod house was quite a ways from the river, our dogs started barking as if they sensed another dog team. I must have been about eight years old that time. I ran to the river and saw three teams, each with one dog. The dogs were very, very big. I got scared and ran back to the house and told my parents about this. I

said, "They have big dogs and the last one it seems to me like they stuck willows on it's head!" They were the first reindeer in our area.

Also while we were here I caught my first weasel. I had set a No. 1 trap when I learned how and set it by the portage trail back there. My parents told me to set a trap because there was a weasel back there. I would go check the trap every morning. My father would leave early in the morning way before I went to check my trap. I would eat a light breakfast and go check my trap because it was close. When I was on my way there I heard something, it made a noise. When I looked at the place where my trap was I saw the weasel. My father had hung the weasel upside down without killing it. When I saw this I got scared and ran back to my Mom and she went to kill it.

Summer Camp

We just arrived at our summer camp. My parents came here every summer. There were other families here too because when the women are going to fish they go in groups so a lot more work can be done. When we came here there was a seine net -- it was a homemade one made with willow peels. I remember seeing the net when we went to camp. The willows were gathered from the beach and braided and made into a net of willow bark twined together with roots from the river bank. That's how they made those nets. I caught (remember) them when we were living here.

When the women stayed here they stored the dried fish in a little shack made just for that, stacking them together. They didn't divide the fish right away but stacked them in one big pile in my parents' storage shack.

In the fall when fishing was over the women went back to the shack and opened it from the back -- not the regular entrance. The shack was made of poles and willows just cut and leaned against the poles so it was very collapsible and easy to take apart. They took all the fish out from there and divided them amongst each family making stacks of fish outside for each family that was there to help harvest the fish.

When they had divided them Mom would get her share and store them back in the cache. The other women who helped took their share and brought them somewhere and built a high cache and stored them for the winter. This was the favorite camp spot of my parents. There are a lot of things to do here like fishing and berry picking places. If you walk back this way you come to big berry patches. In early fall there is also a place to go cranberry picking, upriver, where we are going next.



Lunch break on the river bank on the way to Sun Camp. Joe Sun starts water boiling for tea while Susie Sun and Napoleon Black set out the food. Libbey. July 20, 1983.

Berry Picking Place

This is a place where we used to stop and leave the boat and walk back for cranberry picking. There is still a path to get to the patch. Mother would pick berries, but when she was done she didn't bring them home, she left them there. The berries were stored so that no animals or bad weather could get at them. They were covered and stored in large pieces of birch bark. These storages were made mouse-proof. Cranberries were also stored in wooden Blazo boxes so they wouldn't get smashed. They were never stored in tin or metal containers. The name for this place is *Kuviqsugaurat*.

Before they had containers to store berries in they would dig into the ground and line it with grass and that's how they used to store the cranberries a long time ago -- line it with grass, cover them with grass and then cover them with earth. That's why they call it *Kuviqsugaurat*, the name for this kind of storage. In winter the women or the family would come back and get the berries.

Ipnaigrualuk and Alugvik

This morning we walked here from the village of Shungnak. Long ago the men came here to hunt for dall sheep. The sheep came here to lick. There was salt here long ago.

A little further back from this *Ipnaigrualik* hill, towards the tundra, there is a smaller hill. At this hill the men waited for the dall sheep to come down from the mountains. While waiting they made their arrowheads from flintstone. You still can find arrowheads there sometimes.

The dall sheep come down to *alliaq*, lick. When the sheep arrived they began their hunt. The men would get some sheep, probably not too many, there are only a few sheep that do come down to lick. I remember when we were up north there would be big herds that went down to lick.

The place they call *Alugvik* is silty water that comes up from the earth. It is not clear water. The dall sheep come to drink this water.

When the men killed sheep they did not skin and gut the animal right there but dragged them to this big rock beside us. They put the sheep on top of this rock and cleaned it, not letting the meat touch the ground, and then put it into their packs and brought it home. We are looking at the rock while discussing

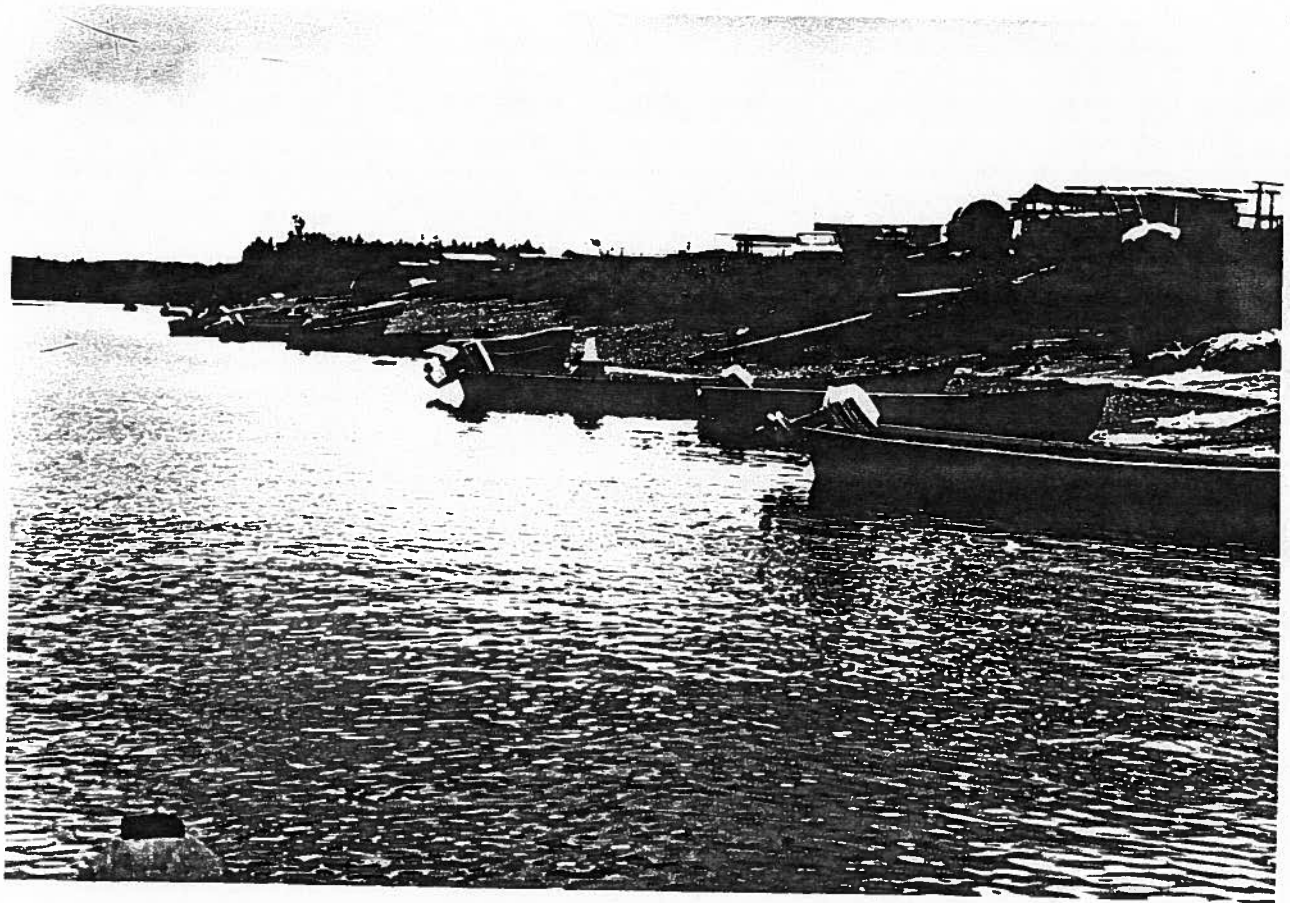
this subject.

On the mountains behind where we are sitting there were sheep not too long ago. I was a young man when they still hunted for sheep here. There were sheep long ago but not today.

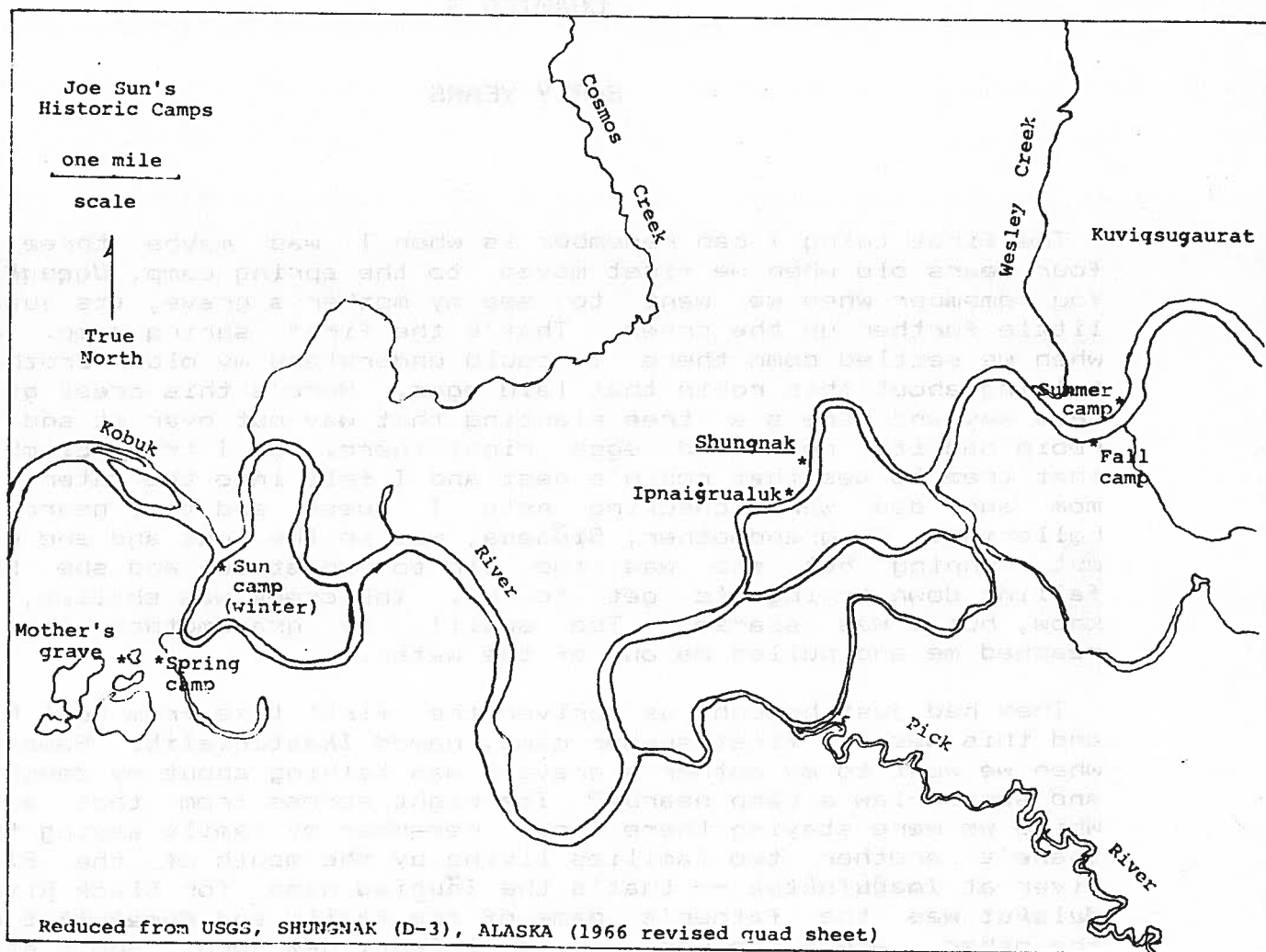
This rock is not the same as it was when I was growing up. I see that the rock is breaking up. Long ago when I first came here it was much bigger and the top of it had a reddish color as if from blood. Today it does not look like that, probably because it has gotten old. Besides breaking up the boulder has moved since it was used as a butchering place.



Joe Sun whittles on a walking stick in front of the rock where sheep were butchered at Ipnaigrualik, a short walk from the village of Shungnak. Libbey. August 5, 1983.



Boats on the bank in front of Shungnak. Libbey. July 22, 1983.



CHAPTER 3

EARLY YEARS

The first thing I can remember is when I was maybe three or four years old when we first moved to the spring camp, *Uqquq̃iq̃*. You remember when we went to see my mother's grave, its just a little further up the creek. That's the first spring camp. And when we settled down there I could understand my older brothers talking about this robin that laid eggs. Here's this creek going this way and here's a tree slanting that way out over it and the robin had its nest and eggs right there. So I tried climbing that tree to see that robin's nest and I fell into the water. My mom and dad were checking nets I guess and they heard me hollering. My grandmother, *Siñaana*, was in the tent and she came out running but she was too old to run steady and she kept falling down trying to get to me. The creek was shallow, you know, but I was scared. Too small! My grandmother finally reached me and pulled me out of the water.

They had just brought us upriver the first time from Coal Mine and this was our first summer camp, named *Ikaatchialik*. Remember when we went to my mother's grave I was talking about my daughter and son-in-law's camp nearby? Its right across from that area. While we were staying there I can remember my family saying that there's another two families living by the mouth of the Black River at *Imaḡuluktuk* -- that's the *Iñupiaq* name for Black River. *Aulakut* was the father's name of one family and *Aumaḡutkut* was the other. Annie Lee was just an infant, new born. She's still living. She's got three daughters here in the village but her husband passed away. He was the same age as me. Annie Lee is a sister to Susie's stepfather. So I remember when Annie was an infant.

I can remember when the trail was rough my brother would pack me on his back. So I was maybe two or three. If I were older I would remember more.

When we went back to our place in the fall time, to *Uqquq̃iq̃*, we started putting nets under the ice then. I would be following them. Remember when we had our lunch that day out on the river? Right across from there was a white man, Herman Bernhart, and his wife. She had a net, too, under the ice. I remember that guy Herman Bernhart coming there with a spoon. People would make a little hole in the new snow above the ice, a little bowl like, and when the fish are about to spawn they would squeeze the fish eggs into that little scooped out hollow, maybe eggs from two

fish. Then they would squash them up, adding some new snow or scraped ice, then whip them up until it gets white. The more you whip the whiter and fluffier it gets. Then they eat it with their fingers. That's why Herman brought his spoon. I was maybe four then. They call those squashed eggs *uñi* when added with ice or new snow.

About 1906 or 1907 when we were at that camp we heard people coming down from up above, probably Kobuk. It was at that place down there, *Aviutqugruaq*, Stoney's settlement. We went down there too when we heard these people come down river. There were the very first teachers who taught at Kobuk, the village above us. They had a young girl with them, a Native girl they adopted from some family. She didn't have any parents on either side so they adopted her and took her. So that's when I remember the first teachers when they landed there going downriver by boat. That was Mr. and Mrs. Carrie. I don't recall their first names.

That village up there wasn't named Kobuk at that time. Mr. and Mrs. Carrie were from Long Beach, California and they named it Long Beach. That's the first name of Kobuk long ago. Now we call it *Laugviik*. Its almost like Long Beach, but that's how the people heard it and started saying it. Its Kobuk in English now. After Long Beach they started calling it *Isignaak*. There used to be a lot of people living up there, a whole settlement. But when people moved down from Kobuk to here where we are now they brought this name with them. That's why our village name is *Isignaak*, but Shungnak is how the white people heard it. There was a white man, his wife was Native, who had a store up there at that time. So when these people took the name with them he named it Kobuk. Harry Brown was his name. He was the store manager.

At about the age of twelve or fourteen, you remember that's when I said my parents first started bringing me around other people. So one Christmas they brought me up from that camp to Kobuk, somewhere around 1912 or 1914. In Kobuk we stayed with my sister. She had been adopted out to this family so we stayed with that family. I went out and started playing with boys my age. It was getting dark. At that time they made their kids come home before its real dark. Strong curfew. There I was, left alone, wandering around between the houses because I couldn't remember exactly where we were staying. I was probably crying a little and somebody heard me. I told them I was staying with this family so that guy brought me safely home. There were a lot of people in that village and little windows glowing with light and I couldn't tell which place I was supposed to go home to! We had dog teamed up to Kobuk and I could easily run behind or in front of the dog team at that age so I know I was about twelve or fourteen years old.

That same year they had their school built of logs. There were a whole bunch of kids but only those two teachers. Sometimes one

would teach, at times both would teach. Irene Douglas was one of the students at that school. She's still alive today. There was another little addition, smaller than the school itself, which was the teachers' quarters. When they moved down here to Shungnak they moved that school building too. They took it apart--that was easy because its made of logs--and they set it up again here. At that time the teachers' quarters was attached to the school itself. Later they built them another log cabin outside of the school.

Along the years I got old enough so when my mother made a snare for me I could snare rabbits and ptarmigans. So I was helping my parents by doing this. Besides the snares I had my bow and arrow and I also got rabbits and ptarmigan with that. A long time ago, and even today, you give your first catch to an elderly person in the village. But at that time when I was a young boy we were away from people living by ourselves down there at that camp so I don't remember my father giving my catch to an old person because we were away from people.

Probably that same year, about springtime, I started trapping for muskrats by a lake down there by our camp area. I set my first trap then with my father's help in one of those lakes. At that time we had steel traps from the store. It was just the right size for muskrat. I set it up like my father said, right there where a muskrat usually comes and sits. After setting it there we went back in the trees and just waited until it came out and trapped itself. My father told me not to try and get that muskrat while its alive. You have to hit it first over the head with a stick. That was my first muskrat.

About that time I got my first rifle, a .22, an old one, but it could still shoot. At first I couldn't hit anything. One spring I went back to a lake and waited for duck. Finally I shot one. I stayed there all morning long. When I went back home my parents were still sleeping so I waited for them to wake up so they could see me coming home with a duck. When I realized they were sleeping I waited down there a little distance. I wanted to be sure they saw me carrying the duck along with the .22.

At that time those .22s were single shot. My father sent me out without any tool to extract the shell after I shot so most of the time I came home with nothing. And he sent me out with just that one shot so what I had to do each time was come home and take that empty shell out of there. That's why today I keep a bunch of .22s, automatics, that I can put as many shells in as I want. I always remember that first gun I used that had so much work to do on it.

My father made everything, snowshoes, sleds. As the years went by I started helping him make sleds and snowshoes and weaving part of the snowshoes. He showed me how. I can make all those



View of Shungnak from the Kobuk River, river in foreground. Kobuk District, Northern Alaska Region, Alaska. 1910. P. S. Smith. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver, Colorado.

That's the old Shungnak, what we call Kobuk now. That big building is the schoolhouse made of logs. Those poles in front are the swing. They moved that school house here to the new Shungnak. That two-story building on the left where the mountain comes down, that was Riley Jim's house. He had a store downstairs and he lived upstairs. There are two tents over to the left of that. That white thing just right of the school is a tent and right of that is Charlie Coffin's two room house. That's Charlie's boat down in front on the river bank.



Young Eskimos at the mission swing, Shungnak [now Kobuk]. Shungnak Quadrangle. Kobuk District, Northern Alaska Region. Around 1914. E. M. Eakin. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver, Colorado.

things right now. And boats too. I used to make real nice boats.

Our parents, when we first started weaving these things, had us unweave an old snowshoe so we'd learn how it comes apart. That's what they teach young women and young men first, unweave an old snowshoe. Then when a young person starts weaving there would be an old person that knows how to weave right beside you. And he would have a stick about a foot long or more and when you made a mistake while weaving he would rap you on the hand without saying anything. You realize you made a mistake and unwind your weaving and try to fix it. When you make another mistake he would hit your hand again without telling you to do this or that. You find out your mistakes yourself. When you're on the right track again he would put the stick down. We have Mens' Club meetings every year nowadays. When I tell these young boys we have today about the stick that they hit a person with when they made a mistake doing something they just laugh at me. They don't do that nowadays.

One thing my father never taught me to make was a log cabin, because my father died before we started making log cabins. But he showed me how to make a sod house. I can do that right now if the kids want to learn how. We had a log cabin that I built. When they started building them I learned how from other people.

I know how to make fish traps and a dam that you make across the river for sheefish. First cut down spruce trees that aren't too thick. Make tripods and put them in the river with two poles downstream and the third pointing upstream. Put all of them like



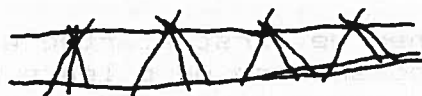
spruce
tripods in river

that across the river. Then chop down cottonwood trees, thick ones. Hammer the tripods down so they can stand even in swift current. Lay the cottonwood trees up against them horizontally.



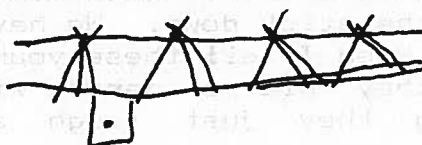
cottonwoods
set horizontally

Towards evening the sheefish come around, here's one right here.



sheefish
swimming
downstream

So you set your boat like this with the back end upstream over the dam. Stand here in back with a spear and put them in the



man ready
with fish
spear in
back of
boat

boat. The last time I saw one of these made was in 1927. That was the first year my wife and I were together. We didn't even have kids yet.

This is how you make a sheefish spear. Its called a kakiaq. You know those poles we had when we were boating? Like that only a little wider to fit your hand. There are two pieces of wood here on the sides and this sharp thing here is a knife. Attach sharp wires or something for hooks on these side pieces so when you spear a fish the spear won't come back out. These two side pieces are flexible. When you catch a fish you can just throw it in the boat, its easily unhooked. You stand a certain way.

fish spear



knife

wire hooks

First you try out your spear to the bottom of the river. Then when there's a sheefish you let go of the spear with your left hand and spear with only one hand, because if your holding it

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CHAPTER 4

GROWING UP

Now I will talk a little about my first experiences at work. In my first hunting days my father would follow me, like if we were hunting marten, when I was learning. Later on I went by myself backpacking.

We had only one set of dogs so if I wanted to trap for marten or mink, *tigiaqpak*, or fox, *kayuqtuk*, in the fall I would take a tent, stove and some food, enough for me for several months when I wanted to trap without going home all the time. I took everything out on the sled with the dogs to where I wanted my camp. After I set up camp I brought the dogs back because my father needed to use them at home. Then I would backpack out again and start trapping.

Come springtime I would walk home again and get the dogs and go back to get my camping gear and bring it home. I did this before I got my own dogs. After I got my own dogs it was easier. That's when I started going out to *Nunataaq*. I was married then and had two or three children at the time. When the children were small we took them with us out to *Nunataaq*. We'd leave in the fall and stay out there the whole winter and come back, probably in March.

When the children started schooling then I traveled twice. We all went out in the fall before school starts. Then I brought my children back home for school and went back out by myself. By that time I had eleven, twelve or thirteen dogs. While I was out there I would get caribou and sheep meat and bring it home for the children here in the village to eat while in school, then go back out there again. Later I didn't take the children out there at all because they had to be in school so much of the time. I only had to sleep overnight one time between here and *Nunataaq*.

My oldest daughter, Magdalene, was born out there in a place called *Aniyaak* on the *Nunataaq*. So she was raised up there as a small child. She liked that country and really longed to go back up there and see the place where she was raised. Now maybe she's forgetting about it. At least she's not talking about it like she used to.

I've gone out there and spent the whole year with people, elders born before me, and learned about the area from them. That's how I know that area out there. That's why white people

come to me and ask for advice about how to go about living out there.

I pretty much knew how to live on my own by the time I got married. When we got married in 1927 that was the last time we used those dams for sheefish. That's when I first started living with my wife's relatives. That following year was the first year I went out hunting with my wife. We went to Ivīsaq. At that time I had my own dogs and sled--my own hunting things. I trapped for lynx and fox. My wife likes to sleep, even to this day, and when I went out trapping she didn't even know when I went out. I'd go without breakfast, just drinking coffee. When the dogs were running out of food we came back to the village here. Laura's relatives, her brothers and sisters, asked her, "How did you do when you were out there? Did you know when your husband left for trapping?" And she said, "No, but when I got up I'd go out and see which way his tracks went." I always walked, I didn't take the dog sled, and she would look for the snowshoe tracks.

Its a very good land there at Ivīsaq. When your there you can eat porcupine. When I got a porcupine out there I would burn off the skin and quills so when I got home it would be ready to cook. During the winter we always burned them but in the summer they must be skinned because the quills are on the inside and burning the skin won't take them off. In spring the porcupines are pregnant. When we killed a female porcupine we took the fetus out, its real clean, not slimy or anything. A long time ago we would keep these little fetuses and take them home. When there's a family with a lot of girls, young girls, we would pull the front of the neck of her parka and let one of the little porcupines fall through, right against their skin, inside, fall right through. When that girl gets to child bearing age she will have an easy time delivering her baby. They say a porcupine doesn't have a hard time bearing babies so it will be the same with the girl. Susie's grandmother had this done to her.

When a porcupine has its baby she only stays with it a few hours, then just leaves the baby. The mother goes and gets one of those things that grow on birch trees, a cushion-like thing, we call them tunnuuraq. They kind of look like a pin cushion and they're soft when you pinch them. The mother gets one of those things from a birch tree and brings it back and leaves it for the baby porcupine to eat on. Then she leaves. The mother comes back once in a great while to check to see if that thing is gone and if it is she will get another one, then leave again.

So that's why they bring that little fetus home and do that to a girl. The girl won't have a hard time raising her child. Just like a porcupine, leave it a little food and it will bring itself up.

After we stayed at Ivissaaq that winter we went to that place called Kuugruaq, its a little this side of Selawik, in that area. There were other families too that went with us. That Kuugruaq River flows to the Selawik area. When we got done muskrat hunting at Kuugruaq we started backpacking along with this other couple. Our dogs backpacked too. We reached Sun Camp where my parents were at the mouth of the Uqquqik with all the muskrat skins. So we traveled to Kuugruaq with our dogs, backpacking. Two times we went to Kuugruaq the same way. Later on I built a raft at Kuugruaq. Then we rafted to Akuliigaq, called Selawik now. We left the raft there and went down to Kotzebue with the other people that had boats and then came back up here through the Kobuk River.

About 1937, after my son Darold was born, his mother was just backpacking him, that was the last time we went out to the Selawik River. Almost at the end of the Selawik River my brother, Patkurak, was spring camping so we stayed with them. After we stayed with my brother a while we all went to the village of Selawik. My brother had an outboard motor then, an Evinrude, so we attached it to the raft and went to Selawik. That was about the time my father died, two years after my mother died. From then on we didn't go out together. I would go out alone to hunt. About 1946 there were some guys up hunting at Nunataaq. I was up there but my wife was in Shungnak. Those guys came back to Shungnak and my wife told them to tell me to come and get her so she could spend some time with me up there. So we really stayed up there together for the last time in 1946. That's when our first grandchild was born, Ella, our oldest daughter Magdalene's daughter. She was born while we were out there. She's the same age as Susie, her uumaa, a female friend of the same age.

So From 1946 on my wife never followed me out there again. But I went out by myself 'till I was too old, 1964 or '65 was my last time trapping up there. That was the time I caught seven wolves. I shot four going together at one time and then I got three more. That was the last wolf I got. Some white guy came around here once counting, trying to see how many wolves I caught. I counted over one hundred, all those years I was hunting wolf along with the pups.

Its easy to get those wolf pups. When you spot a mother wolf you wait from a distance. She's coming home to her pups. Wait 'till the mother gets home to the den. After its been in there for a while it will come out. Then you shoot the mother outside of the den. After you kill the mother wolf you can go there by the den and the pups will come out, one by one, or all at one time. I usually carried a pistol with me. Every time a pup comes out I would shoot it with that .22 pistol. There's always three or four pups. They would be about so high, a foot or so, just like little dog pups. Whenever a pup's coming out he would just look at you from head to toe. They wouldn't try to run away

at that age so you just shoot them right there. There was a bounty on them at that time.

They took these little wolf pups for pets a long time ago. My grandmother's older brother, **Matuligauraq**, had two of them once. He got two wolf pups, one male and one female, for pets. That's what my grandmother used to say. When they had those wolf pups for pets, of course, they knew how old those pups are from when they were born. Those people a long time ago could tell. You wait for the mother to come home, watching the den from a little distance. After the mother goes in there you get up and go in, follow the mother wolf into its den. The entrance to a wolf den is wide so a person could easily get inside. When the mother gets in there she lays down feeding her babies. The mother doesn't fight when you're inside the den with her and you can feel these little pups, whether they are female or male, and choose a female or a male pup for your pet. You can take them away from the mother, it won't fight back. The mother is more dangerous if you take the babies away from her while she's gone. The mother wolf will look for that person because she misses one or two of her pups. So it's better to take them while she's there in the den with her babies. That's what they used to say anyway, but I don't think I would ever go inside a wolf den!

When raising these little wolf pups the villagers there have to bring something to feed them to the pet owner. If they don't those little wolves won't do well. Everybody has to give food to those pups.

That is how they raised them. In the falltime we call that period **aagruk** when two certain stars appear in the sky. The bottom star is bigger, the top one is smaller. When you're keeping those pets you watch these two stars, October, November, December. When it becomes early winter they no longer watch these two stars, they start looking for these other two called **aagrutchaak**, near the month of January. Before the year's end when the days get shorter the **aagrutchaak** would appear. Then the owner of the wolf pups would kill them. Then they use those skins for ruffs. It's the same thing with wolverine, lynx, all those fur skins--that's the time the fur is really good and it's limited to January. After January the skins start to discolor and thin out. If you want good skins try to get them by January, they're thick and long and beautiful. Starting in February and in March and April wolverine hair has split ends and the skin doesn't look very good and the wolf skin is fading, turning white. Same with the fox.

So they would quit watching the **aagruk** and begin looking for the **aagrutchaak**. When we started spending winters down that way, anywhere, my grandmother would go outside early in the morning when there were no clouds in the sky and start watching for the **aagrutchaak**. These two stars are talked about even in Kotzebue.

But nobody watches anymore, nobody watches **aagrutchaak** anymore. They use the calender you see. The reason those fellas used to watch them is because that's the time the days start to get longer. Just when the days start to get longer the **aagrutchaak** come. The old ones are way up but the **aagrutchaak** come up with the daylight. But you can get the same thing from the calender now.

Once, when I spoke about these stars **Uyaan** helped me. He said his grandfather, **Nasruk**, used to tell him about those stars too. **Uyaan** said I talked about the stars with complete accuracy. He said **Nasruk** said the same things about the stars. **Nasruk** is like me, he knows a lot because he grew up with his grandfather when his parents died.

Just this last spring, in April, (1984) we had an Eskimo Day and we talked it over what we were going to do. So we decided to take the high school kids out with six snowgoes. I went and Levi and Walter Douglas, and a lot of the young fellas. We went over toward Kugruaq to look for porcupine. They wanted to know how to burn them, how to fix them when they catch them. And also they wanted to know how to make camp in the winter with the tree boughs. We were lucky, we found a female porcupine with a young one inside. We let one of those school kids kill that porcupine; showed him how. Then I burned it, and those kids were all around. Then after I burned it I skinned it and took the guts out. We tried to do like they used to. Before the porcupine is dead take a sharp stick and put it down the mouth and try to get the heart, make it bleed inside. Then after I cut it and took the guts out and the young one, then I cut the chest and opened up that blood inside. Then I took a handful of that blood and ate it. That's the way we used to do. Then I told them, "That's the way the old people used to do. If you fellas want to try it, go ahead, because we burned it and that blood is cooked." They all came in and cleaned it up.

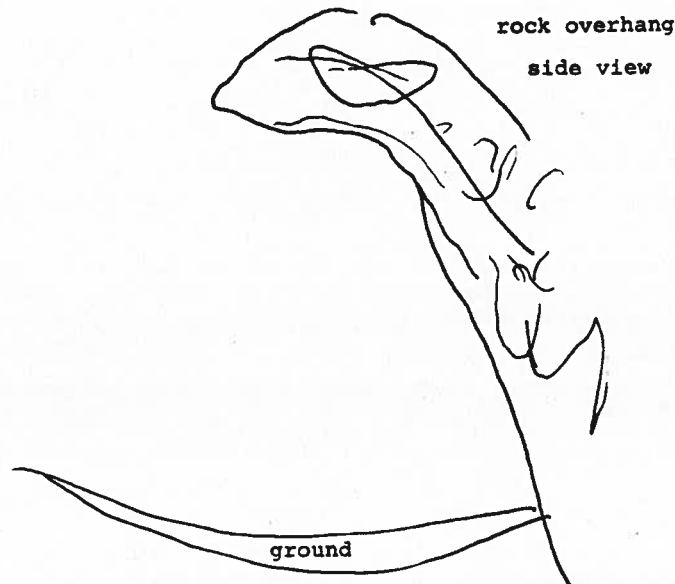
After that I took that young one and cleaned it off a little bit. There were a lot of girls you see and I showed them how they used to do long ago, headfirst down the outside parka, not inside. Then I told them, "that's what they used to do long ago. When a girl gets married and has a baby there's no trouble, the baby comes right out all the time. That's like the porcupine; when they have a baby they never have any trouble at all. So if you girls want to do it without us seeing you go someplace and do that. If you don't want to you don't have to." But all of them went over. We never looked but one of those boys watched them. Then after we came home he came and told me. He said all those girls did that. I told them to take that young porcupine home and then one of them could tell all the girls how they used to do. "But don't play with it. After you get through just throw it away." I don't know what they did.

CHAPTER 5

LIVING AT NUNATAAQ

Houses and Shelters

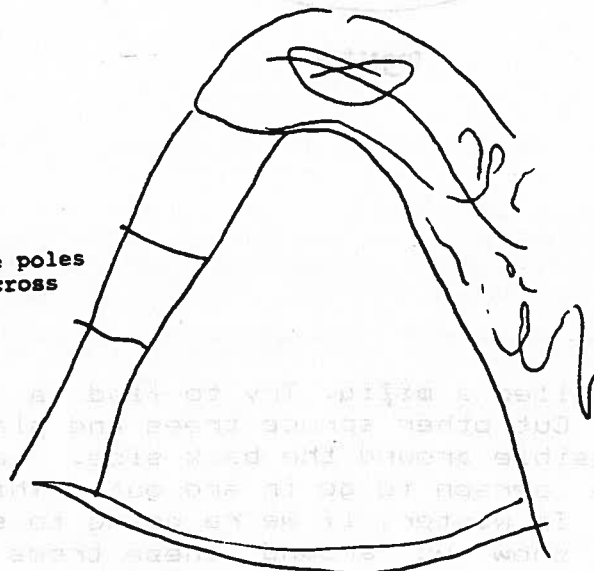
I'm going to start out with the houses and shelters we had when we went out to Nunataaq. Out in Nunataaq we made shelter places under rock overhangs. This is how the rock looks and this is flat land. This is what we used long ago before canvasses or tarps or those things came along. When a rock is shorter going this way we use poles that way, tying them this way too. We also chopped down trees with a lot of leaves and put them upside down -- top down here and root part up here. When there are a lot of leaves the rain doesn't go through it just slides down the leaves. This shelter is called a **qanattaq**.



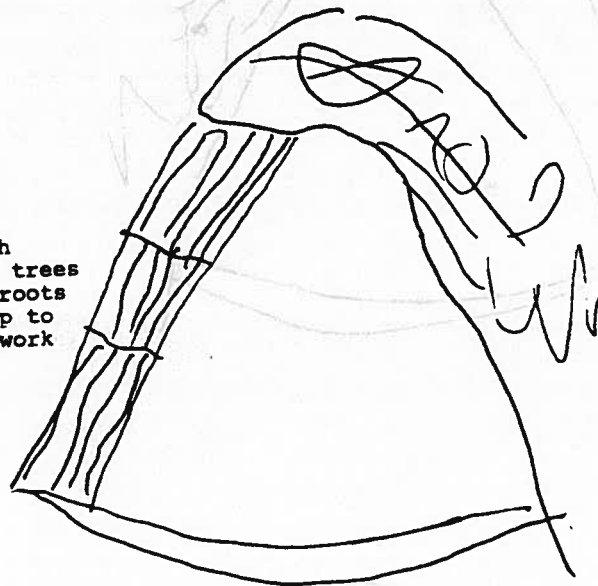
stand up
poles



tie poles
across



attach
leafy trees
with roots
end up to
framework

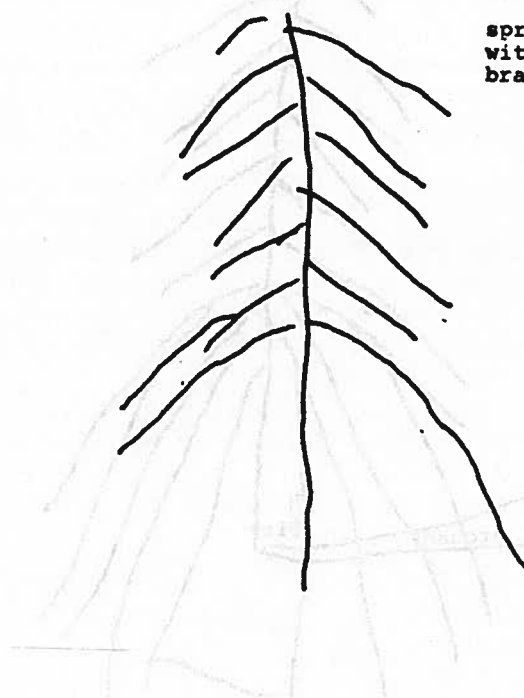


Qaqattaq

This one is called a **miĭiq**. Try to find a tree like this with long branches. Cut other spruce trees and place them upside down as close as possible around the back side. Leave a small opening like this for a person to go in and out. This is used in summer and in winter. In winter, if we're going to stay here for a long time, we put snow up around these trees like sod for a sod house. We try to find sloping ground so the fire is made kind of above us. But in the **qaqattaq** you can have the fire almost anyplace, even outside. So these are the two kinds we used when we went to the **Nunataaq**. That **miĭiq** is what Walter Douglas made when he got in trouble out there. The one I just told you about. Put snow up around it and its good, better than a tent if

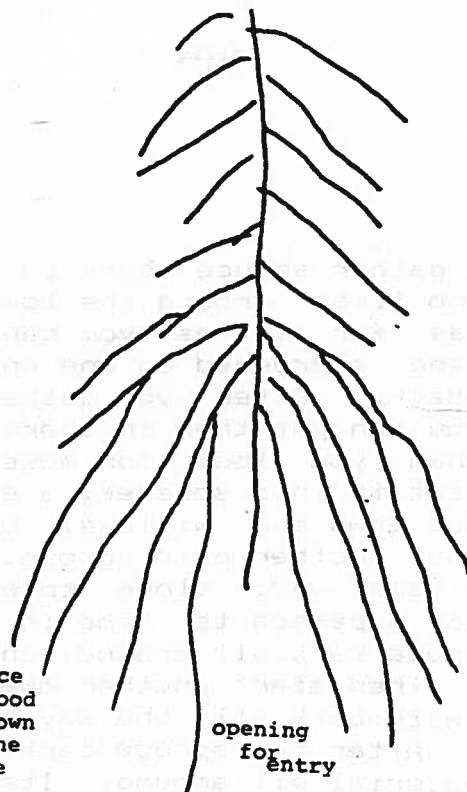
you don't have a stove.

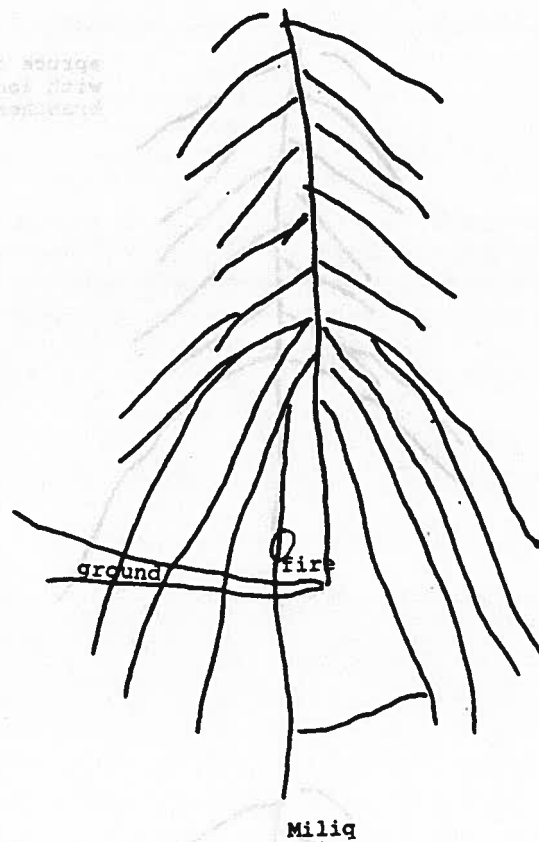
spruce tree
with long
branches



cut spruce
trees stood
upside down
around the
back side

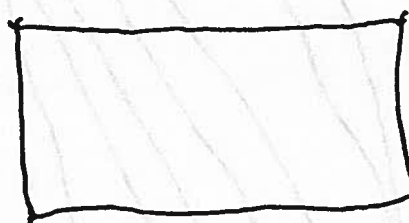
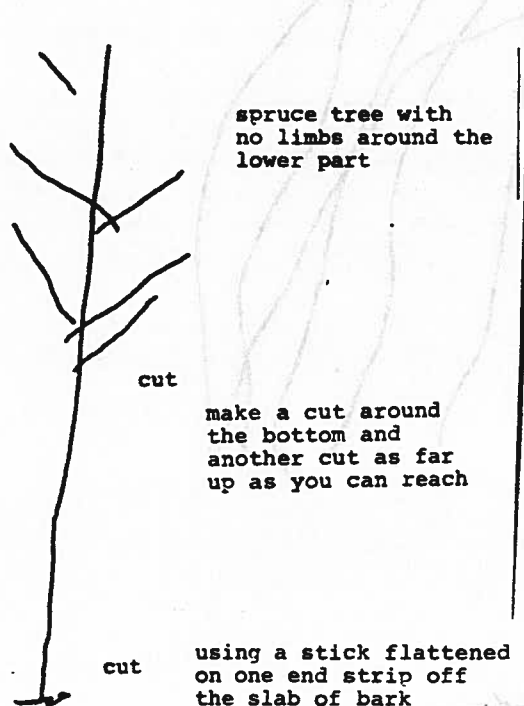
opening
for
entry



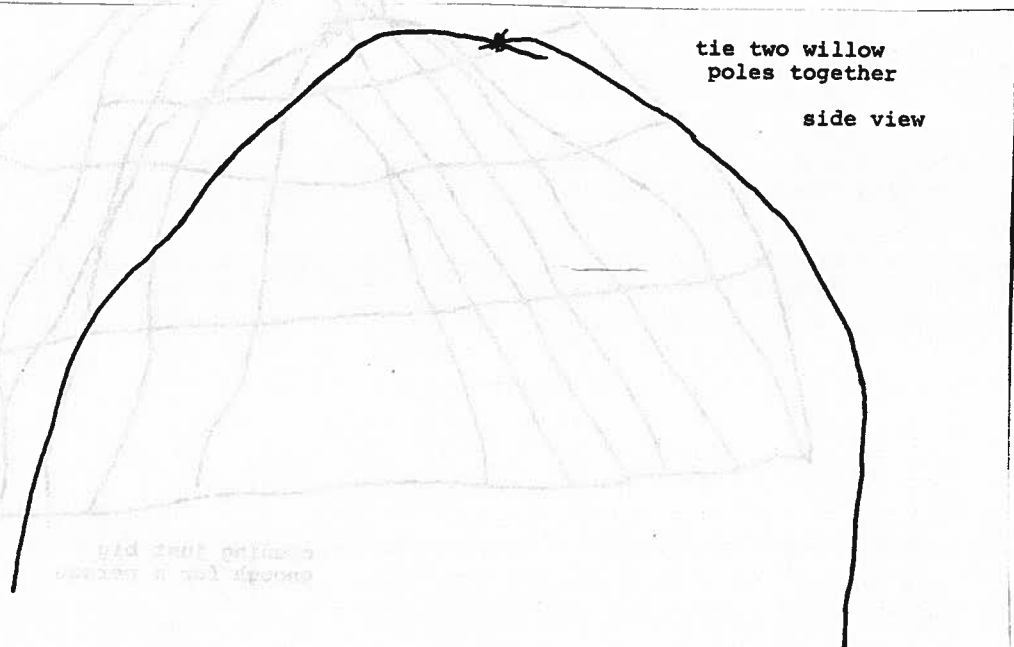


This is how you gather spruce bark in the summer time. Try to find a tree with no limbs around the lower part. Cut around the bottom and again as far up as you can reach. Take a stick of wood, flattened and sharpened on one end, and use this to strip off the slab of bark. After you gather all those barks dig in the ground so you can put them in there and cover them so they won't dry out. Then you look for moss, the kind that grows on sandy banks, and cut it into squares, a size you can carry, and stack them up. Cut down two willows. One goes this way and the other that way. Put another pair across. Then frame all around with willows, the same way, close together. Leave a little opening, enough for a person to come in and out. Start from the bottom and put spruce bark all around, and these willows, frames, going across too. Then start another one above, overlapping all around. Do that with bark all the way up leaving an opening for a window up here. After the spruce bark then start piling up the sliced up mossy material all around. Its rain proof. Rain won't go in this sod house and you can use it as long as you want, just

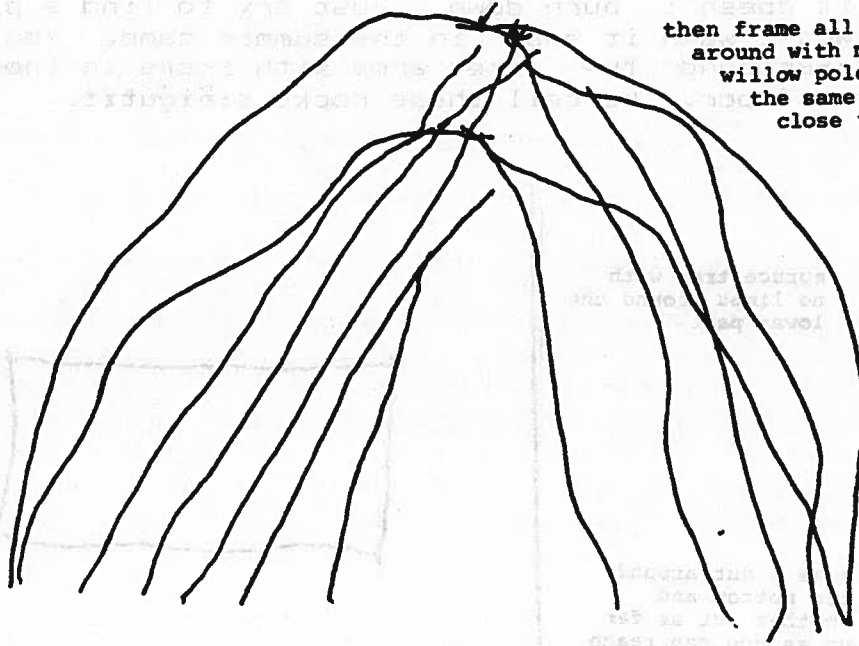
so long as it doesn't burn down. Just try to find a place where the floods won't wash it away in the summer camp. You call this auriviuraq. Surround the fire area with rocks in the middle of the sod house floor. We call these rocks siñigutit.



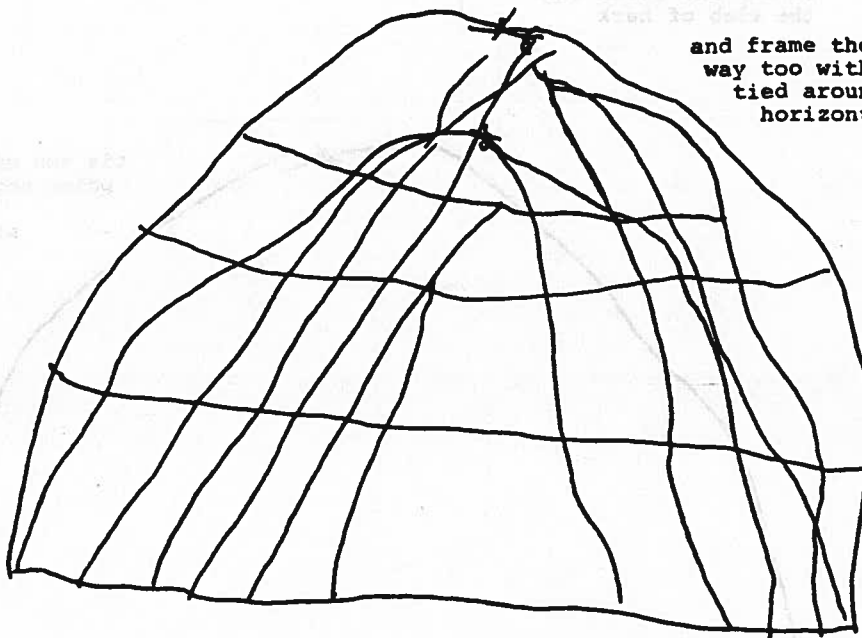
bark slab
bury in ground
so they won't
dry out



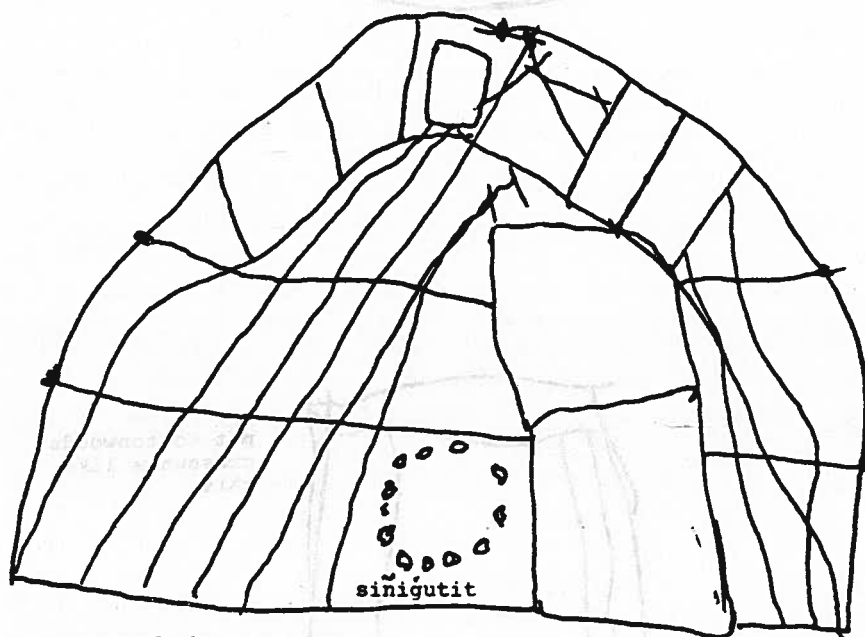
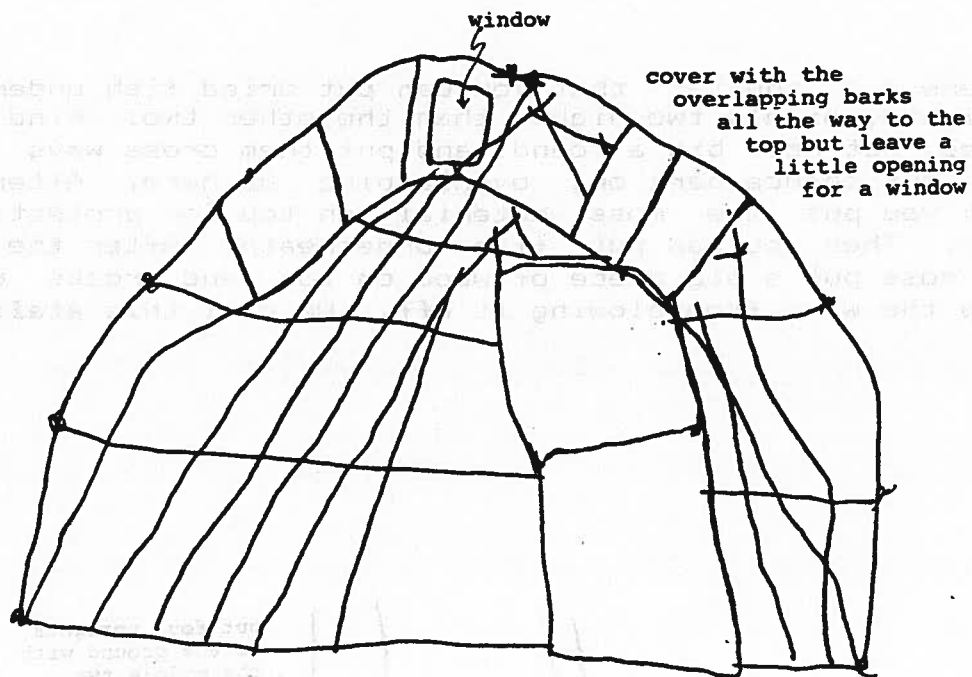
then frame all
around with more
willow poles
the same way,
close together



and frame the other
way too with poles
tied around
horizontally



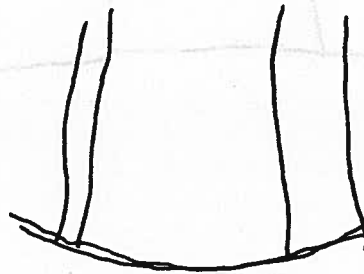
opening just big
enough for a person



surround the fire area
in the middle of the
floor with rocks

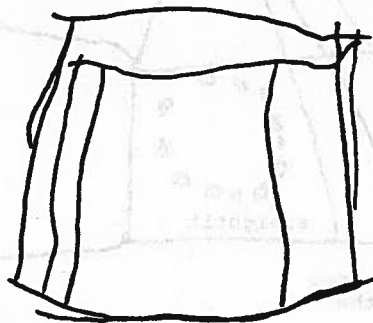
Auriviuraq

Here's a shelter that you can put dried fish under. Put four uprights, middle two higher than the other two. Find cottonwood trees, not real big a round, and put them cross ways like this. Then put spruce bark on, overlapping up here. After the spruce bark you put the moss material on top for protection from the rain. Then you can put fish underneath. After the spruce bark and moss put a big piece of wood on top and rocks with sand to keep the wind from blowing it off. We call this *atałisaǵviich*.

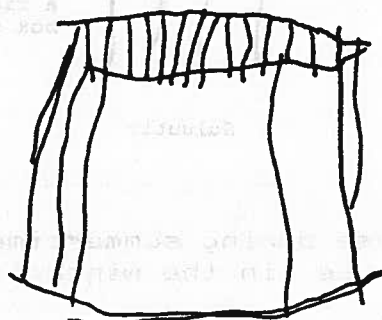


put four uprights
in the ground with
the middle two
higher than the other
two

side view



put cottonwoods
crossways like
this



put overlapping
spruce barks
across the top

Atalisagviich

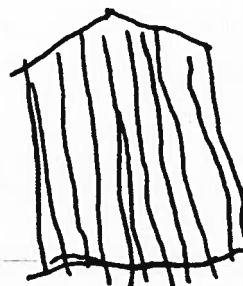
We also make shelters like this one out of cottonwood trees, not too thick. After you make a frame like this you start putting the cottonwood on like this, close together. Then put spruce bark on top -- up there, not down here -- just leave the poles like this so the wind can get through. You store food in there. You call this *saiyut*. So you put all the fish away in here that you were drying over there in the *atalisagviich*. All these you use in your fish camp.



cottonwood
framework

side view

top covered
with spruce
barks



sides of upright
cottonwoods stood
close together

Saiyut

SuYuutit is where you put away the green fish. Stand up four poles, not so long. Then make a little box, only so high, about a foot and a half, and that's where you store the green fish.

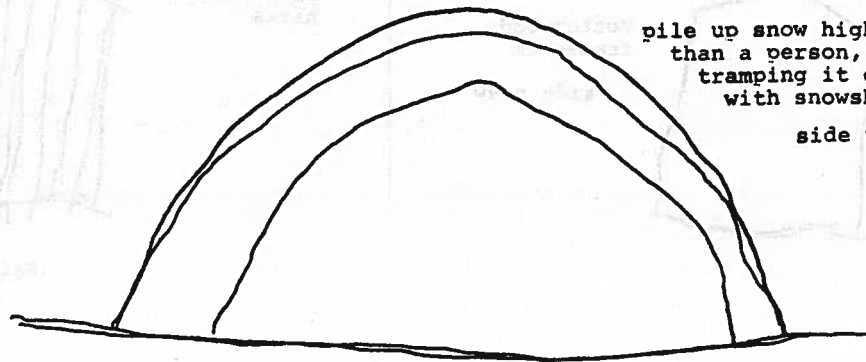


stand up four
poles to make
a rack to store
box of green fish

Suluutit

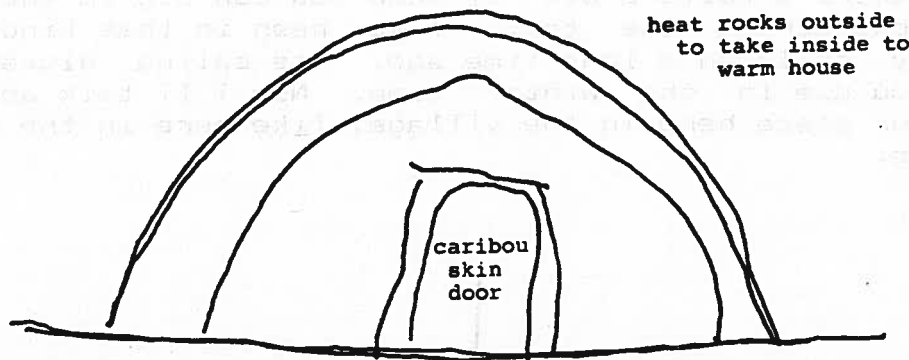
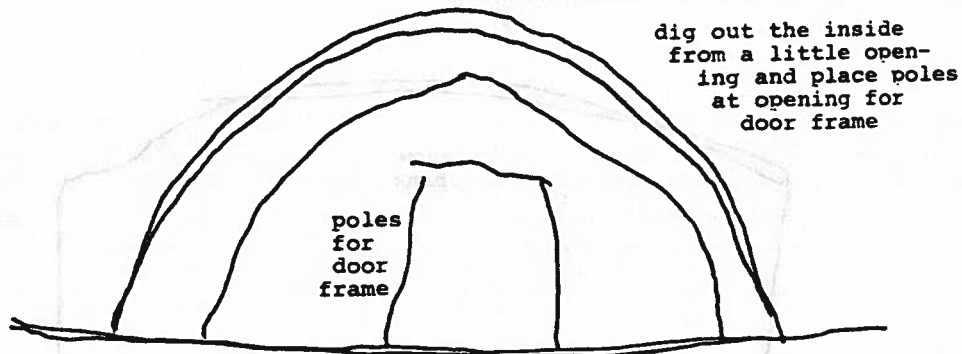
These are what you use during summertime. Now I'm going to talk about shelters we use in the wintertime when hunting, when its cold.

A whole family can live in this kind. Start piling snow on the ground and make it high enough so a person can stand inside. Put on snow shoes while piling it and keep tramping it down. After you're done let it stand a while without touching it. Then start from a little opening, the doorway, and dig out the inside. Put two wood poles up like this with another one across the top. Then put a caribou skin on it. Don't put any window in it, it would just fall apart. You have your fire for cooking outside so it won't melt. Then you heat these three rocks, small boulders, just big enough to handle. Heat them red hot and put them in the house in the evenings. The snow around the top inside kind of melts but it turns to ice. We call this shelter **aniyyityaq**.

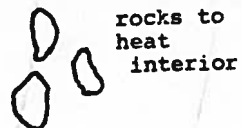


pile up snow higher
than a person,
tramping it down
with snowshoes

side view

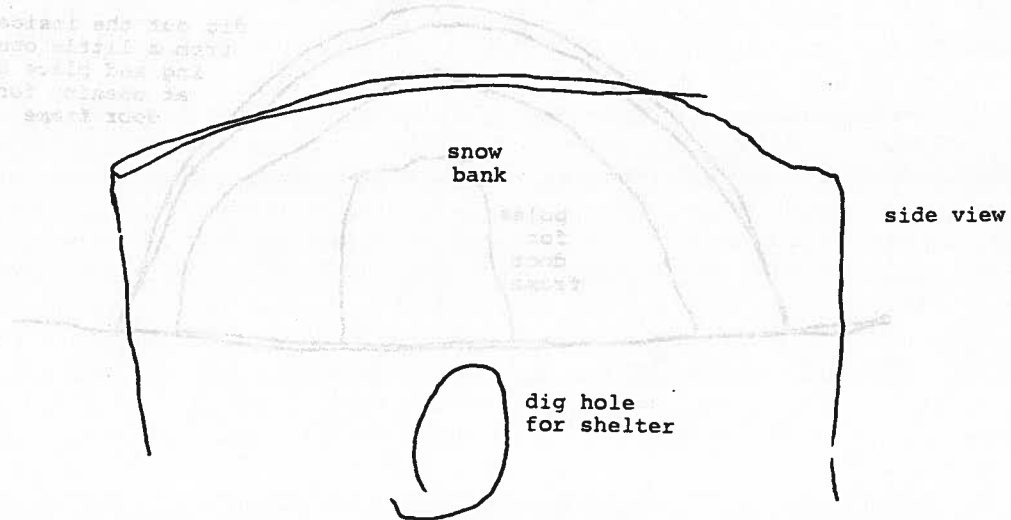


fire out
here



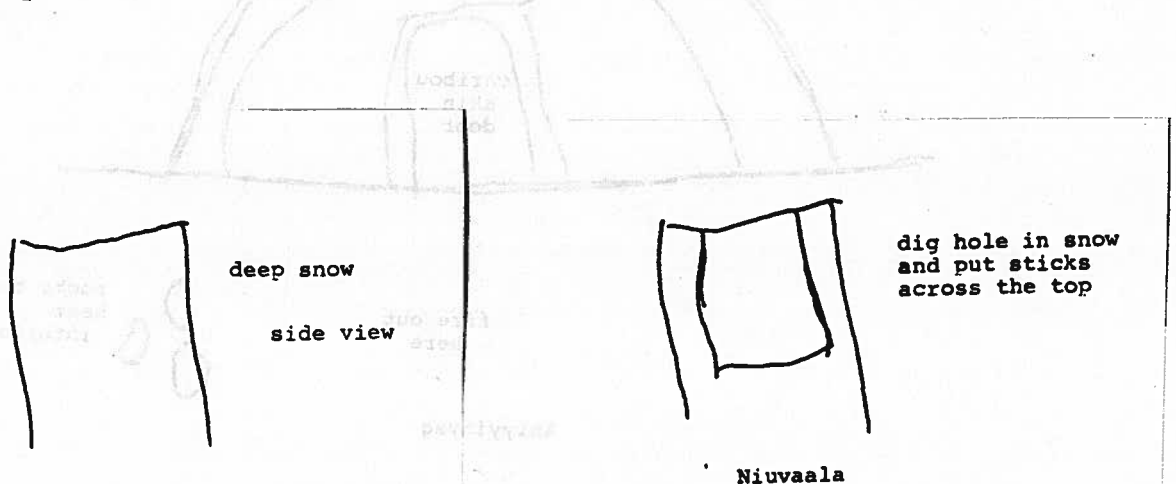
Aniyyityaq

When you're storm bound out someplace and can't get home just dig a hole in a snow bank. I've been out and had to do that before. But you can't have a fire in there. We call it *kayuqtum sisaa*. Its still in use today.



Kayuqtum Sisaa

When there's quite a bit of snow you can dig in the ground and put sticks across the top. I've been in that kind of shelter with my children a long time ago. Its called *niuvaala*. These three you use in the winter time. Now I'll talk about how you make your place here in the village, like here in the winter time long ago.



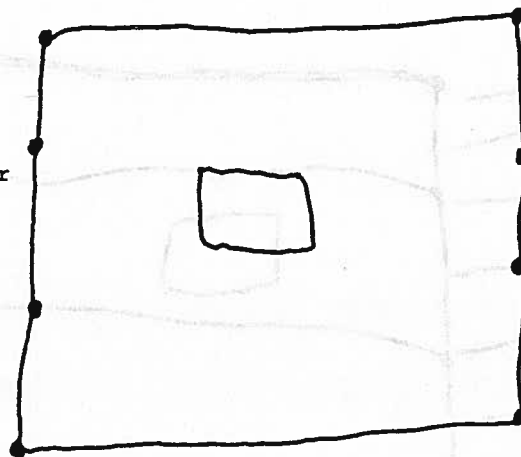
Try to find a mossy area and dig around it, but not in the middle. Put in four poles maybe four feet high all around after digging out, not the middle part though. Then put four more poles here in the middle -- these are taller than the ones on the side -- and then put these pieces across the top. Then put wood all around, upright, not straight but slanting in. Then put poles again that way with cross pieces in the middle and a window, a sky light, right there in the middle. After you put the poles all around and on top then start putting moss, about so thick, three to four inches, all around. The dirt or sand that you dug out all around at first you put on top. The fireplace is surrounded by rocks. You call the fireplace *aḡrautaa*. You also dig an area out here for the storm shed so when you're going out you step down. Put up a brown bear skin for the door. When you go in the skin flaps right back into place. The entry into the house you call *nuiyaḡiik*. The storm shed you call *katak*, the area where you step down. This winter house is called an *ivruḷik*.

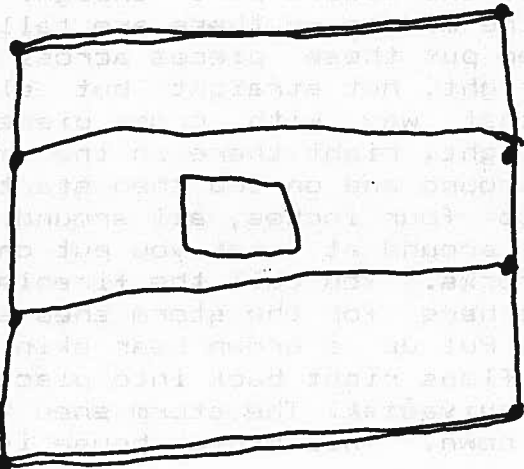
four corner
posts about
four feet high

center posts
a little higher

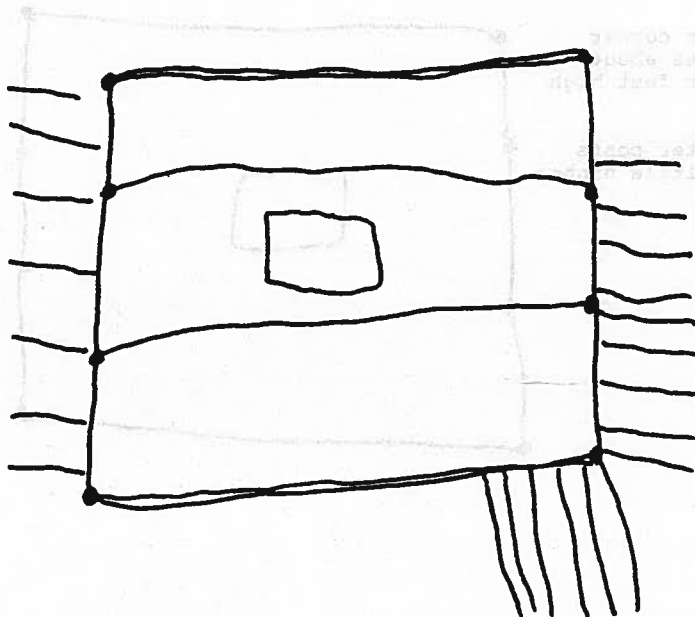
excavated
square with
unexcavated
block in
the center

top view

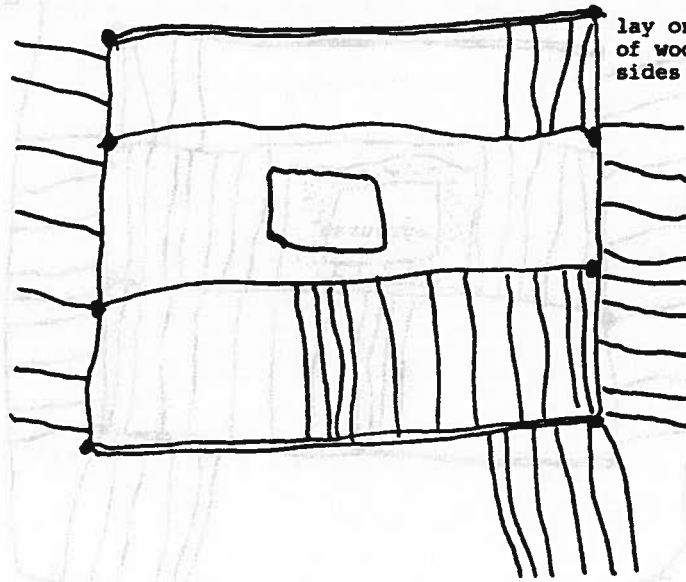




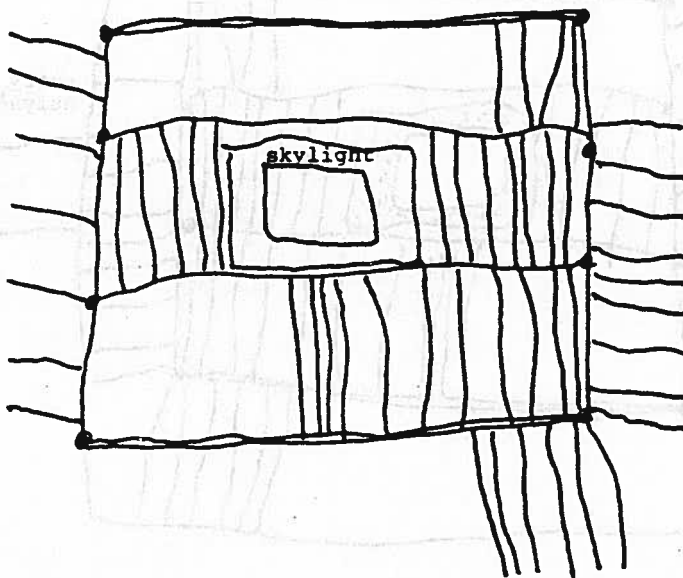
lay poles
across the
tops of the
posts



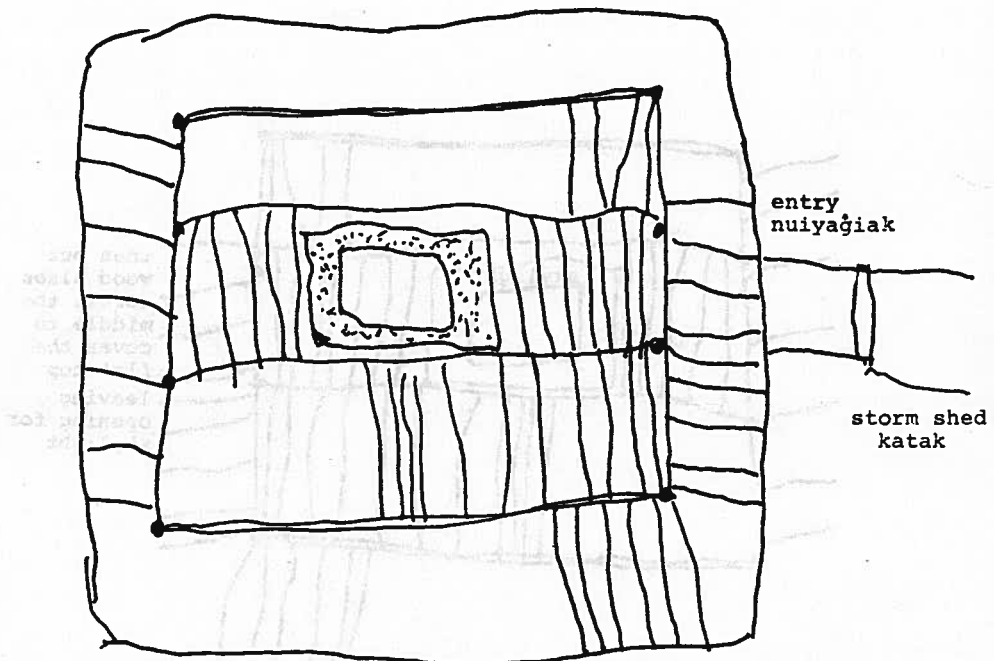
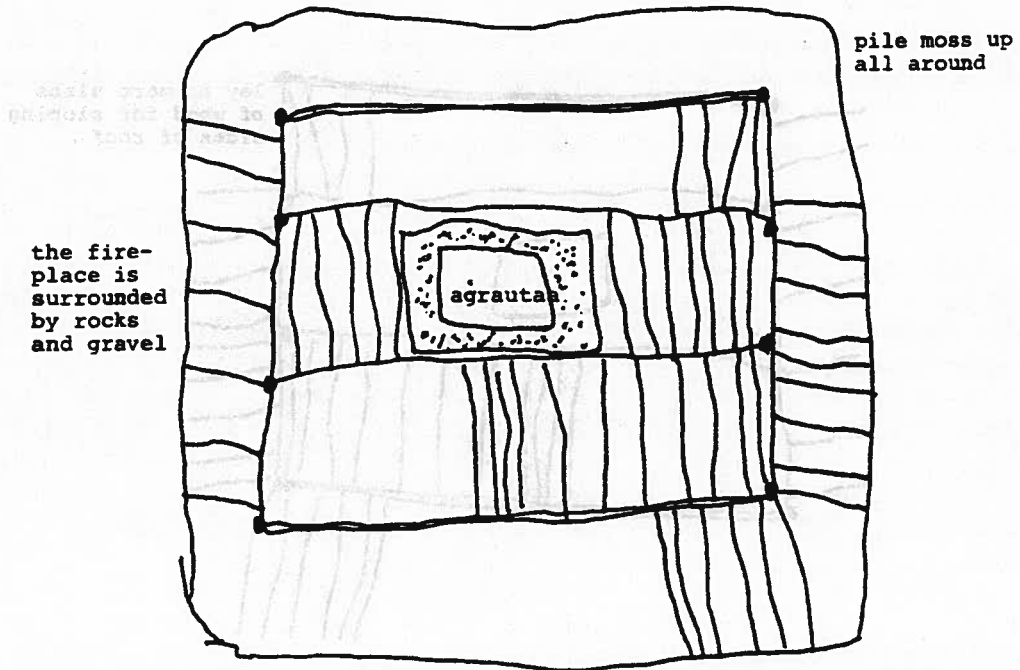
stand slabs
of wood slanted
in all around
for walls



lay on more slabs
of wood for sloping
sides of roof



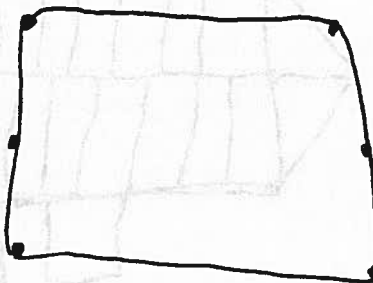
then put
wood slabs
across the
middle to
cover the
flat top
leaving
opening for
skylight



Ivrulik

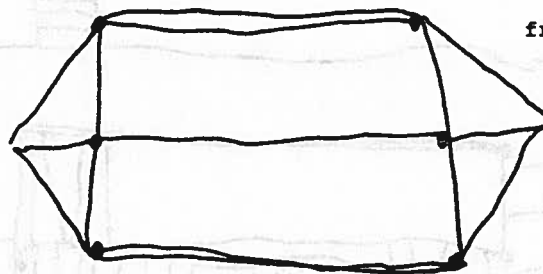
Now for this one you also dig all around, way down into the ground. Put four poles at the corners and two in the middle and start framing it with wood. Also dig a little place out here into the ground so you can go down and step into that food

four posts at
corners
and
two posts in
the middle

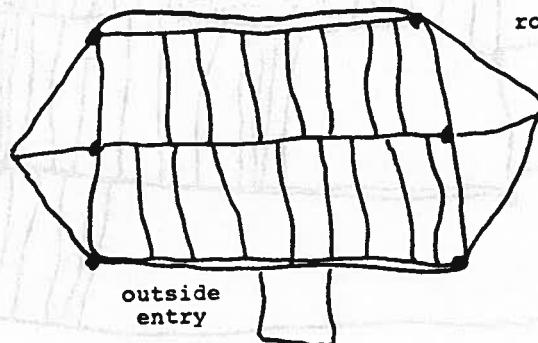


excavated area

top view



frame with wood



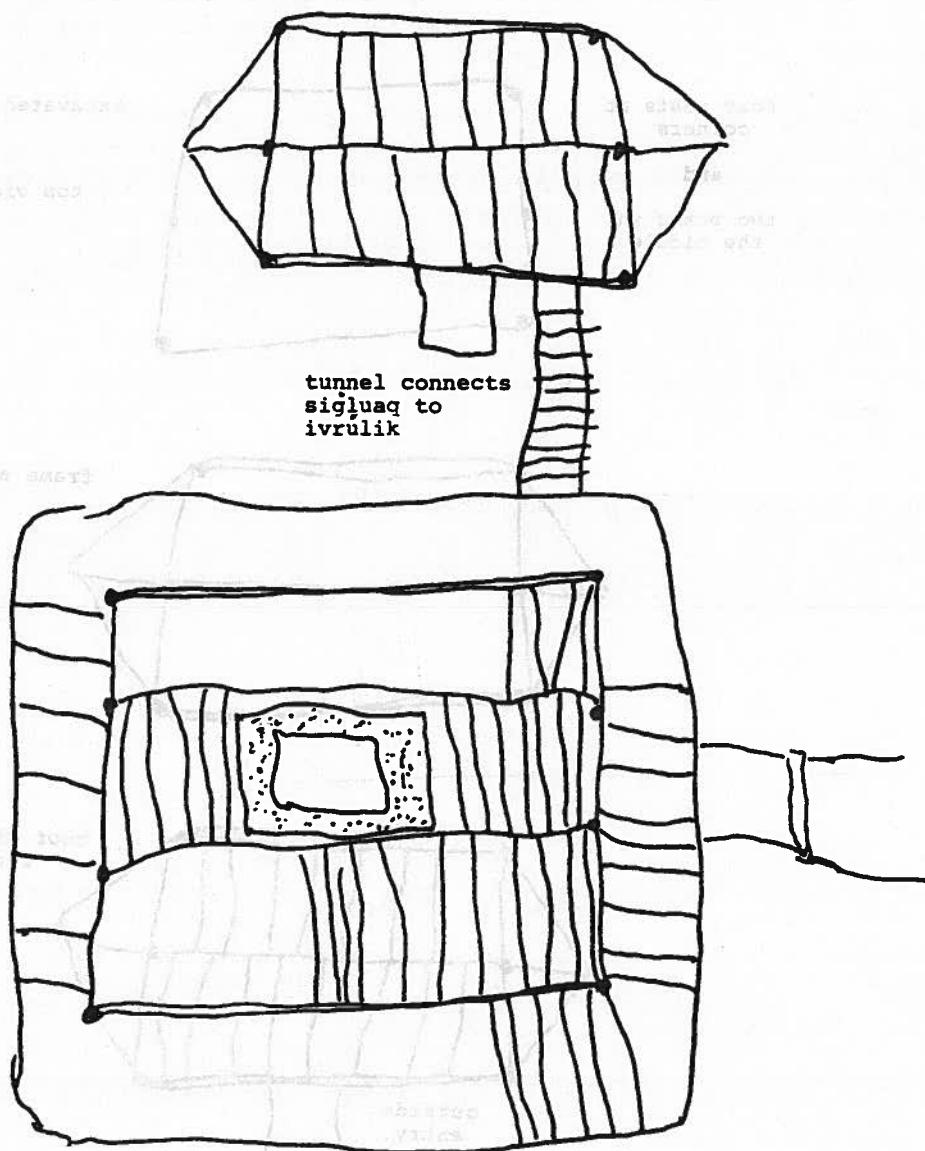
roof with wood
slabs

outside
entry

Sigluag

storage place. Put cross pieces like that. Cut out a little hole for an air vent some place on top. Its also covered with moss and then with sand on top. When you put frozen food in here it stays frozen even in the summer time because its dug real deep. Also you split wood in slabs and stand it all around inside of there. We call this a sigluag.

We also dig an underground tunnel from the house to the *sigluag* and frame it with wood too. This is to protect us when under



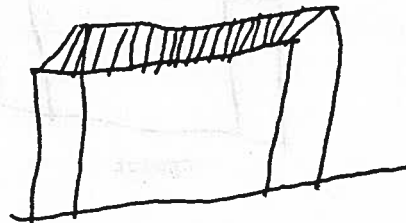
attack -- we can get to the food without going outside. The enemy never came into the houses, they always waited for someone to come out.

Then this one. Put up four poles at the corners and two pieces across each end. Then put cross pieces close together so even a mouse can't get in the cache. Its built like a little log cabin on top. Just before you enter the cache there's a platform and a ladder. You use overlapping spruce bark again for the roofing. You call these upalut. You can cache dried skins and whatever other stuff you have in there.

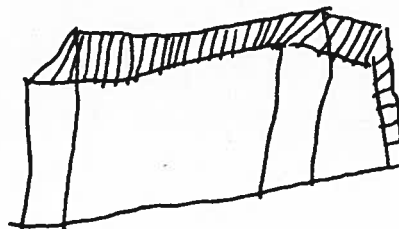


stand up four
poles for the
corners

side view



place cross pieces
close together for
a platform



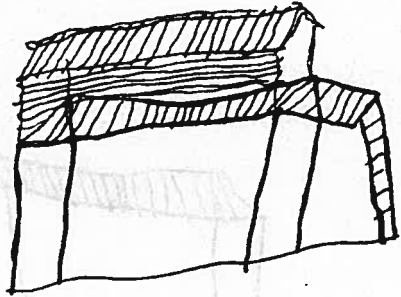
extend platform
and put up a
ladder

Then take one, put up four poles at the corners and two poles across each end. Then lay cross timbers close together as given a house can be set in the bays. The built house is illustrated above on top. Just before you enter the cabin there is a platform and a ladder. You use overlapping barks back again for the roofing. You call these upslut. You can make three shifts and whatever other shifts you have in there.

upslut
roof of
house
the
barks

roof of
overlapping
barks

build small
log cabin on
top of platform



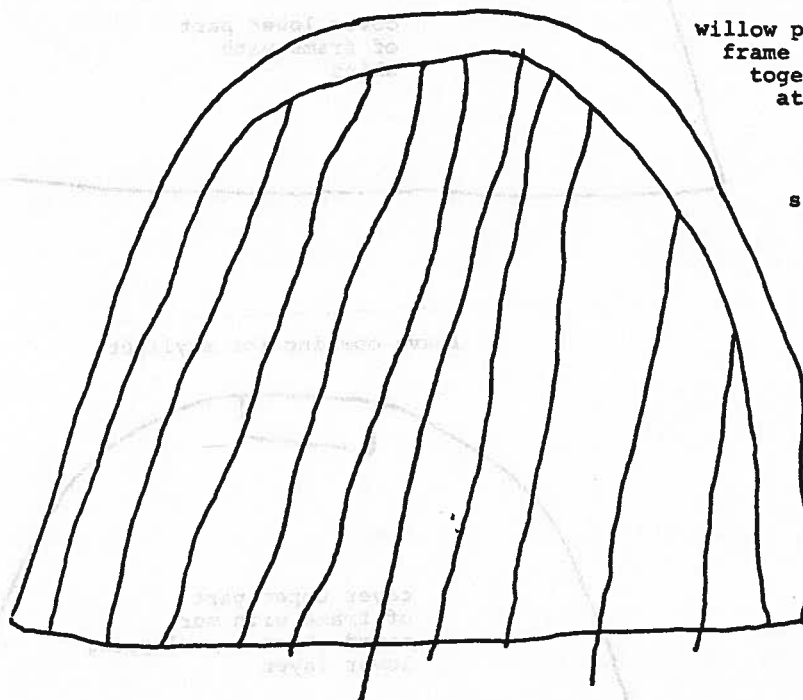
Ugalut

place cross timbers
close together for
a platform



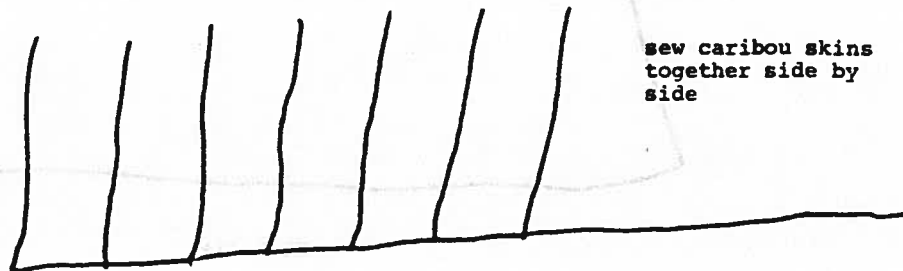
platform
upslut
barks

Then there is another shelter. Cut long willow trees. Its a round shelter. This is the frame. We take these poles with us whenever we're traveling. This shelter you use with caribou skins. Sew them side by side, six skins. Go all around with them. Then another layer overlapping. On top leave a hole for a window. These days, when there are tarps and canvasses, you can use them instead of skins to cover the frame. We call this one *itchalik*. The frame is tied together at the top. So when we're leaving we take all the frames, untie them, put them on the sled, and take the skins along too. I missed that one a while ago when I was talking about shelters.

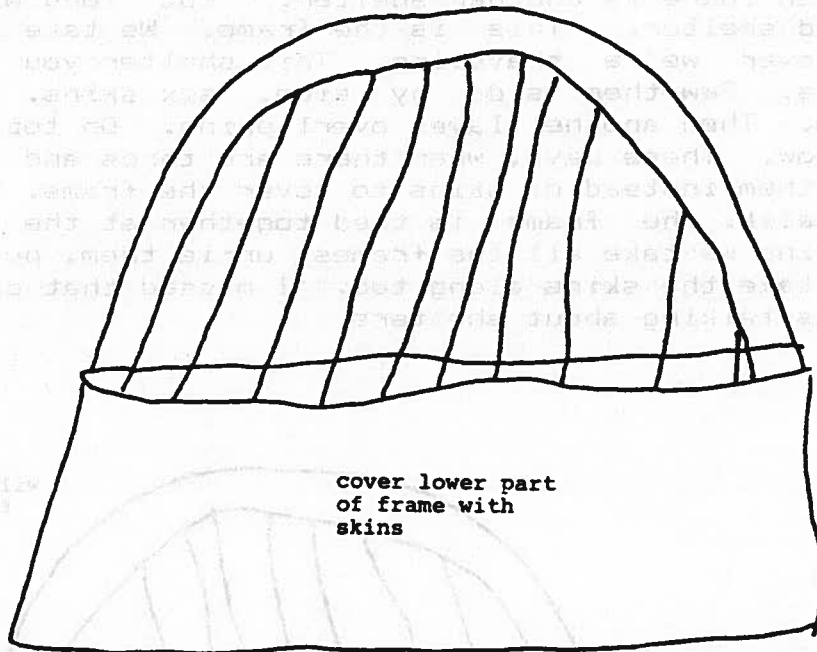


willow pole
frame tied
together
at the
top

side view

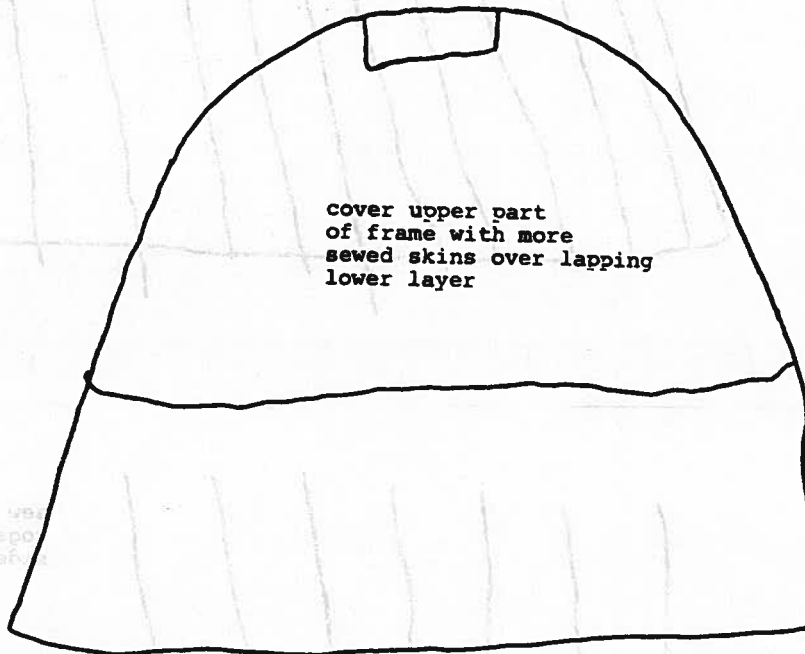


sew caribou skins
together side by
side



cover lower part
of frame with
skins

leave opening for skylight



cover upper part
of frame with more
sewed skins over lapping
lower layer

Itchalik

When you're traveling you try to find a sloping area like this with spruce trees. Dig into the ground through the snow. Chop down little spruce trees laying them down around here and then across here too. When you build a fire right here the smoke will go towards you if you don't put trees here. The spruce trees you put here are called **akiqutit**. The ones you put around are **killiqtutit**. A long time ago when they're teaching a young man how to go out hunting they usually let him stay right here at the end of the semi-circle. Here's the fireplace and poles going that way so that boy sleeps right here so he will be quick about everything he does, without hesitation. He can run real fast. You can chop real thick trees for wood and put it right on the fire without splitting it. Its real warm in there.



lay spruce
trees around
here

top view

pile more
spruce trees
across the
front here

opening straight through

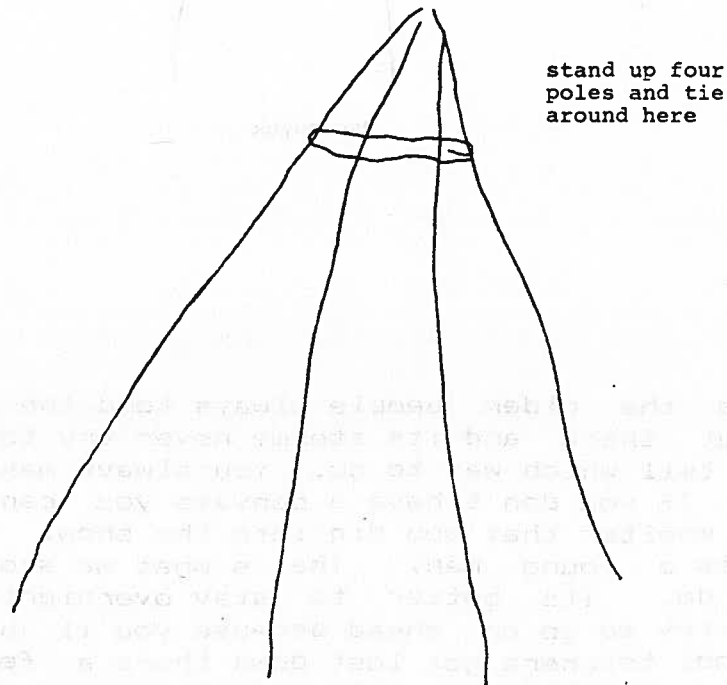
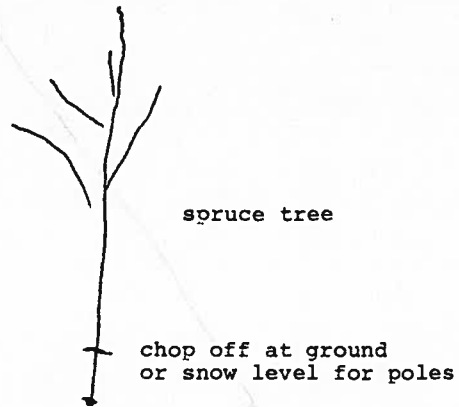
akiŋugutit

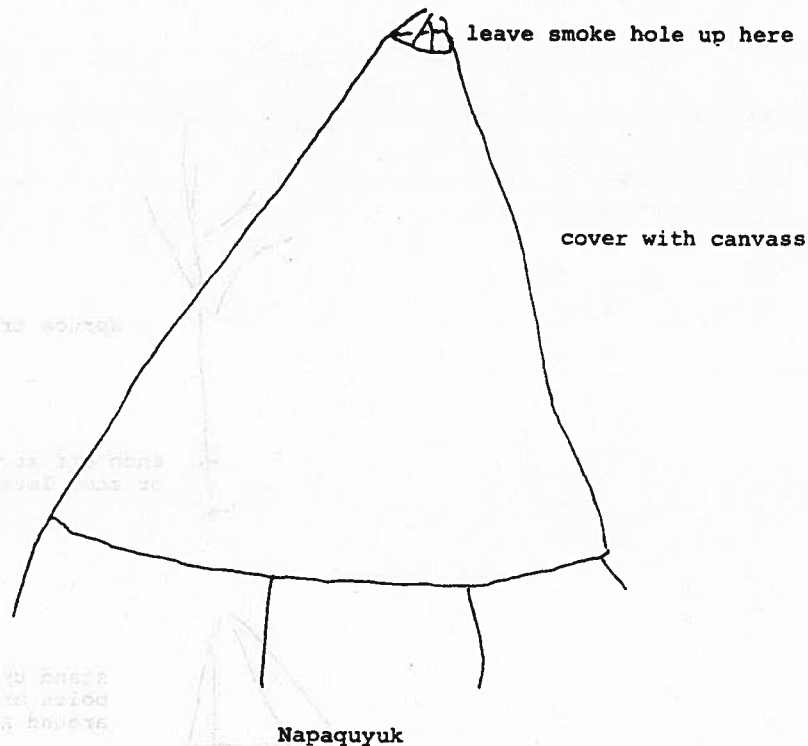
fire

boy sleeps here

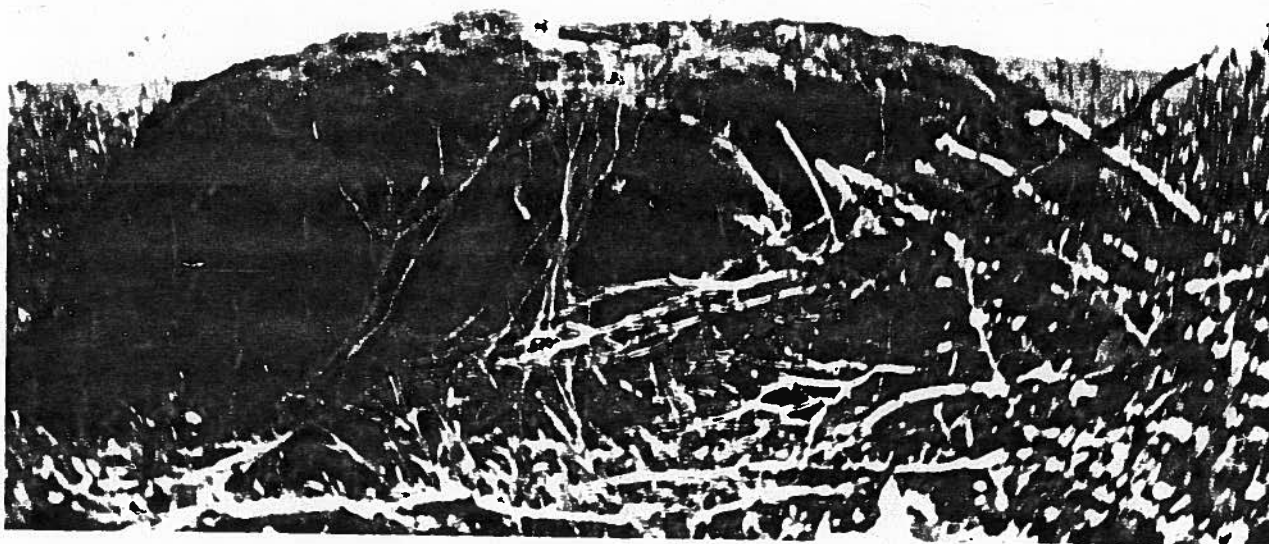
killigutit

Here's another one I've used a lot of times when I'm storm bound. Its called **napaquyuk**. Chop down four spruce trees and make four poles. Stand them up and tie them at the top. Then put a canvass around and leave an open area at the top for the smoke to go out.





Long ago the older people always told the younger ones, when they're out there and its stormy never try to come home because you can't tell which way to go. You always make a shelter like this one. If you don't have a canvass you can use that other type of shelter that you dig into the snow. I've heard that since I was a young man. That's what we should tell our young people to do. Its better to stay overnight in a shelter like this than try to go on ahead because you'll just get lost. When those school teachers got lost down there a few years ago they had canvass with them but they just covered themselves with it, not making a shelter. But anyway it was good for them not to try to travel. They got home the next morning. They were on snow machines. This finishes houses and shelters. Now I will talk about dogs and harnesses.

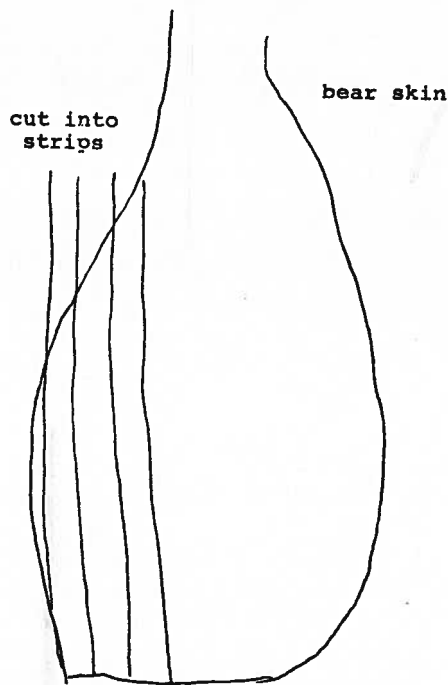


Sod igloo. Noatak District, Northern Alaska Region, Alaska. August 13, 1911. P. S. Smith. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver, Colorado.

Those Noatak people made those even in winter using bent over willows and covered them with moss. They didn't throw any dirt on top. When they wanted to build one of those they looked around for a place with good moss. They call that one *ivrufigauraq*. They used to say those people from around Wainwright (on the arctic coast), we call them *Utokokmiut*, they came up carrying those willows all the time on the sled. And if they didn't have caribou skins they covered them like that. Lot of work but they knew how to fix it. One time when my wife and I went out from here we had three kids and we used one of those. But it was somebody elses and we fixed it over. That was inside of Midas Creek at Nunataaq.

Dogs and Harnesses

Here I'm drawing a bear skin. Start stripping the skin with the hair on. You use these strips for the dogs' collars. You make rope out of the bear skin too, but then you scrape the hair off. The ropes are used if you don't have chains to tie them up. When you have a dog that always bites his rope you use a



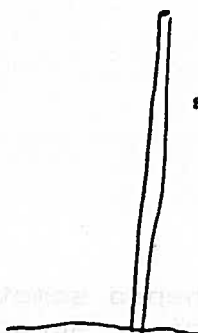
piece of birch. That birch you cut down is shaped something like this with a fork in the end. Then you put a piece across the end of the fork. Then you put this part through a stake in the ground. The dog is wearing a leather strip around his neck. Then drill a hole through this end for a short rope and attach it to the collar. So this just goes around the pole and the dog can't chew himself loose. That's how you handle a dog that bites his rope. The ones that don't bite the rope you just tie them up with a rope.



forked
birch
branch



cross piece



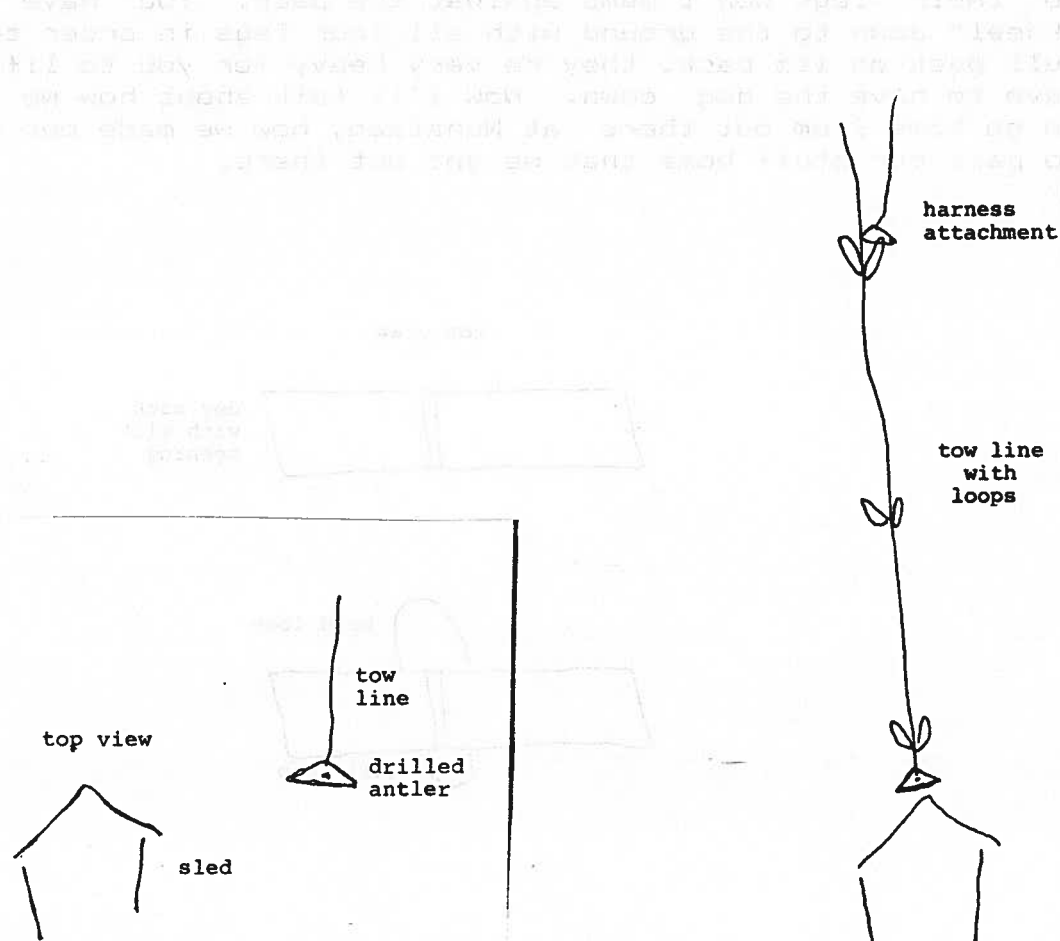
stake



hole
with
rope

stake
top view

Here's a sled. When you're connecting a tow line there's a piece of antler right here with a hole in the middle. That's how you attach the tow line. Then there are these little loops on the tow line that you connect your harnesses to. They all have little cross pieces of wood so you can attach them to these loops for each harness. This was before they had snaps. These cross pieces can be antler or wood. Our dogs were huge at that time, not small like nowadays. A person may have had only three dogs but that was enough for him because they were such strong dogs. This is how they got ready for traveling. We even used our dogs in the summer time. When we went out to Nunataaq we took them so they could pack the bags. Now I'll draw how you make a backpack for dogs.

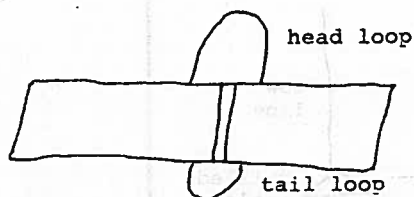


A long time ago we used the same bear skin stripping for a neck line. The bag, the whole thing, is made out of bear or caribou skin. But leave an opening through the middle like this when you're making this backpack. You put the dog's head through this top loop and the tail out through this bottom loop. Then the backpack hangs to either side. When they started using canvass this part here was made of canvass but the ends were made of seal skin. When they're full we could hardly lift the backpacks ourselves, they're so heavy, but the dogs are so strong they can just pack them along. To prevent them from sliding off we used a piece of rope to tie around here so the pack won't fall off when the dog is moving. When we use a dog to pack we tried to get dogs with the "elbows" turned in, not out. Even the hind legs, so their legs won't bump against the pack. You have the dog "kneel" down to the ground with all four legs in order to get the full pack on its back, they're very heavy for you to lift, so you have to have the dog down. Now I'll talk about how we get ready to go home from out there at Nunataaq, how we made our backpacks to pack our stuff home that we got out there.

top view

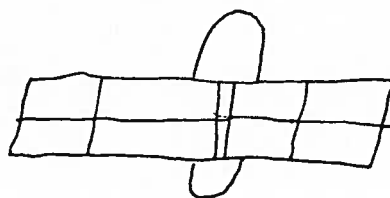


dog pack
with slit
opening



head loop

tail loop



rope ties



Native dogs with packs. Noatak District, Northern Alaska Region, Alaska. August 1, 1911. P. S. Smith. Courtesy USGS Historical Photo Library, Denver, Colorado.

Backpacking

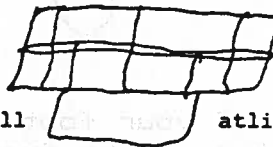
We used sheep skin to pack up any dried sheep, dried caribou, any meat that we got. Tie it up real good with rope, one this



sheepskin
pack tightly
tied

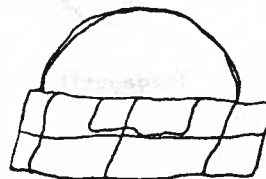
way all around, one that way all around, three times crossways, once lengthways. You make two sheep skins full of dried meat.

neck pad tunusrugmiutaq

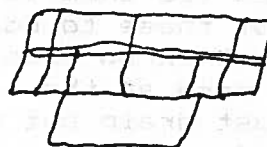


bed roll atliqqat

Tie them real tight, not loose. Then put one on top of the other. Then roll up the bedding and tie it on here on the bottom so its like a cushion and another small piece up here on top so its padding for your neck. The bed roll is called **atliqqat**. The one that goes against the neck is **tunusrugmiutaq**. Then make a



head strap
kavragmiutaq



chest strap
natmautaq (not shown)

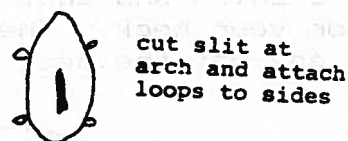
loop something like this -- you can either use a ground squirrel skin or your cloth parka. Attach that to the backpack. That's called **kavragmiutaq** and it goes up over your head. Then there's another loop that goes from the pack around your chest and that loop is called **natmautaq**. It has to be wide and made out of skin too. These loops or straps have to be just right.

When there are two people traveling together you make three pairs of these backpacks. Each person packs one pair out together. When they finally stop one person leaves his pack there and returns for the other one. The other person just keeps on going ahead and goes until he gets tired. So when the one who went ahead stops he leaves his pack and goes back and gets the one the first person left. They call this *akulliqsuqtuq*. That's what they call this stopping and leaving packs and retrieving packs. That's how they carry three sets of backpacks home.

When a person is preparing his mukluks to go out hunting they make them about ankle high. They're not really mukluks but we make these so we can wear them when walking on the rocky areas up there. Cut out a piece of *ugruk* skin the size of your foot. Cut



a slit where the arch of your foot is. There are four loops -- two at the heels and two at the front of the foot. Put ropes



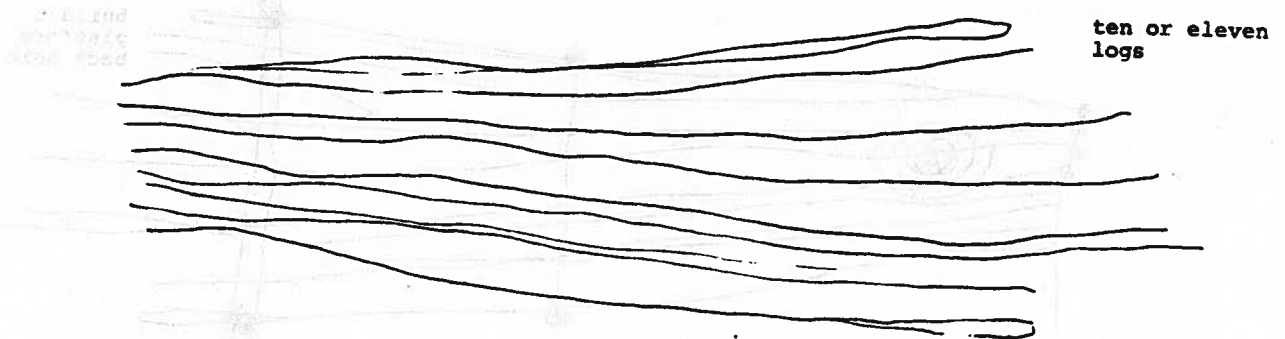
Isigagutik

through these loops, then tie them to your leg. A woman makes her husband many pairs of these to go out there with because they wear out fast and you just throw them away and put new ones on. The reason for the slit here at the arch is so when you walk through water it will just drain out when you get back on dry land. You call these *isigagutik*.

There are mukluks too, that they carry, about so high, up to thigh, that they put on when they're rafting back home. It would be nice if somebody made these things so we could see them. That's it for this part. Now I'll talk about rafting.

Rafting

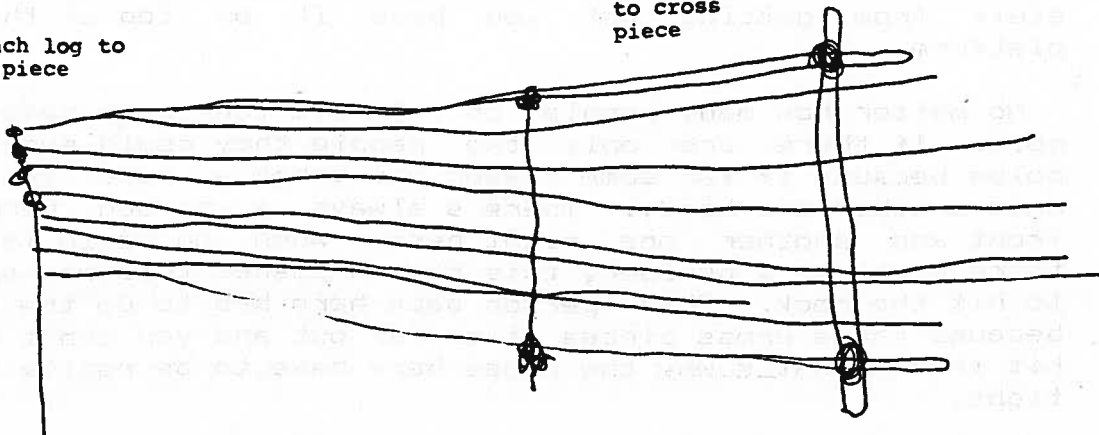
Try to get trees that aren't too thick or too thin, so they can float easily through shallow water -- maybe ten or eleven logs for a raft. Carve a notch around each one to tie them close



together. There's a cross piece going this way so you can tie them close together. The logs on either side, this one here and

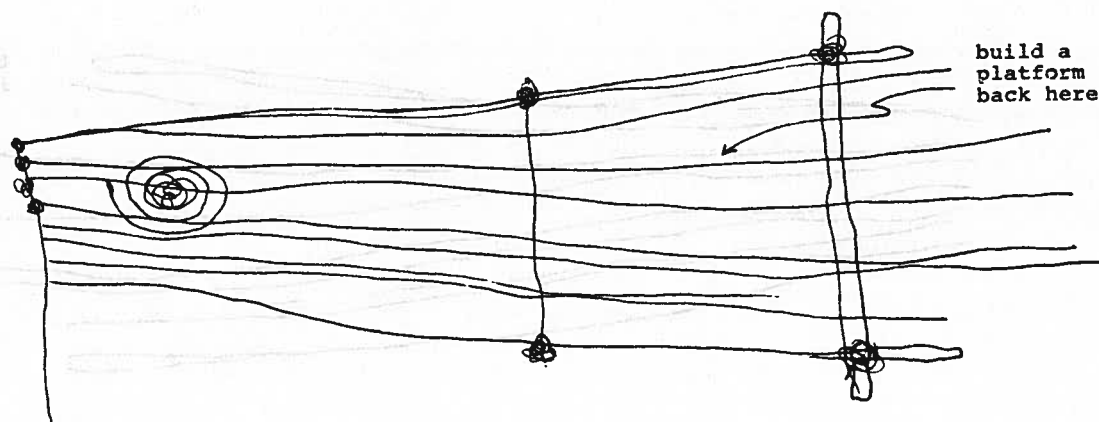
tie each log to
cross piece

tie only
side logs
to cross
piece



this one here, are a little shorter than the others. This is because when traveling in the river they're easier to handle. For instance, there might be a big rock, and you can see the swift water going right here, so if you're not handling your raft right you could hit that rock. Put another cross piece on. This cross piece is a little thicker. Its also tied on either end like you did with these. When you're in shallow water you can put your pole underneath and pry it along. There's another cross

piece like that. On this cross piece you put rope all the way across but on this one you only tie here and here with a heavy rope. It doesn't go clear across, just here and here. You call this cross piece *siusrisik*. You call this one *tupiutit*. After all this you build a platform on this part, putting another log



this way, that way, this way and that way and put logs across so its a little higher, like building a little cache you can put your stuff on. When you're traveling in creeks or rivers you may have your feet in water about a foot or so deep. So to keep your stuff from getting wet you have it on top of that little platform.

No matter how many people on the raft they each have to have a pole. If there are only two people they could even have four poles because if for some reason you break a pole you have to have another one handy. There's always a person here in the front and another one right here. When you're in fast current there might be a boulder, this person pushes this way so as not to hit the rock. This person back here has to do the same thing because these cross pieces stick far out and you don't want it to hit them. That's why the ropes here have to be really strong and tight.

Anytime you use the raft you need to have a rope handy. Here's a coil of rope tied up here. A person can jump off carrying that rope to tie the raft up. This rope is another way to keep from hitting this rock--a person can jump off with it on this side of the river if there's a rock there and keep pulling while the raft is floating down. So this rope has to be quite long. They also carry two poles flattened on the end, almost like a paddle, but not quite, to pry through these logs when its shallow. The raft is called *umiagluich*. That's all for the raft. Now I'll talk about the food we carry when going out to *Nunataaq*.

Traveling Food

We mostly carry dried food -- dried fish, maybe dried meat -- in a seal poke. Make a cut in it right where the arms are. Fill it with seal oil and sew it up. This makes a seal oil container that the dogs can carry in their backpacks. Besides seal oil they carry dried fish and dried meat. We also carry half-dried fish and along the way we roast them by an open fire to eat. You have to eat them right away because they won't store for long. But the dried fish can go for a long time. Those half-dried fish can be either white fish or salmon. You can go through one of these rivers, *Ambler River*, *Quḡluqtuq* or *Manii!aq*. All of them have grayling too so you can stop anyplace along the way on one of those rivers and fish for grayling. That's how we get fresh fish too as we're going out to *Nunataaq*. So we have to have hooks with us at all times. There are grayling up there in *Nunataaq* also.

We make this spear-like thing out of antler to use for fishing. Its about 3 inches long and it has to be flattened.



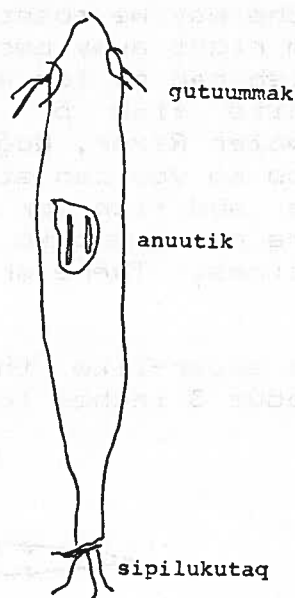
Kapuqqaun

Its a spear head. There's a hole there and there's a rope about 3 feet long tied through it. You get a pole about so long, just like this raft pole here, for the handle, plus that rope. So when you see a salmon or a trout you can just spear it with that one. The antler point has these three barbs on each side. You call this *Kapuqqaun*. Its made out of caribou antler. So this is what you carry besides those hooks for salmon and trout. You just use this for fish, not for other animals. That's it for what you carry when you're going out there.

When you're hunting for martens in the winter time and you're backpacking, take a rabbit skin, tie up the neck and the legs and put seal oil in there. That's what you carry your seal oil in. And you also carry dried fish. Its hard to tear that rabbit skin with the fur out and the skin in. Just pour seal oil in and pack it with you.

Traps

I'm drawing here a dried salmon that you can pack and carry with you for eating. When you're eating a dried salmon you try to save these parts, the tail, the fins in the middle, both of



Salmon

them, cut them out, take the tail out, and then these two up here right under the head. Every time you eat a dried salmon you save those parts for bait. These fins up here from back of the head -- martens really like those. This is what you call these fins: The ones under the head are **qutuummak**; the tail is **sipilukutaq**; and these in the middle are **anuutik**.

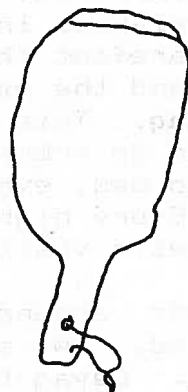
All our traps at that time were made of wood, before steel traps. There are two kinds of traps. You can make a housing for both of them when you're setting them up. But one has this thing right here where you can put your bait and a little short thing about two inches long. There's a little housing for this trap and this piece you put right here with the salmon bait. Then you put this little shorter rod on top. Then when a marten goes in to reach for the bait this little rod comes off and traps it in there. This little rod is called **naġiugutaq**. When we go out there I can set these up so we can take pictures. We can say the sand is snow. Some night when we don't have anything to do maybe we can do that just so you fellows can see how to do it.

Here's another one. These two poles that go like this are called *sukkak*. This is another kind of trap, *natmautalik* is what you call it. We'll have time for both out there. I can also make a wolverine trap. These two kinds are marten traps. But some night when we don't have anything to do you fellows can do it and I'll tell you how.

When you're out trapping you have to have some steel traps too, all the time, in case you have to track a marten you've got to have a trap. If he goes in a hole you have to put a trap right there where he goes in. Then go over to the side and make noise. He tries to run out and gets caught in the trap. That's why we always have a steel trap. You don't set it, just pack it.

That *natmautalik* is much better than the steel trap because its sure to catch a marten and never let it go. With the steel trap sometimes the marten can cut itself loose and run off, freeze its leg maybe. But the *natmautalik* with all that covering on top, it can't get away. He just stores himself in there, dead.

A *patkutaq*. You make the inside for this very thin. Then you drill a hole through here and there is always a rope loop here. When a man is traveling north carrying a gun and a walking stick he can hook this easily onto anything. When the man stops to rest he can drink water with it. The *patkutaq* is also used as a fan to cool off and to swat mosquitoes away. When the men overnight the *patkutaq* is used as a dish to eat out of. This *patkutaq* is a very useful tool.



Patkutaq

CHAPTER 6

HUNTING

Sheep

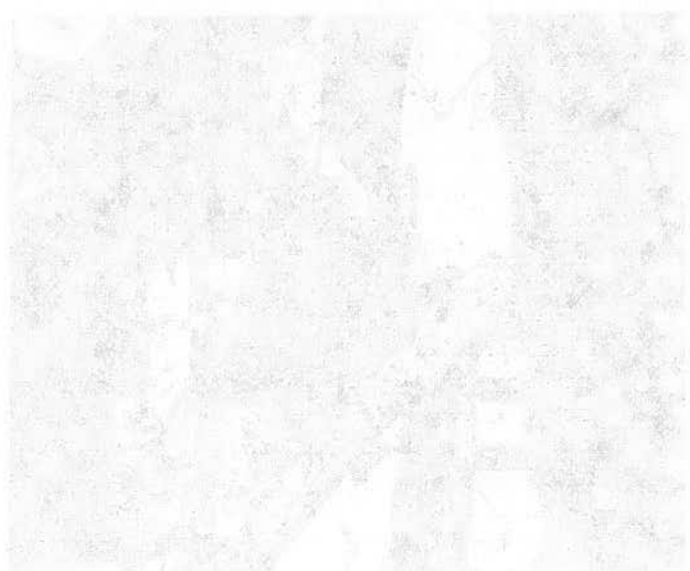
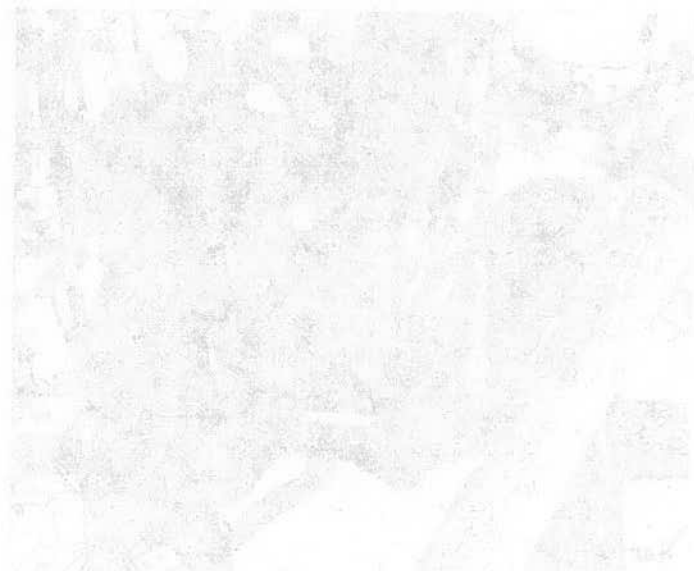
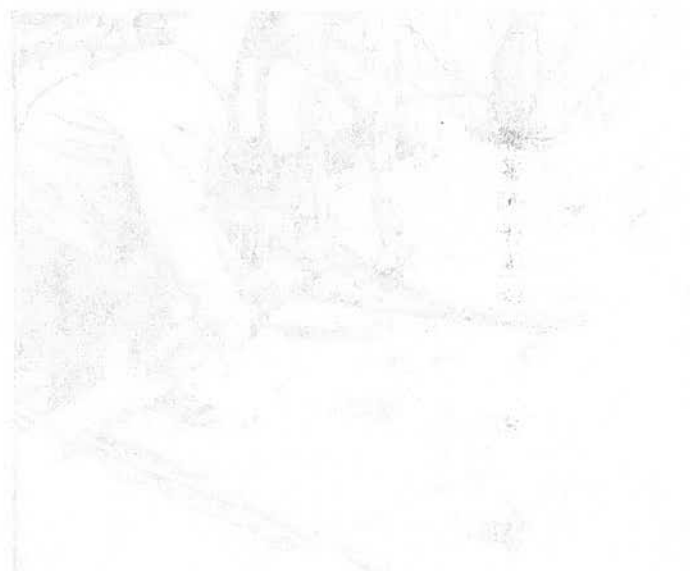
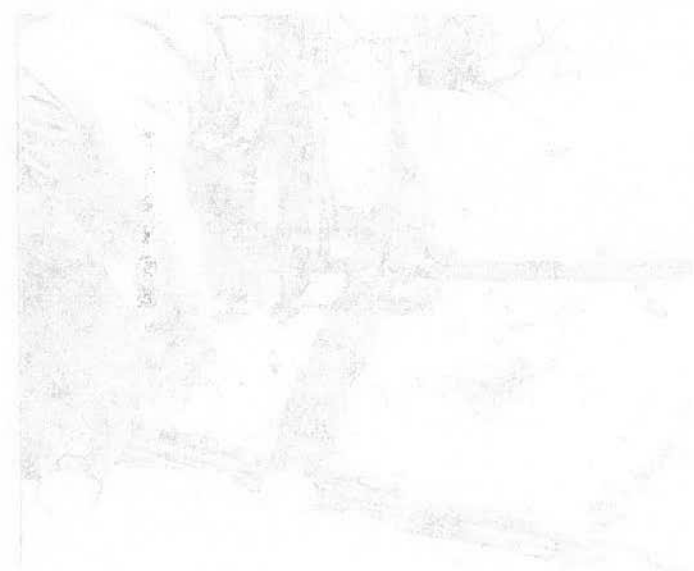
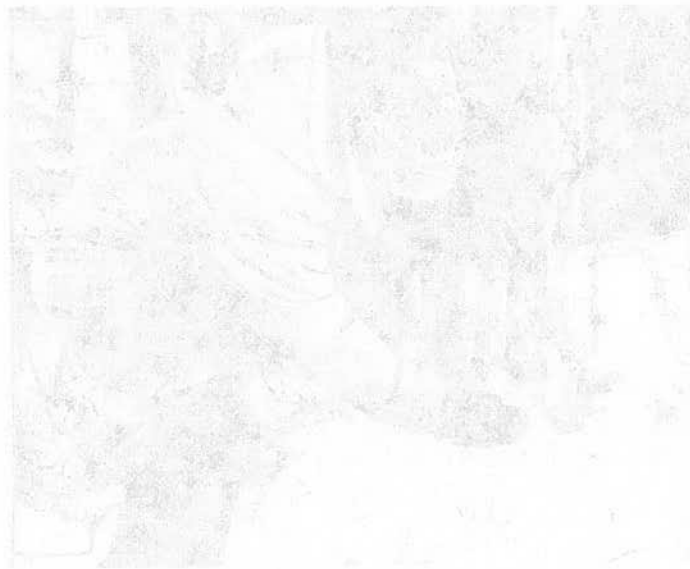
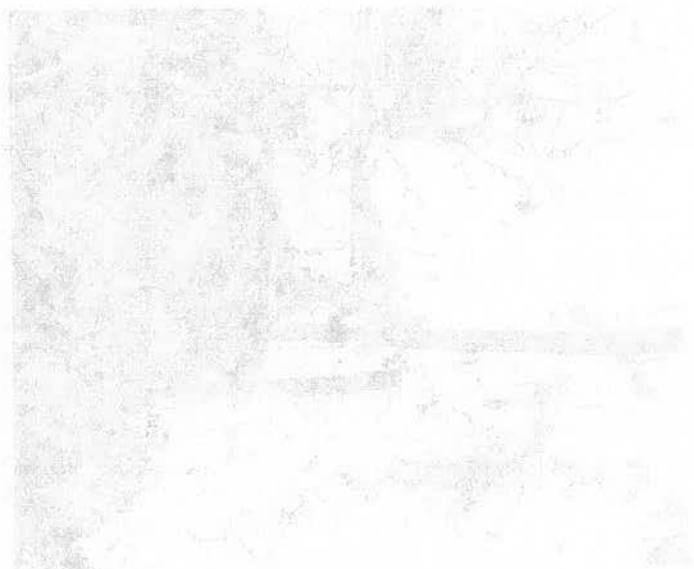
I am going to talk about hunting. I heard about these things long ago. Long ago before there were modern rifles or hunting tools the men used bow and arrows to hunt with. They also set snare-traps for sheep. There are places where the sheep go lick this certain kind of mineral. Today we can still find their little narrow paths going from the mountains to the tundra. There is a liquid mineral seeping out from the earth and this is what the sheep come down to drink. This liquid is not clear.

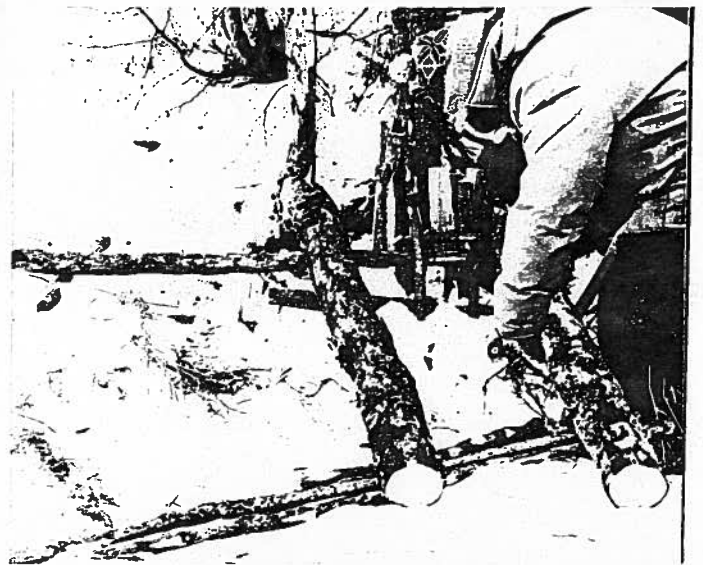
Usually snares were used on the flat land but bow and arrows are used to hunt sheep when they are up on the mountain slopes. The dall sheep have very good vision so the hunters really try not to be visible. When the sheep see people they run to a place that's hard to reach. But if you make noise, or as long as the sheep don't smell you, they won't run away. Noise doesn't bother them because in the mountains rocks fall and they are used to that. So the sheep are not scared of noise.

When the men are hunting for sheep and they are in the sheep area they screen off their evening fire toward the direction where the sheep might be. The people say that when the sheep see fire after daylight they can make the weather bad.

A long time back I heard that when the men come back from their sheep hunt and are relaxing in camp they take off their foot gear. When they are barefoot they have to put a piece of stick between their big toe and the other toes. This is a very old custom of the Inupiaq. This refers to Qayaqtuaḡiḡñāqtuaq, a person who was going to go around the world. It is told that when Qayaq was going to bed, every night he would make another bed across from him. Every night he did this because he expected a guest. And he did get a visitor every night.

One night when he was around the sheep area he made his camp and got ready for bed. A person came by and they talked and relaxed that evening. Qayaq took his mukluks off to get more comfortable. He started to wiggle his big toe. His visitor got curious and asked Qayaq, "Why is your big toe moving?" Qayaq replied, "Because the toe wants to eat you." Because of this the visitor ran away. He went up to the tops of the mountains. That is why the sheep live up there; before they were like caribou who





Joe Sun makes a *natmautalik*, a marten trap. First he clears a flat space in the snow in front of a tree and then makes the housing out of spruce sticks stood upright in the snow. In front of the housing he places two horizontal logs that will form the sissors of the trap. He ties a cord to the upper log and raises it, running the cord over a horizontal stick above the entrance and down to a trigger inside where the bait is attached.

He places heavy logs on the raised sissor to to give it weight when it falls.

The trap is ready. Using a short crooked stick for a marten Joe Sun triggers the trap and the upper log falls, pinning the marten against the lower log.

stay on the tundra. While his visitor was running up he shouted back to Qayaq, "Hold it, hold it!" And Qayaq shouted back, "I am holding it, but its trying to go!" But Qayaq was just lying down and relaxing. This is the reason why the stick is used.

Long ago the people did not say *ipnaiĭiaqtuat*, which means "people who go hunt sheep," but they said *qakuqtuuraġiaqtuat*. When they're hunting for sheep, martin or ground hog and things like that they don't exactly say they are hunting for *siksrikpak*, or whatever. They say it in a different way, not directly, because the people will never catch those animals as easily as they would if they didn't mention the animal's name.

Caribou

In summer the men go hunt caribou and they set their snares for them. The caribou are easy to snare because they have paths. Long ago they were hunted with bow and arrow. Caribou are not as difficult to snare as the sheep.

Another method of hunting caribou is *kaḡalanniaq*. *Kaḡalanniaq* means "to drive the caribou into the lake and spear them." The hunters are in *qayyat* (kayaks). There are men on the shore who keep the animals from landing. The spear is a knife secured to a long pole.

Even today when people see caribou crossing the river they would do the same thing -- *kaḡalanniaq*. Caribou crossing a river is called *kaḡala*. This is how they hunted caribou in the summer.

The caribou are not like sheep. In the Kobuk area, when there are caribou in the winter, men would wait and let all the snow accumulate on the tundra. Then they would go kill caribou. When the caribou are in the mountains or on little hills they drive them down to the trees and chase them into deep snow -- the caribou can't run in deep snow -- and use the knife to kill them. The *Iñupiaq* call this method *puugriřuat*.

Out in the north by the *Nunataaq* area there is not as much snow. The *Iñupiaq* out there made corrals and drove caribou into them. They set snares inside the corral by the exit and killed them with bow and arrow. This is what you call *kaḡiġaqtuqtuat*.

When they go caribou hunting the *Iñupiaq* say *isigakpagiaqtuat*, which means "went hunting for caribou."

Ground squirrel and hoary marmot

When a hunter goes into a marmot habitat but is not sure if there are marmots he takes off his cover parka and shakes it. The shaking of the parka gets the marmots excited and they start making their danger calls. This lets the hunter know there are marmots there. The marmots are killed by setting a trap made with rocks.

A long time ago there was this folktale: When you are roasting a marmot and you have to add wood to the fire you have to put your wood under the roast; don't let the wood pass over the roast. If you do pass or put the wood over the marmot this would bring you bad luck if you are trapping for marmot. The trap you set is on the main exit from the burrow obviously, but the marmot would know that because you treated it badly when cooking it and he will pass the trap by digging out over the top and escaping.

They did not say *siksrigiaqtuat* which means "go trapping for marmot," but say *sauniligauragiaqtuat* which means "to go get little bones." So they call the marmot *sauniligauraq*.

When you are going to take the marmot home, first you cut it through the stomach and with your hand remove the guts, stomach, lungs and heart. Then you sharpen a piece of stick and sew up the opening by skewering it with the stick. This prevents flies from entering. Marmot are hung like muskrat -- take two marmots and take one foot each and tie them together and hang them. Then you take a stick, and while the marmot is hanging, poke the stick through the mouth all the way up to the end. This draws all the blood out. When you have prepared the marmot like this its called *iŋuiŋaq*, which means "no stomach."

You should not pack more than three or four marmot because they are very heavy, even when gutted. When you are gathering marmot you can eat them but if there are sheep nearby you can also eat sheep. When you are going to cook though, there is a thick layer of fat on the animal so you won't be able to eat all of it. Take the stomach fat and other fat off the body if it is too fat and put it into a female marmot skin. *Kuŋuutaŋnaq* is the mother of all the marmot. This mother has all the children and her fur does not get good all summer long. The fat is put into the skin of this female. The skin does not have to be dry but when you are skinning it you should try not to tear it. This is also taken home. After you have prepared this out there and brought it home this aged fat can be eaten raw. It tastes good but has to be thawed out before it is eaten. Usually fat has to be boiled for a period of time before it is eaten. So the marmot fat is aged in the female's skin. There is an *Iñupiaq* term for

the fat in the female skin. It is called aaktaq.

Bear

When the men in the village plan to go bear hunting they go way upriver to Qalugriivik. When they get there they see where the bears have made paths into the willows and they wait there. Qalugriivik literally means "a place to eat or get salmon." So they camp there and patiently wait for the bear to come back and fish.

The men stay there all day and at dusk they put twigs on the path. They do this by tossing the twigs; they don't step on the bear path. When the bear arrives the noise of the twigs alerts the hunters.

The men still use this method to warn them that a bear is on the path. They shoot the bear when its coming, by that time they already have seen it. Long ago when the men have wounded a bear and it has gone into the willows they would just leave it alone. They leave the wounded one alone and wait for another one to come along. On some nights, long ago, the men would get two. The bear does not die instantly right on the path. Instead the bear goes into the willows and rests. The next day when it is daylight the men go out and look for it. The bear makes tracks with his long nails, claws, and the men follow these tracks to find the bear. However, when a bear is shot and on his way into the bush and vomits or drops feces it usually means that the bear is going to get revenge. A bear empties his stomach so he can fight. When this happens they wait until the next day or two before tracking the wounded bear.

Brown and black bear are hunted the same way. When the men go out to track down the wounded bear they carry their spears. This is the weapon they used on wounded bear when it is on the tundra and not by the river. Long ago when the hunters sighted a bear they hit it first with bow and arrow, they then used the spear when the bear came at them.

Its a little different when hunting out in the open and not down by the river where they're eating salmon. A long time ago when they sighted a bear they hit it first with an arrow. If it gets mad it will come at you so you're ready with your spear at all times. That's how they got their attention, by hitting it first with an arrow. If it comes toward you you just spear it right there. This is how a person settles himself. The spear head is made out of bone, one of the forearm bones of a bear. The wooden handle is long, longer than this broom here. When the bear is coming toward you you put the end into the ground, firmly, about so deep. When the bear goes for the person he

never grabs him, he goes flat on his chest onto the person. So when he does that you try to hit the heart with the spear when he's landing on you, so the bear falls on the spear point with the spear shaft firmly butted into the ground. After you spear him through the heart you keep spearing him. When they tie this spear head they make the tie really wide so it won't go through the bear and they can pull it back out and fight some more.

There were real brave men long ago and they would say to the bear "You're not breaking your bones again, you'll have to!" And the bear fights more and dies.

After the first guns arrived and were used by the hunters my father advised me, "When the bear keeps attacking you keep towards the bear's right side." This is because the bear is left-handed and fights with his left. My father also told me that the brown bear is much easier to fight with. This is because brown bear are bigger and slower. Black bear are faster, smaller and tough, hard-bodied like a rock.

The skin of a black bear is called *qigniqtuam amia*. When a bear is sighted the people say *qigniqtuag*. Brown bear are called *akpapiaq*. The skin of the bear is called *talû*, meaning "door," because usually a brown bear skin was used for a door a long time back.

As soon as a bear is dead the tongue is pulled out. Under the tongue there is a long, worm-like piece. This is removed and brought a little ways from the body and set near brush or willows. Long ago the people advised the hunters not to treat this piece roughly but to handle it with care.

Now I'm going to talk about how they store the meat when they don't bring it all home from hunting; like for example when they get two or more bears, or maybe one big one.

Meat Storage

They wait 'till the bears are fat, so it would be fall time when they hunt these bears. When a person caught a bear he started making a cache, high enough from the ground so that other animals won't get at the meat. The person would put the meat on the cache. The cache is not so wide, just big enough to store the meat on top, with four poles, one at each corner. They used split logs for cross pieces, long enough so they stick way out over the edge. They make the floor stick way out past the ends so that if a wolverine tries to climb up he won't find anything to hold on to to get over the top. But even though they store their meat away like this bigger bears can get at it by chewing on the posts, causing the cache to collapse, and eat up the

meat. As for me I don't quite know how to store the meat the right way; I had a wolverine eat up all that I tried to store! After you cover up the meat you put sturdy willows above the cache so they hold a bear skin, or several skins, to dry out.

That's how they store the bear meat. A long time ago they hunted bears when the bears started hibernating. Right now, to this day, the Indians still hunt them that way, though we don't do that anymore here in our area. They track them down when there's a first snow fall and locate where they are hibernating. When reaching a place like that they cut down two spruce trees that aren't so wide and they put them at the entrance of the cave in a cross shape with the top end of the poles into the brush area -- bear caves are always at a place where there is lots of brush around or a wooded area. After that they try and force the bear out of the cave. This is one way they do it but I've never tried it myself. I did it another way because there were guns already when I hunted them in the winter time. But before they had guns they used the method I just described. In a bear cave there's a place that you call a "window." If a bear doesn't go out right away when you force it to go out you make a hole through this window. You can locate this window above the cave, not far from the entrance to the cave. It's just a mossy area, not firm like the rest of the cave. When you get to this soft area, if there isn't much snow, you just dig in and shoot the bear from there. That's how I do it myself or when I'm hunting with other people.

That is all I can tell about bear hunting and storing the meat. Now, about the meat you get at **Nunataaq** -- sheep, caribou and so forth. You don't cache that. you dig a big enough space into the ground and put the meat in there. You can line the area you dig with willows or grass. Put the meat in there and make a frame on top -- there are sturdy willows out at **Nunataaq**. Then you can start putting rocks on top of the frame. The rocks should be big enough so that the wolverine won't pry them off. When you store meat away like this you call it **iyagaaqtat**. That is how you store meat out at **Nunataaq**. When it is winter time you can get the meat that you stored.

With this method of storing food the animals don't get at the meat because of those heavy rocks. The meat that is stored that way you can eat raw, without cooking, it tastes real good. It's the same way to store ground squirrels when you can't take them all home. I'm also going to tell about how my father hunted sheep.

The creek at **Natmaktuġiaq** is real swift and one person alone can't raft from there. He just brings down the sheep he caught from the mountains and makes racks so that he can hang the meat. I've gone and gotten the meat that he left behind for him. The racks were not so high that the meat hung on and it was covered

with sheep skins. When he caught a grizzly bear he dried the skin; wolverines don't bother the meat that is covered with this big brown bear skin. One man used to say that if the meat is covered with the big bear skin the wolverines would sense the smell of the bear and wouldn't go near the meat. When I reached the meat my father had hung on the racks and covered with the bear skin there weren't any wolverine tracks nearby. Even the foxes won't get at the meat.

This is all I'll add to this part. That is how hunters long ago stored leftover meat.

I forgot something I really should discuss. It relates to sheep hunting. I'll talk about that now. A long time ago people used to talk about there being sheep back of here. It was true too, in back of this village. You remember I was talking about sheep coming down from the mountains and going to licks. That's what they used to do; come down here just a little ways away near where the cemetery is now by Riley Camp. There's a place where the sand is sliding and there used to be a little hill back there, but it's all gone now because they used it fill the airport runway. That's where they used to wait for the sheep to come down to the licks. That's why they called that hill *Ipnaigrualik*, "place where there's sheep."

On that hill, while they were waiting for the sheep to come down, they made their spear heads out of some kind of rock, whitish with little black markings. When they were shaping the spear points they threw away the little pieces there on the ground. They're really sharp at the edges. They use these pieces when somebody's eyesight is getting poor or there's blood in there. They use them to cut it and that fixes them. They pull the eyelid back, inside out, like this, and cut the blood vessels. I've had that done to me by my mother. Those little chips that they use for cutting the eye they call *salliisit*, and when the sun comes out they go above the ground and you can easily pick them up from the ground. They used to have a reindeer corral back there too, where the airport is, and when they were watching their reindeer sometimes they would find spear heads in that area. The men probably had thrown them away because they were no good to use. But they were shaped into spear heads already. They would find them inside the corral where the reindeer had pawed the ground.

At the bottom of that hill there's a huge rock, we passed it that time we were going down to my mother's grave site. When the sheep go to the river to lick the hunters go in back and get as many as they can and butcher them on top of this rock, not on the ground. So that rock used to be kind of reddish in color. They named that rock *Piḷagvik*, which means "place where you butcher the meat." I was just beginning to remember things then. The rock is getting a bit smaller now. Maybe from the ice. And that

hill, *Ipnaigrualik*, used to be close to the river. Now its all sand slide. That's all with this big rock and the sheep. Now I'm going to tell an old story, but a true one, about three men who went out to the Nunataaq to hunt.

The Story of Tumitchiauuraq and the Three Lost Hunters

One of these men was named *Tumitchiauuraq*. He was a real good hunter. Every time he hunts he got something, whether its sheep, caribou, any animal. He was such a good hunter the people thought they should just leave him alone, "He's not like us," they said, "he can get any animal." But these people talking like this were shamen trying to get rid of him because when they went to Nunataaq he would be the only one getting all these animals. Anyway, he took two partners one day from further downriver, and they left one day for Nunataaq -- but they went beyond Nunataaq.

While they were traveling, backpacking, it got foggy and sometimes they would lose their way. It went on like that for how many days. Once in awhile they would get a caribou along the way. But they didn't know which way they were going because it was so foggy in that area. All summer long they were lost. They didn't know which way they were going. Finally falltime was coming on and the fog went away, but they couldn't place where they were. Then it became winter and there was a little snow on the ground. They found a place to winter with trees to make a winter house. They spent their winter in that house that they made. It became summer and when the weather became good they started traveling again, not knowing where they were even though it was clear. They traveled again that whole summer, catching something to eat once in a great while because there were caribou in that area. But still they didn't know where they were, though they weren't hungry. They had only bows and arrows with them and that is how they killed those animals.

It became winter again. Along the way they hunted rabbits and saved the rabbit skins and when it got cold they used them around their necks to keep warm. They saw the sun but they still didn't know exactly where they were. Finally in their journey around there they met two people that were traveling with a dog team but had one sled. These two people stopped not too far from the three. One of the two people rushed to the sled and took something out from the load. He aimed this thing at the three people and there was some kind of noise and smoke. It hit one of the rabbit fur things that one of the guys was wearing. The three realized that those two were going to go against them. When they realized that those two were going to shoot them the three raised up their hands and the two saw they were surrendering and didn't want to fight. So the guy with the gun

put his weapon away back on the sled and started walking toward these three. When the man got to the three they started talking but they didn't understand each other. They had a different language. So they used their hands to tell the two where they had come from. They drew the shape of the river indicating they came from that kind of a place. The two were not far from their own place so they took the three men home with them.

When they got there they went in to a house. Men started going there to visit them but they didn't understand each other. That same day an elderly man came in to see them. These three men could understand him a little bit when he was talking so they started telling him that they came from the Kobuk River. Somehow he understood that they were from this area and he said, "Kobuk is far away," and pointed a direction, "a far away place." So they were communicating a little bit with this elderly person.

One day all the men of that area gathered together in one house and the elder told one of the guys to go get the three so they could meet with them and plan. They decided to get together whatever they would need to travel back to where they came from. The three men barely understood him when he was talking to the others. Then the elder started telling them the direction they would go to get back to the Kobuk area. He pointed to the sun and said the sun would rise and then there would be a sunset in the opposite direction. He said, "Wherever the sun sets, that's the area of Kobuk. So that's the way you guys will travel, towards the sunset."

The women of the village made them mukluks and whatever warm clothing that they would need. They started their journey back. They traveled and traveled but the two men that *Tumitchiazuuraq* had taken with him started going against him saying he was just getting them lost and they went off on their own. *Tumitchiazuuraq* continued on his journey the way the elders had told him. It became winter again. He was in among the trees so when it got too cold he settled down, making a sod house with a little window above, a skylight. While he was living there once in awhile martens would appear and look into his window, there were so many of them there in that area.

Finally it was spring again and good to travel so he started out again, spring and all summer long. Finally he got to a place that seemed to him like he had been there before. He crossed a river and then went through some mountains that were not as high as the others, a place where he could go through. He got to a swift river and sure enough, he recognized the area then, it was the *Maniiĭaq*. He recognized it as the area he had gone out before when he was going towards *Nunataaq*. So when he finally found his way at the end of the *Maniiĭaq River* he went back to *Nunataaq* to hunt for sheep because he had to get some meat to bring home.

He went and got his meat and dried it and started backpacking back knowing he wouldn't get lost again. He got to a place inside the Maniilaq River where he could make a raft and he made his raft and started downriver toward the mouth of the Maniilaq. In the area where the mouth is lived his relatives, his parents and his wife. Before he got there he started thinking about what had become of his family, wondering if they were still there. There is a bank and a sand bar right there just a little below the mouth of the Maniilaq. This was where their settlement was, where he had left them. As he got there the people came out seeing him and saying, "Oh, here he comes!" When he saw them coming he wanted to jump off his raft and run away, but he stayed.

While he had been gone his wife had stayed there all that time with her mother- and father-in-law, the man's parents. She never left them. When he got to these people there were other people too, living along the river. This man had a relative there, a young man, who started off downriver in his qayaq telling these people that his uncle who had been lost for a long time had arrived. When he approached a place he would start crying out, "My uncle came back, he came home!"

Of the other two men he had taken when he first started out one had survived but the other died. The one who survived went back to his people way down there. That's the end of the story. When he had gotten lost he must have gone way out through Canada and on through to Greenland. That's why he couldn't understand their language. They call those people Iyagaagmiut, those people they can't understand when they talk. Maybe it was between Greenland and Canada but it was in that area where people live in rocky places. This guy named TumitchiaPuuraq got lost because that was how those shamen set him up, to get lost in all that fog, trying to get rid of him. But he came back.

CHAPTER 7

TRADING

Now I'm going to talk about how they traded and bought things a long time ago. First of all I'll talk about how they did these things before they got to travel to other places.

People long ago had what they called "messengers." A village would make their plans during summer time with other villages close by. They would all gather together, making a community house and getting everything ready that was needed, preparing food from what they gathered before the big get-together. The same thing is done during the fall time. And then when the days are getting longer they send out two people to tell the other villages. These people knew each other too, like we are today. So these two messengers carry spears and on these spears there is always a little gift attached that is sent to that person whom the other person knows. The spears are always full with little gifts attached. So the messengers carry a spear. These two don't travel by dog team, they walk to each village that they had to go to. The village they're going to is not always aware of them coming. Before these two arrive at a place they wait until it gets dark so that the people won't see them. Then when it gets dark they approach the first house and all of a sudden rush in there and just sit close together in one corner without showing their faces. The owner of the house could tell right away that these two are what they call "the messengers" by the way they act. The husband of the woman that lives there goes out and hollers real loud so that everyone can hear him, "*Napaaqtum aqargia mitchuug!*" which means "spruce ptarmigan has landed." The people would know these two had arrived when the man hollered that. When they heard what the man said each person would go around to all the houses, telling them the messengers had arrived -- "spruce ptarmigan has landed" meant the messengers had arrived. So they have these two messengers come in to the big house which they called a *qargi*. These two would stand in the middle and put the spear that has all these little gifts attached to it upright from the ground. They would take a gift, one at a time, and call a person's name and say "Come up and get it, this is for you from . . ." and they would name the gift sender. This is how they try and get a *niuvig*, which means "partner" -- by sending little gifts.

So when these two are done with what they have to do they go back where they came from, bringing back little gifts to the senders. These two would go even though the place they're going

to is very far. Anyway, these little gifts on the spear that they sent meant, "Come to our village so we'll be together and dance and feast." And this partner-to-be to this other person, this *niuvig*, requests what he wants to eat when he gets to that village. So they would prepare this special food for him. And if the person doesn't have that particular food he looks for it amongst the villagers and then has it ready for his partner. And this person coming would bring things to trade and they would trade with each other as partners. From the area of *Maniilaq* they would send two messengers way out to *Unalakleet* by the ocean. That's way down past Nome. But they went across country and that way it's not so far. Last summer when I was up at Barrow that's one of the things they wanted to find out, how they used to get together in this area. There was a letter to Kotzebue saying they needed two inland people to go up to Barrow and talk about these two messengers and how they do it in the Kobuk area. So I went up there and talked about these things.

So this was how they traded their things a long, long time ago. Later on they no longer used messengers. But the people who had quite a lot of things like furs, maybe a little money, would go down to Kotzebue where the coastal people are and would trade or buy things from down there. There was one wealthy man they called *Sauiliuq*. When he went down to the coast he filled his boat with all kinds of stuff and came back here and sold these things to people up here all year long. There were two other people who did this too. One of them was my father's uncle, *Aqpiksraq*, *Sinaana's* brother. They went down to Kotzebue when the big ship came and started trading and buying and brought back boat loads of all kinds of things up here. The white people that were in that big ship bought bear skins and caribou skins and sold them to the coastal people who didn't have land animals.

I remember when we up here would gather beaver skins, otter skins and cross fox skins to bring down there for trading. They traded for things that you could use for hunting, for food and clothing, and other stuff. They also got whiskey from the white men that were in the ship. The whiskey would be in a big barrel. So these wealthy men would bring home this whiskey and have it all year long. Young men like my father would trade all their valuable skins just to get a little drink out of that big barrel.

The beaver skins, otter skins and cross fox skins which they gathered were traded for reindeer skins to the people from Siberia. These people from Siberia had reindeer all along -- from way back. They also traded wolf skins and wolverine skins, even though there were few wolverines around here. I started going down to Kotzebue and I remember when these people from Siberia came across and traded with our people and with the coastal people down there. They brought lots of reindeer skins from Siberia. The people also went way out past *Anaktuvuk Pass* to

trade for caribou skins at a place called *Tuŕuqaq*. There were no caribou in our area at that time. So they went way out there to trade for caribou skins.

Then finally there were little stores starting around here. Tom Berriman was the first white man to start a store at Kobuk. I remember he bought skins at a real cheap price at that time. When my parents brought us to Kobuk for Christmas I went into the store and a woman came in there to sell her fox skin. The store owner said he would buy the skin for fifty cents from that woman. The woman did not sell the fox skin because fifty cents was too cheap for that good red fox skin.

At that time the skins were bought for a real cheap price. I remember, I was a young man then, a boat came from the Kotzebue area trying to buy muskrat skins. We were at Sun Camp when the boat arrived. My father and I went down to the boat when it stopped, bringing our muskrat skins along with us. The man that was buying the skins gave my father one dollar for eight muskrat skins, but at that time the price of things you buy wasn't expensive like it is today -- one pound of coffee cost fifty cents at that time. So my father sold all the muskrat skins at eight for a dollar. The white men sold these skins they bought for maybe a bigger price when they go back to where they came from. It seemed like the *Iñupiaq* were cheated out of the good skins they gathered at that time.

They didn't sell beaver skins, otter skins and cross fox skins to the stores but instead brought them down to Kotzebue to trade for something else. They knew they would get more for trading if they went down there. There was one man by the name of *Kisiuraq*. I knew him too, myself. He would sell his cross fox skin for gun powder and a few other things that the store owner would sell for one cross fox skin. He would say, "This cross fox skin won't even kill one duck by a lake!" He meant that the skin was sold for such a small price it wouldn't even kill a duck and he would hand the skin to the store owner to sell it.

When I first started going down to Kotzebue the big ships would anchor out in the ocean and little boats would bring the stuff in to Kotzebue. *Durplay* was the name of one of them. It would bring stuff for all the villages including Kotzebue and they brought it in with the barge. Another ship was called *Baldwin*. It belonged to people by the name of Lomen. There was another ship, it had no engines, only sails. It was the schooner *C.S. Holm* of the Midnight Sun Trading Co. It had four long masts and sails. When the wind is just the right direction the power ships couldn't catch up with that schooner. The owner of that was John Backland. There were two other boats that belonged to the government. One was the *Boxer*, it brought stuff for the schools. Now there's a bigger boat that took over from the government boats by the name of *North Star*. It still comes now

and anchors out in the ocean. The captain of those government boats was a good friend of mine, Frank Whitlam. During World War Two, about 1942 when the Japanese were fighting, he was captain in an area where they were really fighting and they sunk his ship. So he died with his people. He was a good person to his deck hands and workers.

I remember one year we moved to Kuugruaq in early spring. After we stayed a little while I started gathering logs for a raft. Two 40' long logs. I drilled them at the four corners with a hand drill, brace and bit, then nailed them together with another piece of wood, a cross piece, so they would be sturdy. Then I put 20' logs going this way for the front and 20' logs going this way for the back. So its 40' long. Then I put three log cross pieces in the front, back and middle. This is for another layer for the floor. I drilled holes at either end of each, six holes, and nailed them, but on these I carved a little notch so the nail goes through into the log below. The reason why you make the raft two layers high is because when you get to this river here, the Selawik River, the west wind is always so strong and the river not so swift that the raft will go backwards because of that strong wind pushing upstream. So the two layers is to make it heavy enough so the wind won't drive it back. Then I put thinner logs on top for the top layer. I left a space here in back and put down pines and pitched a tent there for the living quarters. I put the dogs and other stuff on the front area.

The Kuugruaq River is a nice slow flowing river and its nice just to stay in the tent. So at times you can just go in the tent and rest, the raft going along by itself downriver. So with the tent you can stay with your children in there and use it for eating and sleeping.

Along the way there were people spring camping. One day one family asked if they could come along on the raft. So they did. These people had a winter camp somewhere around there. At their winter camp they had an outboard motor. So that's how they helped bring us in to Selawik. When we pulled in I told that guy, Harry Skin, I would buy him a drum of gas. That drum of gas was about thirty or thirty-five dollars. Those people that got on the raft said they wanted to help me, they didn't want to just get off the raft and go. They had asked Archie Fergusson, the trader with the boat service out of Kotzebue, to hold a drum of gas for them but they didn't get many muskrat skins to buy that drum. So I told them I would buy it for them. So that's how we helped each other.

On another trip we were rafting down and got to where Archie Fergusson had his boat. It was a power boat and he pulled us down to Selawik with his boat. It was one of his tug boats. Archie did this without pay, just help. Three times I went down

to Kotzebue with Archie without pay. But I helped him on the boat with chores that had to be done. When we reached Kotzebue I would still work for Archie but with pay. So when we left to go to Shungnak I would still be with him. He let my kids ride for free all the way to Shungnak. Archie Fergusson and his brother were like brothers to me. We were really close. Archie's parents took me as their son, too.

From Selawik to Kotzebue on Archie Fergusson's boat was a one day trip. From Kotzebue to Shungnak we took turns piloting his boat. Sometimes I was engineer during the night. It took three days. In falltime, though, its getting dark and you have to stop at night; then it would take a little over five days from Kotzebue to here. So this is how we used to travel from Kuugruaq to Selawik to Kotzebue and then to Shungnak.

Archie Fergusson's brother Warren was partners with Tom Berriman, the guy that had the first store in Kobuk. He was partners with him for a while, then he started running his own store up here in the Kuutchiag area, on one of those big hills up here. Warren had this store for a good many years, then sold it out to other people. It used to be there where that old FAA Station is, across from Susie's mother's camp. That house that's still standing there is the one that Warren built. It was a two story building but then Rhiny Berg, the prospector, made it into one story.

When I had some muskrat skins I'd sell them to people in Kotzebue or Archie himself would buy them. But when I had wolf, otter or wolverine skins there was a person in Selawik I gave them to. And when that person went down to Kotzebue he traded those skins for seal oil, ugruq skin for hard bottom soles for mukluks and maybe for seal skin ropes and stuff like that -- what coastal people have that we don't have up here inland. So this guy traded my skins for these things and sent the things to me. This guy's name was Matulik. He was my partner from Selawik, what you call niuviq. Selawik used to be called Akuliqag. But Archie Fergusson was the main person that I sold my skins to at that time. He was the one person, really, that I bought from and sold to.

Those white people that we traded our skins to liked their money too much, so I traded my skins for things that I could use for hunting, or maybe for food. One time this guy in Kobuk sent for a lot of aluminum coins because he just couldn't give away the real money. So when we brought our skins there the guys would pay up their bills with some of the skins, and he would trade with the aluminum coins for the skins. This money wouldn't go anyplace else, only back to the store manager. So these aluminum coins can't go out anyplace, they just go around in the village. So if you have some of these coins and you want to buy somebody else's stuff you buy it with these coins. But then the

person who got the coins has to sell them back to the same white guy that owns them. So this thing went round and round. His daughter, May Bernhart, may still have some of those coins. They may have thrown them away. She and her husband live in Hawaii and Kobuk.

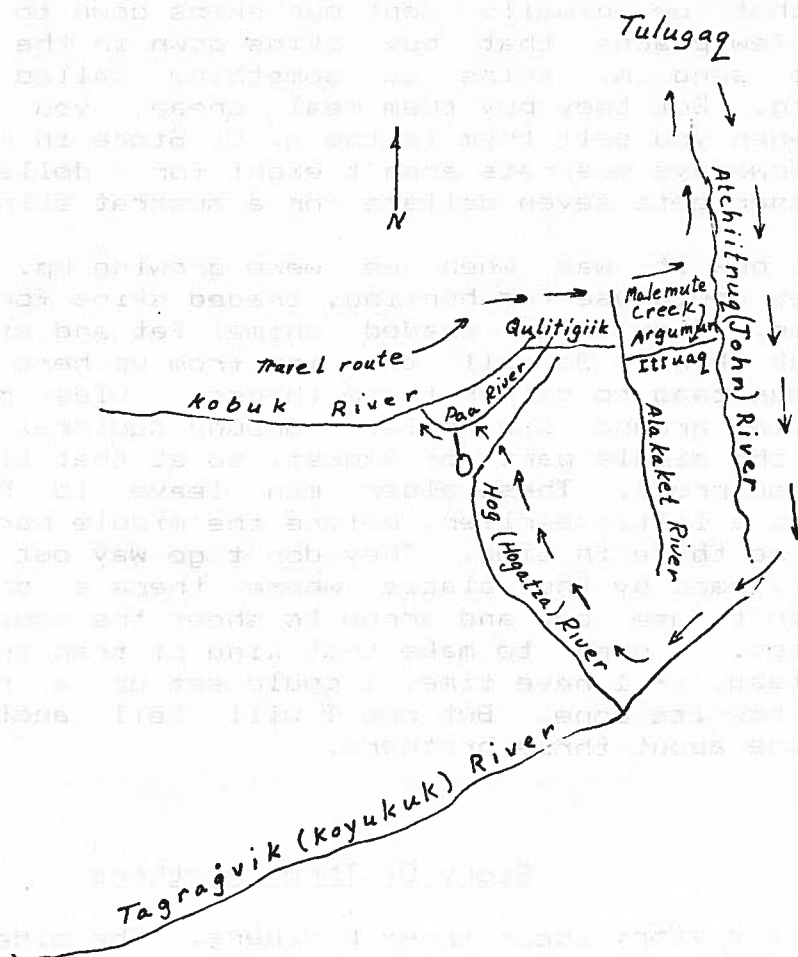
When These little mines started up in each area, then they started using real money. That's when the skin buying started slowing down in the stores and they stopped trading in skins. Even right now you can't buy skins in our store. You have to go down to the A. C. Store, the Alaska Commercial Co. Store, in Kotzebue. They have a thing going with skins to the states or someplace. This thing with the A. C. Store buying skins just started. They've been doing it for about three years now. Before that we usually sent our skins down to Seattle. There's quite a few places that buy skins down in the United States. I used to send my skins to something called "Northwest" -- something. But they buy them real cheap, you don't get much money; when you sell them to the A. C. Store in Kotzebue they pay more. Nowadays muskrats aren't eight for a dollar anymore. Now the trapper gets seven dollars for a muskrat skin.

That's how it was when we were growing up. They traded for what they could use for hunting, traded skins for making clothing and so on. They also traded animal fat and sinew for seal oil and ugruk skins. So all the men from up here would go hunting out to Nunataaq to gather these things. Older men would go too, for hunting ground squirrels. Ground squirrel skins are really good by the middle part of August, so at that time they hunt for ground squirrels. These older men leave to hunt for ground squirrels a little earlier, before the middle part of August, so they'll be there in time. They don't go way out to Nunataaq, but close by, back by the places where there's ground squirrels. They didn't use bow and arrow to shoot the squirrels, they used rock traps. I used to make that kind of trap too. If we go out to Nunataaq, if I have time, I could set up a rock trap so you can see how its done. But now I will tell another old but true story, one about three brothers.

Story Of Three Brothers

This is a story about three brothers. The oldest brothers name was Iikiqilaq. When they talk about these brothers they say they are not from around here or any other area. They are from above us, from a different land. These three brothers divide themselves each to a different country -- one likes to eat coastal animals so he landed down there, one landed up around here, and the other one another place. First I'll talk about the oldest brother who landed here in our area because he liked to eat bear meat, black or brown bear.

When he started to live among the people up here in our area they had so much respect for him he became their leader in hunting and some other ways too. Because he was a different person from them they had respect for him. In late fall he would hunt with the people for bears when they are fat and the meat is good, late fall when they're about ready to hibernate, that's the tradition from long ago; they don't hunt them in early summertime when fishing is going on. They lived all year long and then come spring he would take them upriver to hunt moose and caribou. He took so many young men with him and they called this group avraat.



They traveled by dog teams with sleds. Along the way Tikigi!aq's sled would stop in a certain place and wouldn't move even though he tried to force the dogs. Then the group of young men would say, "Lets check around this area and see if we find anything." Sure enough, when they searched the area they would

find bears hibernating -- that's why the sled stopped there. Sometimes they wouldn't find any animals to hunt in this area of the Kobuk River so they would go clear out to *Anaktuvuk Pass* to a place called *Tulugaq* and get caribou. Here's the Kobuk River here. They traveled up the Kobuk River, through *Qulitigiik*, a portage to the *Alakaket River* and from that river they go on to *MaIemute Creek* and that takes them to the John River. There's a big lake on that *MaIemute Creek* called *Argumun Ittuag*. Then they go up to *Tulugaq* through *Anaktuvuk*. Then this is the *Koyukuk River*, we call it *Tagragvik* in *Iñupiaq*. When they don't come back early enough while winter is still going on they spend the summer around John River, make their boats and go down through the *Koyukuk River*. They made their boats with a wood frame and then used caribou skins to cover them. Then they would go this way through the *Paa River*. There's a lake here, they stop and portage across this little piece of land that connects to the Kobuk River. That's how they got back home if they spent too much time up by the John River. They call these people who travel like this, who go up in wintertime and then go this way and come back, *iuvauraut*, which means like "going around the bend and going back."

Anyway, they were hunting upriver. When they started to get ready to go with the dog teams this son of *Tikiġilaq*, who was named *Argaitchuuraq* because he had no hand on the other arm -- there's a mountain in this area, going that way, north -- and he walked, the son, while the others with *Tikiġilaq* went by dog team up to the head of the Kobuk River. When a person walks while the others are going by dog team they call that *qutiġuqtuaq*. The son was taking a different route, around the mountain. When he takes this different route he's the one who is checking where the caribou will be without shooting them so he can tell the others, the ones with the dog teams.

But one time he was doing that again and he realized that he was scaring away the caribou. So when the caribou ran he tied a knife where the hand was missing and catching up with the caribou he speared them with this knife that's attached to his arm. He didn't count; when he thought he had enough he went toward the other peoples' camp. When he got to the camp he told his father that he had suddenly realized he was scaring away the caribou but that he had got some, he didn't know how many. His father asked, "Did you get enough for all of us to share?" And the son said, "I don't know. I didn't even try to look back to see how many I got!"

So they went back along his trail. They worked bringing back the meat and skins but didn't even get done that whole spring. They even had to leave some behind, there were so many. All spring long they went back and forth to their boats, butchering and skinning them but didn't get done with all of them.

At the mouth of the Pick River, just below us here, there's a big tree with sturdy big limbs. This *Tikiġiġlaq*, when he no longer used his stuff, he would bring it down and put it under this big tree; like if he no longer used his snowshoes he brought them down there; if he no longer used his sled he brought it down there. It just fell to the ground not too long ago. I had how many kids when it fell? The fast current kept eating the ground under it and finally it leaned toward the river. Then one summer we found it. It didn't fall into the river, instead it went the other way, back onto the bank for some reason.

This man finally got old. His wife was gone, his son was gone. Then he chose one of the young men from the Kobuk area and they traveled toward Selawik and got in with the Selawik people during the winter time. They made him a little shelter and he started living outside the village.

Amongst the Selawik people there was a woman and she had a son. And her son was a powerful shaman. And at night while *Tikiġiġlaq* was asleep this son, this powerful shaman, would go to where he was by his shamanistic ways, not himself but this other being of him would visit the old man. But the old man didn't know. The young man went back to his mother and said, "I heard this *Tikiġiġlaq* was a shaman, but when I visit him during the night he doesn't even know me." So he found out he wasn't a shaman, he was just a regular person like us. When he said that his mom told him, "Just don't bother him, leave him alone. If he was a shaman he would know if you visited him there, but just leave him alone."

During one of his visiting nights as a shaman he killed the soul of the old man. But the old man was still alive and all of a sudden this young man just dropped dead, even before the old man died. That's how strong the old man was. When the shaman went after him the shaman died first instead of the old man. He had gone even though his mother told him not to. The old man somehow had known while he was there in the Kobuk area that this young man in Selawik was a shaman. And he knew that someday he would be killing a lot of people. So he went out there to be bait for the shaman, "Let him get me there then I can kill him." That's why he let the young man bring him to Selawik. And that's what happened. They both died, but that's how he took care of that shaman so he wouldn't kill other people. All those years he lived with the Kobuk people he didn't bother them or misjudge them or treat them badly. This was the only time -- he went to the Selawik area and killed that big shaman. That's the end of the oldest brother's account. Lets have a coffee break and then I'll tell about the next one.

The next brother's name is *Iġaganniġ*. This brother landed at the coastal area, around Kotzebue. It might be where those old igloos or old caches are, but its in the Kotzebue area. He liked

to eat seal meat, beluga, those sea mammals.

When **Iḷaganniḡ** is hunting out in the ocean he doesn't use a **qayaq**, he swims by himself. He takes a rope with him and every time he catches a seal or **ugruk** he ties them along this rope, he got so many. His hands are like duck's feet. They have webbing. So he doesn't use a paddle he just uses his hands.

Iḷaganniḡ wasn't like his brother; he knew when something was going to happen. he had a being within himself that let him know that danger is coming. So when these people from the other side, maybe **Diomede** or whoever they are, they call them **Sakmaliagruich**, would come to kill him he would know. There would be one or two boats with people in them and he would find out they are after him and would swim out in the ocean and dive under the boats. He could stay under the water as long as an **ugruk** can. He would just tear their boats from the bottom.

This **Iḷaganniḡ** had two wives with so many daughters and sons-in-law. Long ago people used to have one container for eating seal oil, **uqsrupiaq** we call it up here but the coastal people call it **misigaaq**. When he was eating along with one of his sons-in-law he tried not to dip his fingers in at the same time as his son-in-law, because if he did it would just kill the son-in-law right there. One day he was eating together with his son-in-law. All of a sudden the son-in-law dipped his fingers in to the seal oil at the same time as his father-in-law. Before anything happened the son-in-law hollered out real loud, "There's people coming from down at the ocean side!" And sure enough there were some people coming in with boats. He did this so he could get the attention of his father-in-law and he would go towards these other people and not get him. And he lived because his father-in-law went toward the people coming in instead of getting the son-in-law.

Just before the ocean freezes and there are icicles on the the ocean already, he swims for the last time while there's water. The reason there are not many people on that side, the **sakmaliagruich**, is because of this person, he killed so many of them. They go against him and are finished. Maybe if they went on land to fight him they could have gotten him but they tried to get him with their boats. In those days there were no caribou down at the coast so I think he lived only by sea mammals. That's it for right now with this brother but later he will be together with the younger brother so right now I'll begin with that other brother. Then the two together will will be the last part of the story.

The youngest brother's name is **Kuvravak**. He landed out in Bering Straits, the Wales area, at a place called **Tapqaq**. The reason he landed there was because he liked walrus meat. There's these **Tapqamiut** people living here and somehow **Kuvravak** found out

they go this way to hunt caribou and they gather all the skins, the sinew and meat. So when they got home he would go to them and take all that they gathered. He'd do that every time. They were scared of him. He had a huge qayaq and he used walrus shoulder blades for the blades of his paddle. When he got there he would just ask for all their skins and meat and they gave it to him because they were afraid of him. He would put it all in his long qayaq and take it back where he was living. He also hunted caribou and had enough meat but he would go there anyway just to take the meat from those other people because he knew they were scared of him. They say he had so many ice cellars, siġlūaqs or underground cold storages, to keep the meat in, not just one storage but many.

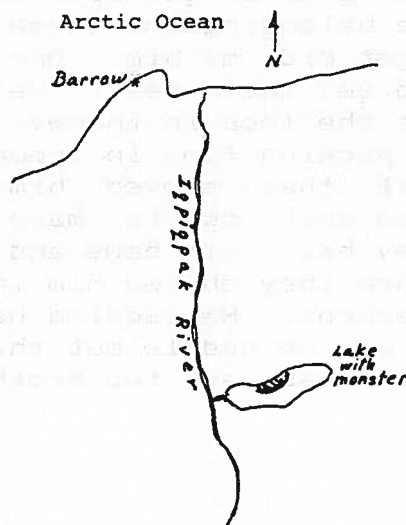
One day his older brother heard that he was bothering these people and killing them if they didn't give him the meat. So Iġaganniġ said, "At such and such a time I'm going to go there and kill you." When Kuvravaq heard his brother's message that same winter he had his wife put in one of the ice cellars the heads of walruses that he had caught, opening the mouths about so wide so his hand would fit in there. He said, "We will feast on the last meat that I catch."

Sure enough, one day his brother arrived. He told his wife to bring in the walrus heads from the ice cellar. When his wife brought them in they were frozen solid, cold and icy. He started cracking the mouths open and in half. When Iġaganniġ saw him doing this he thought, "Gosh, he's really strong," and he had second thoughts about trying to kill him.

Now, the Barrow area is up here and there's a river, the Ikpīkpak, going that way and beside the river there is a big lake. In this lake there's a monster. It looked like a rat with a sharp beak. When people go back and forth on this river they always try to be as quiet as they can because if this lake monster hears them he will come across the land a little ways to the river and just grab one of them for food. So when they go downriver and upriver they always have to watch it in this area.

So one day these two brothers heard about this monster in this lake. The older one talked it over with the younger brother and they planned to go kill this monster. I don't know by which route they traveled. When they got there his brother carried his qayaq through this little piece of land and they got to the lake. They spotted the big monster sleeping. The scales were of rock. The older brother told the younger brother who had the long qayaq -- he didn't use a qayaq himself, he had this webbing on his hands and could swim -- he told him to go toward the monster in his big qayaq and when the big rat spots him to go back to the land while he did all the work from underneath. He had his brother tie a knife sharpened on both sides to his hand, they call that kind of knife iġluktulik, and he went under the

water to fight. He said, "Don't worry about me, I'll do all the work from underneath." So when they started off he was underneath the qayaq.



This was the first time that monster had seen somebody using a qayaq in this lake. He stretched around and then came at them. The younger brother did what the older one had told him to, he paddled right back as fast as he could. He paddled so fast that the water went right with him clear up to the land. When the water rushed back he could see the big rat emerge from beneath there. The older brother was fighting from underneath and the monster's scales would open up when it reached out. So he put his knife through between the scales, any place he could, weakening the monster. The younger brother fought with a spear.

So they got the monster and then they beheaded it and crossed this little stretch of land to the river. They put the head upright beside the river where people go back and forth. I don't remember the name of that place. Maybe it will come to me. One time some travelers went to this head and stopped their boat right there and stood next to it. The person was maybe as tall as you but the head would still be taller. It was that big. Maybe I'll remember the name of that person who stood there after a while. After they killed this monster they went back to their areas.

When the older brother got back his two wives, who didn't like the way he had been treating other people, decided to kill him. One of them knew how to hypnotize people and that's what she did to him. Then they tied his arms and legs to driftwood, knowing

how strong he was, and speared him. He awoke then saying, "I thought those people from over there that I had been bothering came to kill me but instead its you two." He lay back like he had been and told his wives to just get rid of him. So they did.

When the younger brother got back to the Wales area he started taking away the belongings of those people again. So one day they planned to get rid of him. One day he went back there with his long qayaq to get their meat. He put his qayaq on the ground so they could put the food in there. He was sitting in the qayaq and they started packing food in around him through the opening. When it was full they shoved him in the ocean. But they had stuffed it with so much food to make it hard for him to get out of the qayaq. They had their bows and arrows and all kinds of spears ready. When they shoved him in they started shooting him with all their weapons. He paddled hard and killed a few people with those bones on the paddle but that's how they killed him. That's the end of those last two brothers and that's the end of the story.

At the opening of an abandoned burrow at Lake Matcharak Joe Sun builds a ground squirrel trap. He makes a housing out of upright rock slabs and covers it with heavy slabs propped up by a thin piece that serves as a trigger.

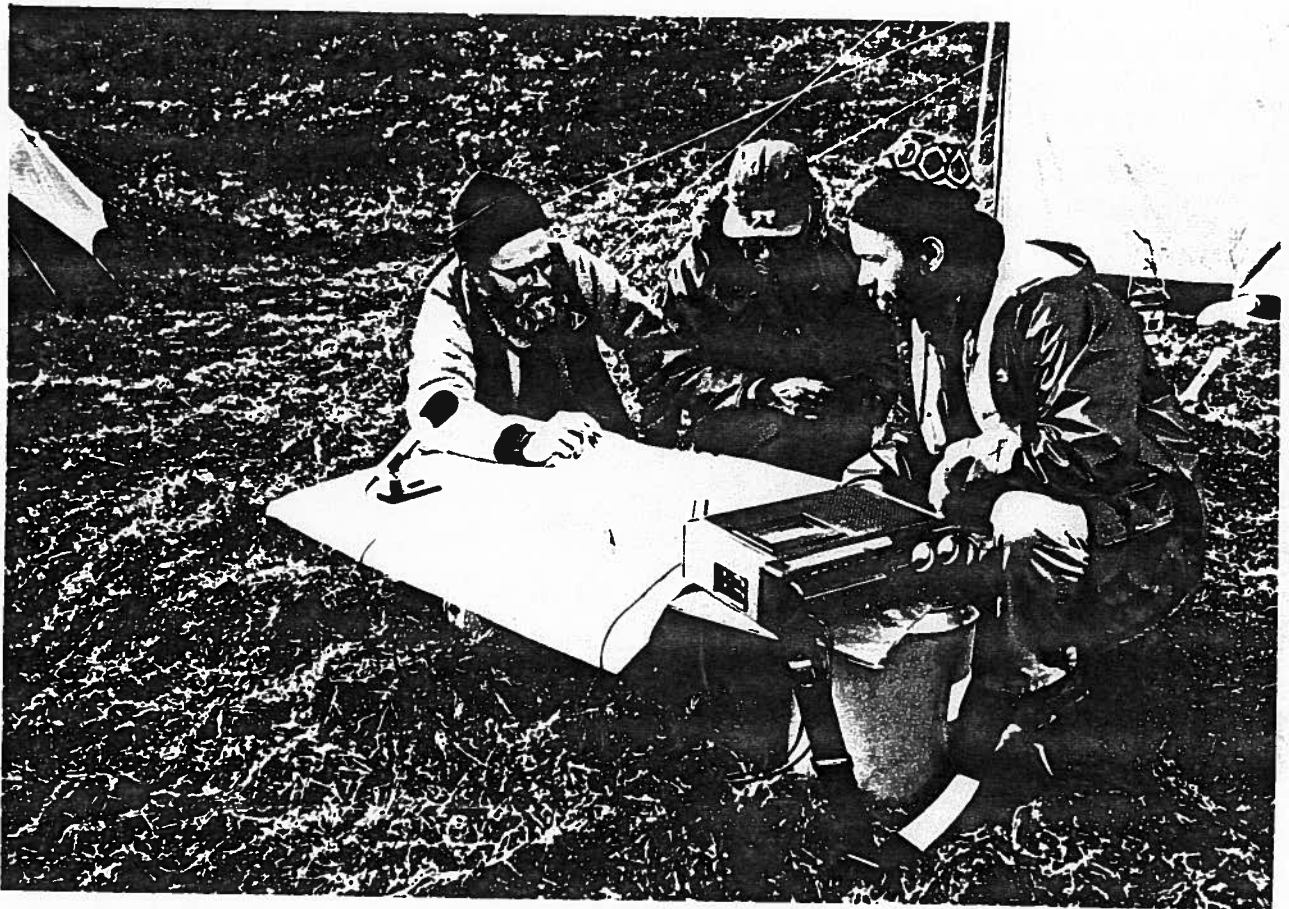


With two exits covered by the heavy stones the trap is now ready to catch two ground squirrels as they leave the burrow.





*Our camp from the top of the bluff at Lake Matcharak. Libbey.
August, 1983.*



Recording placenames on the map at Lake Matcharak. Ray Bane, Joe Sun and David Libbey. Libbey. August, 1983.



Ray Bane says goodbye to Joe Sun at our camp at Lake Matcharak.
Libbey. August, 1983.

CHAPTER 8

MINING

Now I'm going to talk about how they started the mining long ago. These white men came, probably by way of Kotzebue, and when they came up here they started prospecting most all the creeks that they thought had something in them. So they started off with Dahl Creek. We used to call it *UqquqIñiq* but they called it Dahl Creek when they came up here because John Dahl was the first prospector.

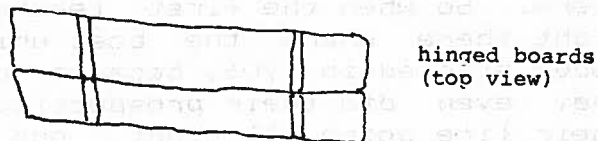
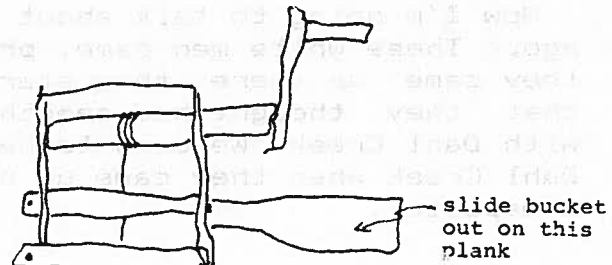
Dahl Creek

They knew there was something in Dahl Creek so the white men built four sets of houses. The first group pitched their houses right down here, summer houses. Then there was a fifth setting, another creek behind those mountains going through Dahl Creek and then down Riley Creek, other white guys.

These miners needed things so this boat from Kotzebue started coming up to bring them what they needed, a stern wheeler boat. When it arrived it went up to where Kobuk is now and unloaded there. So when the first teachers arrived they settled down right there where the boat unloads. That's how the village of Kobuk started in 1906, because of that boat unloading there. They even did their prospecting in the winter time. They had their fire going all night. And when the ground thawed they dug it during the day, as far down as they could, until they reached bedrock.

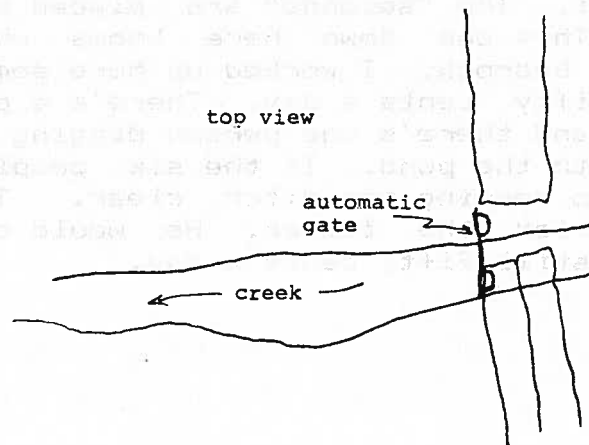
When its too deep to dig with your own shovel they used a windless. This is what a windless looks like. There's two logs going that way and another log up here that sticks out with a handle on it to turn. There's always a person down in the ditch to fill the bucket and another person standing by these two planks. The two planks have hinges and when the bucket comes up it opens the two planks. The planks fall back when the bucket comes out so that the dirt won't fall back down on that person below. Its a wooden bucket they make, tied with ropes. This bucket is attached up here so the windless can pull it up. This board comes out from the side so when they get the bucket up they put it on there and drag it out to dump it. Then they wind it backward to make the bucket go back down. The person standing here opens the two planks and lets it go down so the person can

fill it again, and so forth.



Windless

Here's Dahl Creek. They built a housing on either side of the creek and there are two doorways right here. They block this little creek that flows this way (up above) and the water would go through here, the doors would open by them selves. There are two big springs right here. They take time to make these logs real sturdy. They put moss on them and then rocks on top of that, rocks you can handle, lift yourself.



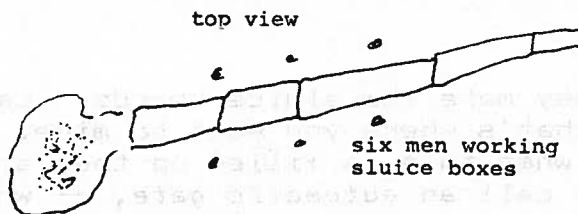
Then they make the sluice boards. Lay them along here on this side if that's where you want to mine. Quite a few men stand here and when this is filled up they start washing it. So that's what they call an automatic gate, -- when the sand in the river gets lighter they shut themselves. These gates can open and shut just so long as this little creek over here is dammed, even without anyone there.

When they're digging in the winter that's when they see if there might be "pay." So if there is they start building these gates in the summer. Each time they dig out the ground it looks like a big sand bar along here. Then they would start moving the sluice back because the ground they are going to work gets wider. They put up the gate first of all so the water won't go through there, then go to the gravel at this end that they pushed up here that looks like a sand bar. They dig down to the bedrock, about so deep, so wide, so when they start prospecting that gravel the water will drain through the diggings. So as they go along, every time they dig down to bedrock so the water will drain out. Each time they dig a hole like this they put in heavy rocks. If they didn't dig holes like this the water would be there and you couldn't dig into it.

We made boxes, too. The boards are 12 feet long by 1 foot

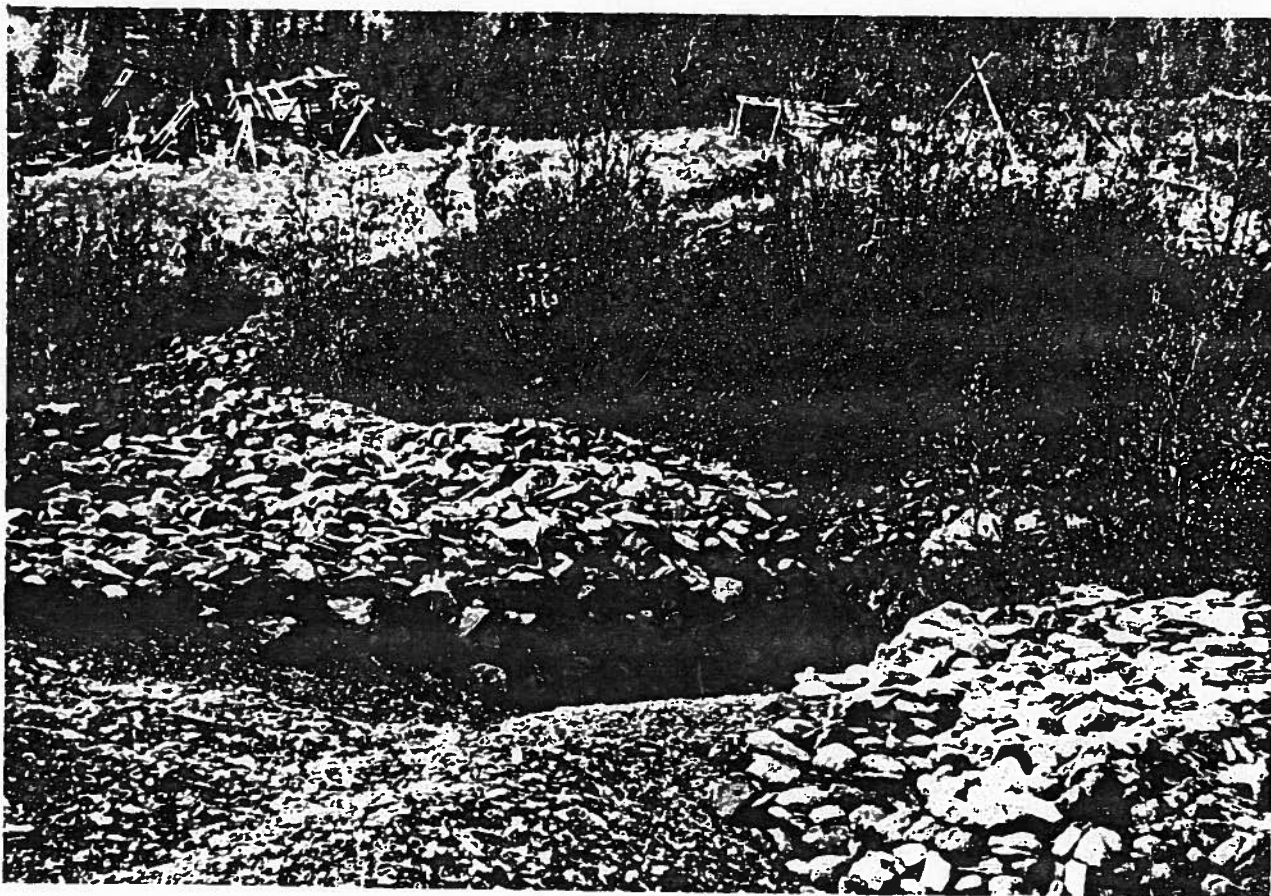
wide. One end is narrower so it can fit into the end of another box. And we dammed the creek so it would flow away from the gravel. But when we needed water to wash what we've dug we had a canvas hose that filled up from the creek. We made a little housing right here so we could shut the hose off when we go to lunch or supper.

We made six 12 foot long boxes. The end box is on the ground. The next one overlaps 1 foot and they keep getting higher. There would be three men on each side, six all together. The ones that don't know much about mining are placed here where they can work on the gravel. The "seconds" are placed so they can work on the sediments. This one down here knows what its all about so he works on the bedrock. I worked up here sometimes, inexperienced, and I made fifty cents a day. There's a pond here at the end of these boxes and there's one person digging all the time to keep a ditch clear to the pond. If the six people are fast sometimes they need two keeping the ditch clear. The person who works there is called the *tiller*. He would call on me if he needed help, I was still fifty cents a day.



When we made these 12 foot long boxes, along the bottom we put little spruce logs. We placed them so far apart, crossways, for riffles so the gold won't flow through, it will fall in there. These pieces are nailed in from the side. Then you take the riffles out of the first two boxes and using tools like this, looks like a long handled paddle with a square end, and use those to clean the gravel. Pretty soon the gold starts piling up in there. There's a person up here at the end handling the hose and putting in just enough water to clean the gold out and not wash it away, and the person that's cleaning the gold tells him how much water he needs. You have to wash the gravel away but not the gold.

When there's enough gold they put it in gold pans and bring them to a place where they clean them up and dry it out. Then



West across old diggings to Johnson's cabin. Dahl Creek. 6/3/66.
Irv Tailleir. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.

Fred Johnson made those walls out of those rocks on either side. He worked in the middle.



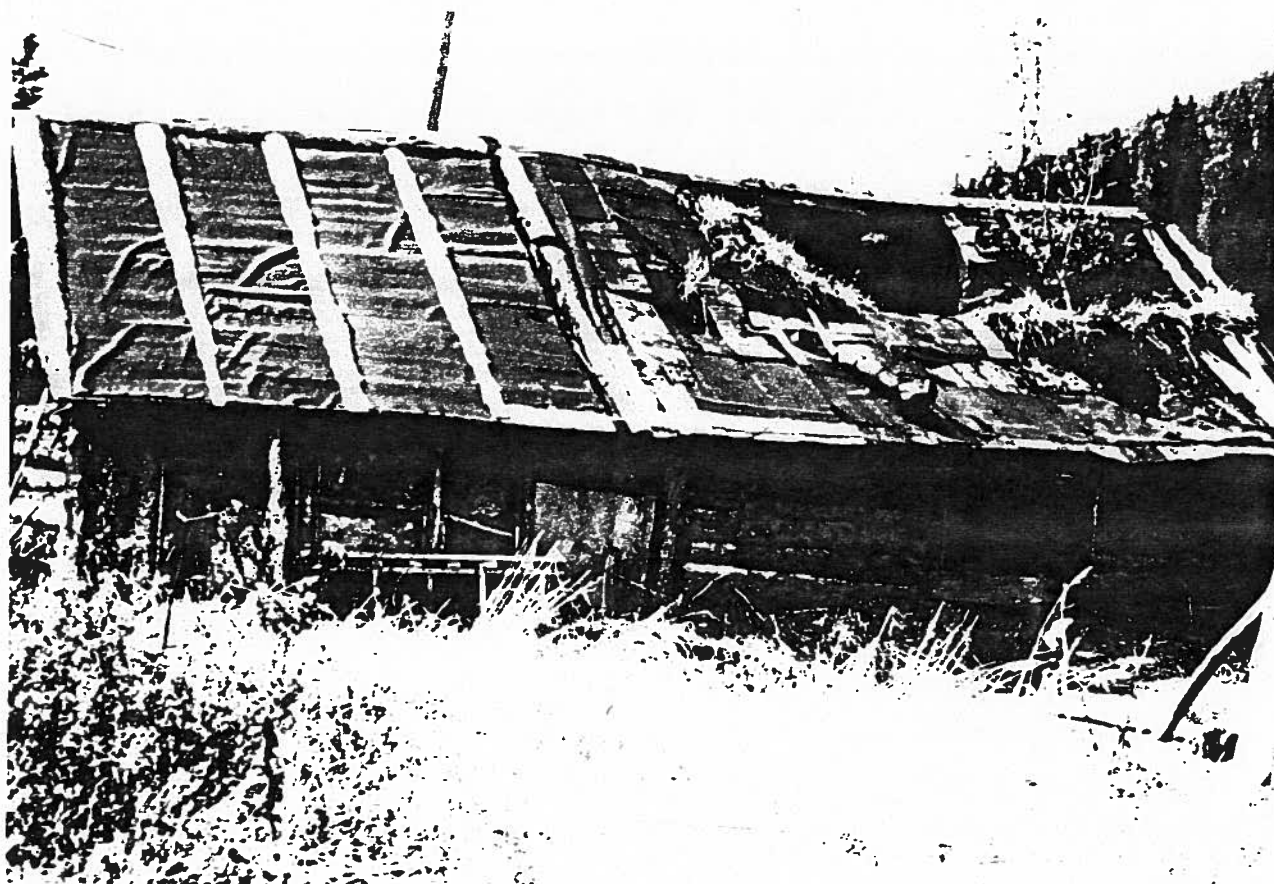
Fred Johnson's black sand. Dahl Creek. 7/55. Irv Tailleir. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.

The one on the right is Fred Johnson.



1945. The body of a man, possibly a soldier, lying on the ground. The man is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants. The background is a textured, possibly outdoor, surface.

The one on the right is Fred Johnson.



Trondstedt's cabin, Dahl Creek. 6/15/56. Irv Tailleir. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.

That's the house that had three sections in it. Touhy lived in this one too.

there's a piece of magnet to pick up the sand that's left. That cleans the gold.

Then there's quicksilver you can use. But only the white men used that. We didn't because the smell is strong. If you put it in a fire your teeth would fall out. We didn't know how to use it.

Most of the gold is in the first box and not much in the other two -- none at all sometimes. One of the guys working here, Charlie Coffin, tried to sell these two boxes to somebody once, but they wouldn't buy them because there's not much gold, just a lot of work. That Charlie Coffin, he's the one they used to call Yukon Charlie. His dad took him over to the Yukon from here, you see. And he spent about three or four years over on the Yukon, all along, up to Circle City, he knew all those towns. Then when he came back he told stories about that Yukon all the time. That's why they called him Yukon Charlie. But he was from here originally. He was my half brother.

When we're done on this side cleaning the sand and getting the gold, we move the boxes we made over to another area. That gravel we're digging is really wide. Each time the drainage moves too. Then they start going forward. They can only work an area the length of the boxes. As we move along we put in markers, wooden poles, so we know what's been worked and what hasn't. We would dig down to the bedrock and put these markers up.

That gravel we worked in was piled up real high. When we need more men they would hire them. The guys who really knew what they were doing made three dollars a day. The guys just starting got fifty cents a day. That's how we did it at Dahl Creek.

Shungnak Creek

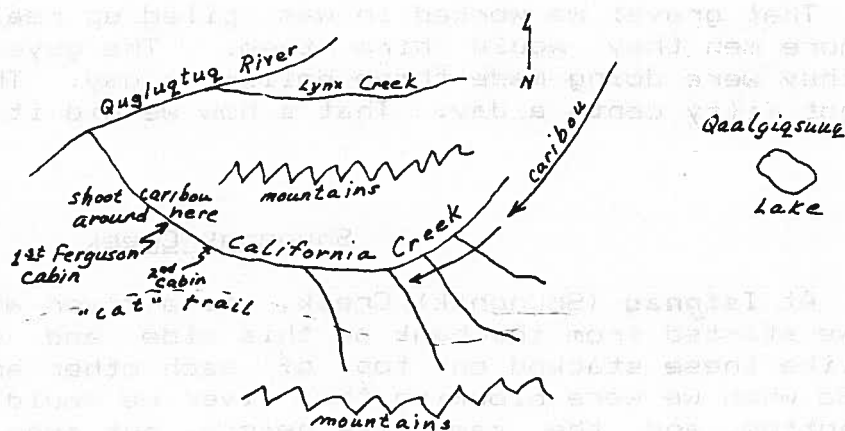
At Isigna (Shungnak) Creek, its a river wider than Dahl Creek, we started from the bank on this side and started putting logs like these stacked on top of each other so it would drain out. So when we were blocking this river we would go deep into the bottom, and the same like before, put moss and then heavy rocks to hold the moss over them. We don't drain all the water but it would be slow and shallow. The way we did was angle this log wall out from the bank, kind of move the river over a little.

In Isigna Creek we waited for the water to get low before mining. When its flooding its no good because that "money" is in an area where its deep. So we wait for the river to get shallow. There's still gold down there right now. People who have allotments down there, if they work hard enough they could

get it. The only thing they try to get now is jade. Another little place further up is Qaanauraq where they could use the water coming down from the mountains, the little creeks. There's some "money" there too, right now, but it might not be as much as was down below. Its just a little further up from this place where the big mine was. So starting from here the creek goes up and gets narrower and narrower. But now I'm going to talk about California Creek which they used to mine too, a long time ago.

California Creek

Its first Inupiaq name was Kanigiugsivik and when the white men came to mine there they named it California Creek. The reason they used to call it Kanigiugsivik is because they used to go way up through this creek and way up close by the mountains people would stay. There's mountains along this side and mountains along the other side. Then there's another creek, Lynx Creek, comes out down here. They mined there too. The caribou go through there and that's where they waited for them to shoot them. This is an old channel and this is Qaalgiqsuuk Lake. So the caribou come in this direction and the people would be waiting right here where its real narrow and kill them right there. There's a place right here at the confluence with the Qugluqtuq River where there's a lot of fish.

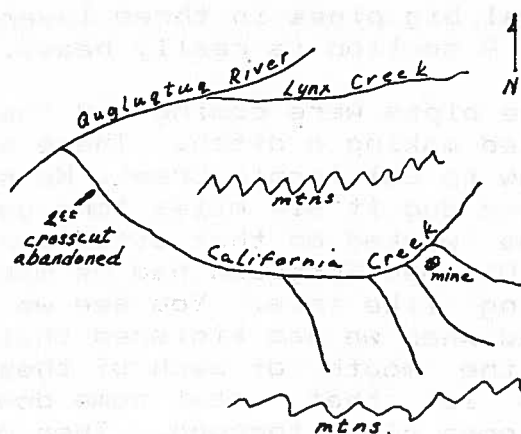


There's a "cat" road along here on the old channel that goes all the way from Kobuk village and there used to be a dog team trail going from there to California Creek. So they went up there from Kobuk by dog team before they had the "cat." This is the trail they used to bring stuff to the mine--what Old Man Ferguson brought with his river boat. Frank R. Ferguson. That's Frank the

legistalor's namesake. That's how the village started. It was a boat landing.

The Ferguson family, with his wife and two children, came planning to go to California Creek. Somehow he knew where to mine for this gold, saying he was going to prospect a certain place. He came up from down in the states somewhere and settled at Kobuk and then started bringing a lot of stuff back.

When the Ferguson family first started settling down they had their first cabin right here. Around that same year they settled at Kobuk he came here to build his house. When they first came up they said they were going to California Creek, they had heard about it. He built his first cabin right here, a little one. They stayed there one winter, then when summer came they went further into the creek and built a bigger cabin right above where they were going to mine. Susie's grandfather, Aivluna, Alec Lee, helped build that cabin, and the other person's name was Anatkuuraq, Jacob Coffin, a cousin of Yukon Charlie. I was helping the Fergusons at that time already so sometimes when I didn't have much to do I went there, too, to help build this cabin. At that time Old Man Ferguson started digging someplace around here. One day he was really concentrating on his digging and his son arrived from Kobuk. They talked for a while while Old Man Ferguson was digging. Pretty soon he threw up a shovelful and his son saw something shiney. He said, "Wait a minuite father I saw something in that shovelful!" He found a gold nugget, about the size of the end of your little finger, with some kind of rock. But his father doubted him saying, "Oh, maybe you brought that yourself with you, just to fool me." His son said "No, this is what you found from your digging here." Finally he believed him. He took his son to the little log cabin where his mother was and Old Man Ferguson said, "Take all the food out for a feast to celebrate the finding of the first gold!"



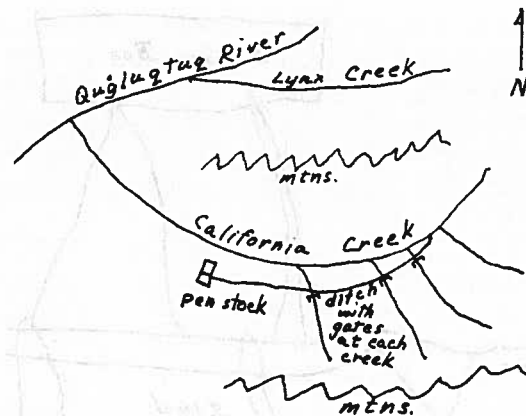
First of all he did a cross-cut through that creek before he started really digging. But he left that cross-cut alone at that time when he found that gold nugget and started working a little further up, right there, and he found a lot more gold. After he dug here he started planning an underground mine and began working on it that winter. I was working with them all that time.

They used to have a copper mine when I was a small child, we call it *Bornite*. Old Man Ferguson knew about a boiler that was at Bornite. To get that big boiler he hired all the men at Kobuk who had dogs to go and get it and bring it down to where he wanted to mine. When they got the boiler to the area he put it between where he made the first cross-cut and the place he dug last. He started using it that winter, thawing the ground way down to bedrock. Inside the tunnel then he would dig any which way -- this way, that way -- branching out. In that tunnel he used that windless we talked about before. I was in the underground mine when they first started to use the boiler. There were rails to bring the bucket out. They were as narrow as the bottom of the bucket. They made the tracks out of 2 X 4s and put 2 X 2s under the bucket so it would fit to the railing. The rails weren't so heavy, you could move them around to different locations. I dragged the bucket out and pretty soon this pile of gravel was really high. Every time I dumped a bucket of gravel gold nuggets the size of that first one would spill out. During the wintertime we piled it up like this and then come spring the snow would melt and we would build our boxes and start working on that big pile.

So we dug that gravel once that year. They took the gold with them to Anchorage or the states and then came back with these big pipes for the pipeline. After they cleaned up that year the Ferguson family left to get those pipes and came back with them. I think they are rusting away back there now. He had them shipped up here to Kobuk and then his son, Warren Ferguson, started bringing the pipes one by one by dog team back to the mine. They're real big pipes in three layers, an outer layer and two more inside. A section is really heavy.

He told us the pipes were coming and that summer, before they arrived, we started making a ditch. There's three creeks going this way that flow to California Creek. We started the ditch just above the creek and dug it six miles long going through all those three creeks. We worked on that ditch for two summers by hand, shoveling. Then Old Man Ferguson had us make a pen stock and put the pipeline going like this. You see we had started down here by the house. And when we had finished that ditch he had us make a board gate at the mouth of each of these three creeks. Then when he wanted to let that water come down he took those gates out so the water goes right through. Then down here he made that

pen stock, down here by the working place where he wanted to use that water at the mouth of the ditch. Also he put a screen up here so if a man happened to fall in he wouldn't go in the pipe. These pipes are real strong but one time one of them broke.



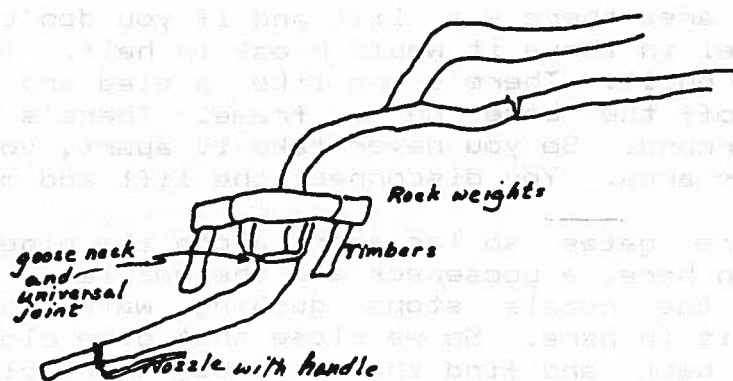
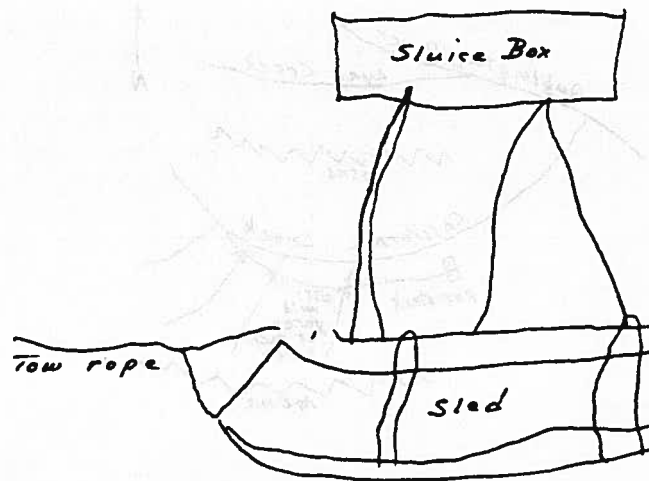
This was for the hydraulic line. There was another pipeline going this way with all these little nozzles. And here's these boxes built very high from the ground. So as the gravel comes out it goes into these boxes which have the riffles. Gravel, rocks and water come through the pipeline and gush out. There's another piece of steel pipe that swings back and forth letting gravel out into these boxes.

In this area there's a lift and if you don't watch and you get your shovel in there it would break in half. This is how these boxes are built. There's one like a sled and then the boxes are built up off the base on a frame. There's a rope in front to pull it around. So you never take it apart, you can just move it to another area. You disconnect the lift and move it too.

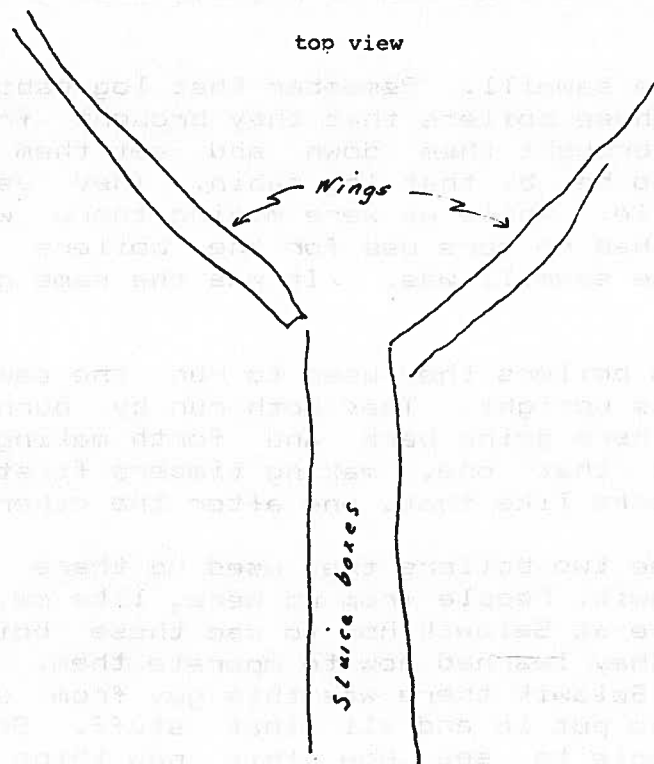
There are gates so far apart along the pipeline and there's a connection here, a gooseneck and the nozzle. As we're working sometimes the nozzle stops gushing water because something's blocking it in here. So we close that gate closest to the nozzle and work back and find these rainbow trout plugged up in there. They came from the lake through the ditch and into the pipeline.

These things are still back there if anybody wants to see them. At the nozzle there's a handle to control it and it has a universal joint so you can aim it in any direction. If a person doesn't know how to handle it it can get away from you and go round and round in any direction. This nozzle is really strong and can move big rocks. I know how to work one. If I had one

here right now I could mow down these willows and trees with that thing. The end of the pipeline where the nozzle is has to be real steady so its weighted with rocks and there are big timbers going into the ground.



Later on there were other miners and there was a head man by the name of Louis Mitigi. They did it a little different. They used the hydraulic line to uncover the ground down to bedrock and they used demolition. They had their boxes built right here on bedrock and two wings funnelling into it and the gravel would go in from up there. This guy got with Old Man Ferguson and started working, 1940 through 1941. So he was the last miner to mine this area. He's the one I told what Old Man Ferguson had shown us about the screen to keep fish out of the line. He didn't do it and one time the water just slowed to a trickle. We followed it back and found those fish in there that time.



Louis had a winch that ran a big scraper, a shovel. It ran by cables, back and forth, scraping. I handled that winch too. There's a little mountain area here and the winch is right here and the gravel comes through here. The gravel from the whole mine comes over here and piles up to the mountain side. There's a person here at all times bringing the gravel over from the mining area and piling it up by the mountain side. That tailing rig is now in Kiana. Lorenz Schuerch, Sr. owns it. He used to use it when a barge came to bring his stuff up. He doesn't use it now but that was what he bought it for. The way it got there, they were mining too at Klery Creek down by Kiana and they wanted that cookhouse that was at the mine. I put it on the barge with the winch, the cookhouse was on a sled and you could drag it with that thing. That cookhouse had everything in it, stove, everything you need for cooking. They brought the winch down, too, but I'm not really sure if they took it to Klery Creek or just left it there in Kiana. Anyway, that's how Lorenz Schuerch, Sr. got it.

They had a sawmill. Remember that log cabin we passed by going upriver? These boilers that they brought from Bornite to the mine, they brought them down and set them up where the old saw mill used to be, by that log cabin. They used them there for quite a while. While we were mining there we had the sawmill. So when we had no more use for the boilers they just moved them to where the sawmill was. It was the same guy had the saw mill, Ferguson.

These two boilers they used to run the sawmill, one lays down, the other is upright. They both run by burning wood. The saw was right there going back and forth making timbers and lumber. I've worked that one, making timbers first then sawing it into lumber. Works like that, one after the other.

Those same two boilers they used up there at the sawmill are now at Selawik. People from up here, like me, went over to show these people at Selawik how to use these boilers and then left them when they learned how to operate them. When we first set them up at Selawik there was this guy from up here who knew how much wood to put in and all that stuff. So there were a lot of Selawik people to see how this new thing was going to operate that time, a crowd of people around. Well, if you put in a lot of wood and it makes a lot of steam sometimes it shoots out making a lot of noise and steam all over. So this guy puts in a lot of wood and that's what happened. The whole crowd went running into the willows. The only guys left behind were the ones that knew about this thing, me and the other guy, Louis Commack, Sr. He was fun. He did that on purpose to fool the Selawik people. He just died not too long ago. When I and the rest didn't get scared and run they slowly started coming back and watching again.

So that's about all I can tell about that mine. In spring or early summer you can go in there through Quḡluqtuq by boat with outboard when the river is high and land right there at the mouth of California Creek. Sometime we could go back there, if I'm still around. It would be nice to go.

Dates of Operation

Dahl Creek

The Iñupiaq name for Dahl Creek is Uqquqḡiñiq. It means "Its down below from there." There's Quḡluqtuq River, and its down below from there. That's why they call it Uqquqḡiñiq. When people are talking about something here's the place where the thing is over on this side. Sun Camp is the same thing, Uqquqḡiq. There's a lake called Tikigasarugruk and this place is down below it so its Uqquqḡiq. That's Sun Camp now.

Dahl Creek began about 1905. I had a friend, a white guy named Lewis Lloyd. They called him Siksrikpalik. He had ground squirrel jackets, that's why they named him that. There were four houses built along Dahl Creek. The first one belonged to Lewis Lloyd and in the bigger one was Charlie Danket. They called this area here Lucky Treat. The largest was the middle place. It was divided in two places inside.

About 1909 this guy by the name of Gus was living there mining. But he had done something wrong before he came and some white people came to get him. No one touched his claim for twenty years. After twenty years Charlie Coffin staked that land and started mining it -- I was about twenty years old then. When they were searching for this guy there were five guys with six horses. These guys were asking who's who in these mining areas and sure enough they were looking for this guy. They told these women they were surveyors for the land, but they weren't. They were just looking for that guy. So when they knew he was there they pitched their tents and started living there for a while. Those guys left their horses and bought a boat from some Native guy and took that guy, Gus, with them in that boat.

They brought this guy Gus down to Kotzebue. When they got there they weren't watching him closely. One day he met a Native from up here that he knew and the Native guy was carrying a shotgun and this guy, Gus, says, "I'd like to go hunt ducks back there," back of Kotzebue. These girls were picking berries back of Kotzebue and they met this white guy with the shotgun. They saw him writing on a piece of paper, and they said among themselves,

"How come this guy's way back here where there's nobody around? We should go!" So they left but they saw from a distance when he shot himself. They went and called people from downtown. What he wrote down was that he wanted the guy that he borrowed the gun from to have some of his money for use of the shotgun. The guy he borrowed the gun from was Mr. Wright and his Inupiaq name was Kakiag.

About 1912 I worked with these guys up there, back and forth. About 1918 I worked at a place where Charlie Coffin staked the land. Then I was earning fifty cents a day.

Then Tom Berriman bought the Dahl Creek mine from the first guy, Tom Shea. E. E. Patterson of the Kotzebue Fur and Trading Company was the boss of the guys that were running the stores, like Berriman. He wasn't around all the time though. Then later some company bought it from him. They came with the hydraulics. That was about 1928 I worked there with those people again. When they went down to bedrock they didn't get any money at all. But I worked on these other little mines every summer for about three or four summers. About 1946 or '47 Al Stout bought that mine and worked on the whole area with a tractor.

So he cleaned the whole area and got all the money and he lives around Fairbanks now. He sold the "cat," the house, everything -- kind of took away what Natives were working on. But there was a guy named Fred Johnson who was the last one to work up there at the head of Dahl Creek. That's it for the dates on Dahl Creek.

Shungnak Creek

We started the same time with these guys so its the same approximate dates. Harry Brown's place was right here and Charlie Coffin claimed this one a little further up at Shungnak Creek. They mined and then they left this land and people started claiming it, like Robert N. Cleveland and Charlie Sheldon, just for the jade, not for gold mining. They didn't care much for jade when mining was going on. It was just a few years ago they started getting jade from back there for jewelry and stuff. Old Man Robert died already, Charlie Sheldon died too.

So about 1938 these guys tried again with a big machine that runs by steam, a dragline scraper. There was a guy named Axel Hanson died there. He was down about sixty feet and the guys were waiting for him a long time. Finally a guy named Billy James said they were all going to die and he was going to go down and look for him. So they lowered him down and he found Hanson dead of a heart attack. He tied a rope around his waist and they pulled him up with the windless. Those guys were with the Kobuk Alaska Mining Company. Billy James stayed there two more summers

when those other fellows quit.

Those old machines are still back there right now. But they didn't get any money. Here's our river, Kobuk River. They let that thing run itself and settle down right here, in wintertime. They had a winch and cables so they brought it back there where it is right now. So right now they don't mine it anymore. They may even be running out of jade.

California Creek

The Fergusons arrived about 1917 and started operating California Creek around then. But they really started working with all the hydraulic machinery about 1927. They finally quit mining about 1937. We had our first child, who died, before that. About 1939 Charlie Coffin worked there for just one summer and he hired some guys. Then in 1940 and '41 that guy, Louis Mitigi, ran it and I worked with them again for those two summers. Since 1941 nobody has worked there anymore. But right now two brothers, Don and Ray Ferguson, go in there every summer. Remember Old Man Ferguson, Frank R. Ferguson? They are his grandchildren. Their father's name is Warren Ferguson, he's Frank R. Ferguson's son. Minnie is their mom and she's still living but their father died. Warren you remember is the one who had the store in Kobuk.

Old Man Ferguson and his brother had planes, an air taxi, store, boat, everything. His brother was Archie Ferguson. So when Old Man Ferguson died Archie Ferguson took over the air taxis and everything from about 1938 to 1946. Archie owned that Arctic Lighterage Company, that fuel supply boat. It had a different name then but some guys bought it and named it Arctic Lighterage. There's a big building in Kotzebue that they use for a post office, hotel and maybe a restaurant. Archie Ferguson owned that. NANA bought it and named it the *Eskimo Building*. It now has offices, a post office and a book store. That's about it on those mining dates.

That guy on Lynx Creek was Herman Pohl. And there was a guy at Riley Creek named Billy Dugan. He died at Riley Creek. They went up from Kobuk to that asbestos mine, up top of the mountain. They go through there. And from there then you go down to Riley Creek and there's his house there. But that's as far as he went. He fell dead.

WORLD WAR TWO TO PRESENT

In 1942 I went over to Candle in late June to mid-July. But I

didn't like that place I was working at. They didn't give me a place to stay. We were staying in an old abandoned house while I ran the hydraulics there at Candle. I wasn't making much but they charged me rent for that place we were staying at. I was planning to come home here to Shungnak but somehow they found out I was working there and they called me in from Nome to work over there. When I went to Nome I worked for two months as a carpenter's helper at the FAA Station. They were building houses then. While I was working there they sent me a message from here that our daughter was real sick so I had to come home.

Late November they started repairing the old FAA Station up there, up river near Kobuk. When I was at Nome my boss had told me I would be working on that job so that's what I did. And I worked here around town, little things here and there.

Come summer again, 1943, I started working for Jim Robbins. They were going to make an airport up there by where that cranberry picking area is. There's an old airstrip up there, that's where I started working again. You can still see that landing strip. But they didn't use it much. The gravel was too loose and the wind made ditches in it.

I was still working with Jim Robbins in 1943 and '44. They had found asbestos rock. You go through Dahl Creek and there's a mountain back there where the creek ends, in that area. That's where I worked those two summers of '43 and '44. On the very top of that mountain they built two big log cabins. There was some asbestos in that mountain and they thought the whole thing was asbestos. But it was just a little so they quit working on it when the asbestos was all gone.

About 1945 or '46 I started working for Harry Brown, going down to Kotzebue and back as a driver on his boat. Harry Brown had the store in Kobuk then. That following summer, 1947, I went to Ikikik to that big cannery in Bristol Bay. The next summer I stayed home, but whenever the barge came up to Kobuk I ran the tractor unloading and loading stuff.

In 1949 I went to Fairbanks to work. I worked as a hydraulic operator at Livengood. The following summer I went back to Livengood as a "catskinner." The next year I went to Livengood but they said there wasn't much work so I went to Fairbanks and found work with another company. So that was the last time I worked away from home.

When Rhiny Berg started prospecting that area we call *Bornite* now, I worked for him for three years. I was a "catskinner" there. When he found copper Kennecott opened it up and I worked three more years. Those last three summers I worked as a driller's helper when Kennecott opened that mine. When I was a driller's helper you always have to go back and forth and up and

down ladders. I told them I was getting too old for that. I started working for Rhiny Berg again because he was still prospecting in any place, like the Candle area. I worked for him for four more summers after quitting the copper mine. When I worked with Rhiny I just stayed at the camp site doing little chores. Rhiny would do the walking around looking at areas he thought might have something. The next summer we went over to a place called Kuugruk. That's in the Candle area, between Candle and Nome. I still did the same thing the whole summer.

The next summer was the last time working. We moved old houses from Candle to Kuugruk. There were houses to be repaired so I worked as a carpenter fixing them up. After that I retired. My only income then was from Social Security. Some white people still asked me to work but I told them no. During all those years I never worked in the wintertime. I always went upriver hunting for martens and then come March, when the days are getting longer, I went out to Nunataaq, the Upper Noatak River. All those years I've been doing that in the wintertime. Then come summer I would start working again. And every year since my retirement right up to last year, 1982, I trapped for skins. Last year was the first time I didn't do any trapping. So that's about it for my working years.

CHAPTER 9

THE ELDERS CONFERENCE

Now I will talk about the Elders Conference, about its beginnings. Willie Hensley was in the Legislature. He went all over the place, down to the states and everywhere. And he finally realized that when our young people go out to school, finishing grade school and high school and then on to college, they were forgetting their *Iñupiaq* identity -- that's what he called it -- you know, how to be an *Iñupiaq*. He recalled that from way back *Iñupiaq* people used to live comfortably with each other, and knew how to live off the land. Young men went together without fighting or hating each other a long time ago. I think it came to him one day that he should gather the elders and have them talk about things that our kids should learn about. He did this through NANA, the Northwest Alaska Native Association, bringing this idea up down in Kotzebue. And that's how it started. He used to say that even though you learn so much out of the white mans' culture you still have to know how to live in the *Iñupiaq* way. So he was the one who first got the idea to get the elders together and record these things for the kids to read.

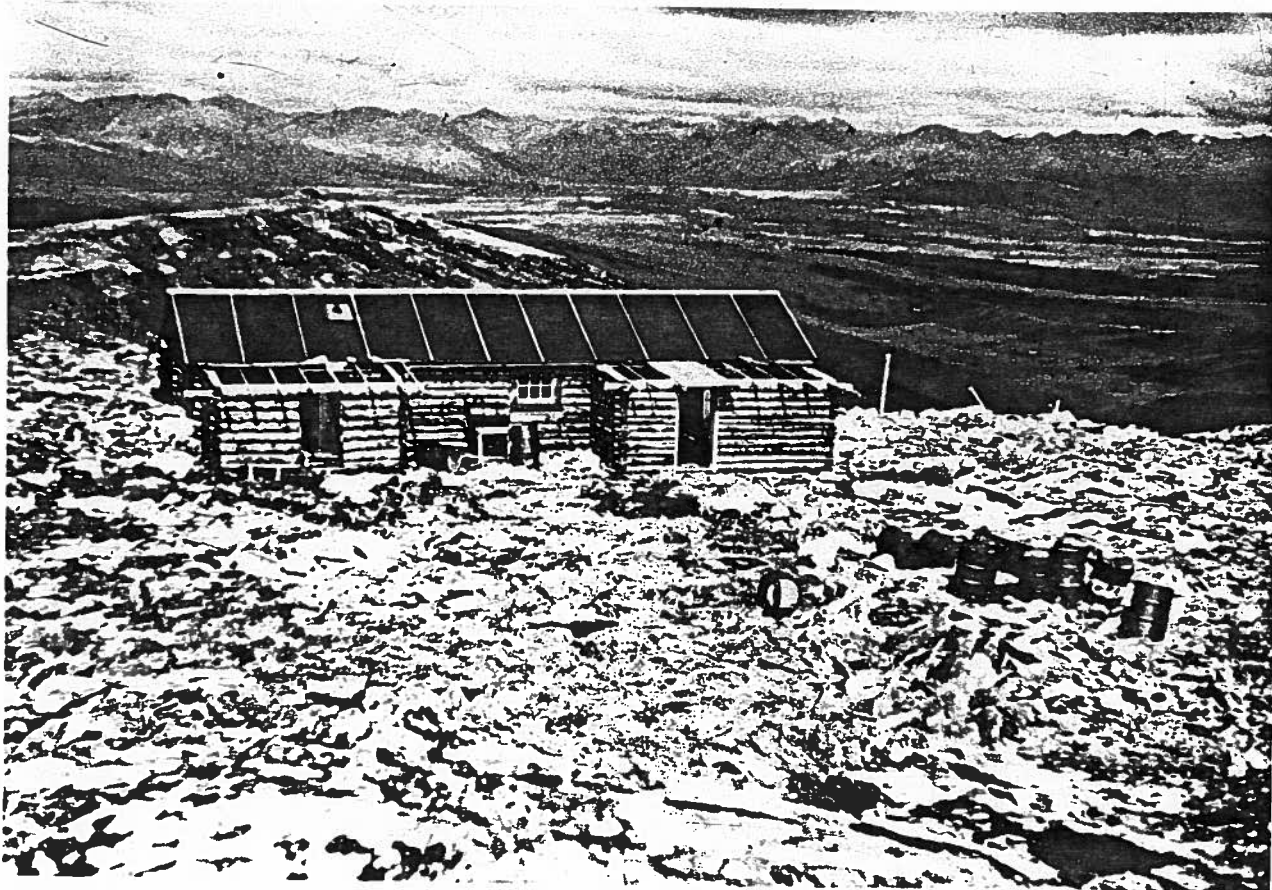
When NANA first started calling on us elders, for two years none of us understood the purpose of our gathering. We would all go back home, not understanding the purpose of our trips. Then at the last meeting I finally understood a little bit, I had not made a previous effort to understand why we were meeting. At that last meeting, when John Schaeffer explained it, I finally understood. Then I stood up and explained what they had been trying to get us to do and how I thought the idea of using the elders for direction was a good idea.

We finally understood it and after I got up the elders designated me to go home and get delegates to represent the Elders Council. When I got home they asked me to select a President and two people to serve as Secretary, one as head secretary and one as alternate. Once I got home I told the elders of the plan. I had hand carried papers stating our intent. The elders got together and voted. They voted *Paaʔuk*, (Walter Douglas), as President and me as the *tuvliq* (lit. "the other person," in this case the Vice President). There were five of us elected to the Village Elders Council, *Paaʔuk*, myself, my *suunaq* (male friend my same age) *Qinūgana* (Charlie Lee, since deceased) who was voted in as a member, *Qaulgutialaq* (Florence Douglas) and *Kitik* (Bertha Sheldon). *Qaulgutialaq* was the head



Lew and prospectors. Berg's equipment on Aurora Mountain.
7/26/55. Irv Tailleir. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.

That's me driving the "cat" on Partner's Hill on Aurora Mountain. That's Rhiny Berg in front of the skid. We were prospecting on top and we were working a jack hammer up there. We are hauling oil and stuff up there for that machine. That was a copper mine up there on Bornite Mountain.



Mine buildings on top of Asbestos Mountain. 10/29/55. Irv
Tailleur. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.



View looking on the St. Lawrence River from the
Tallard, 1952. (Photo by the author)

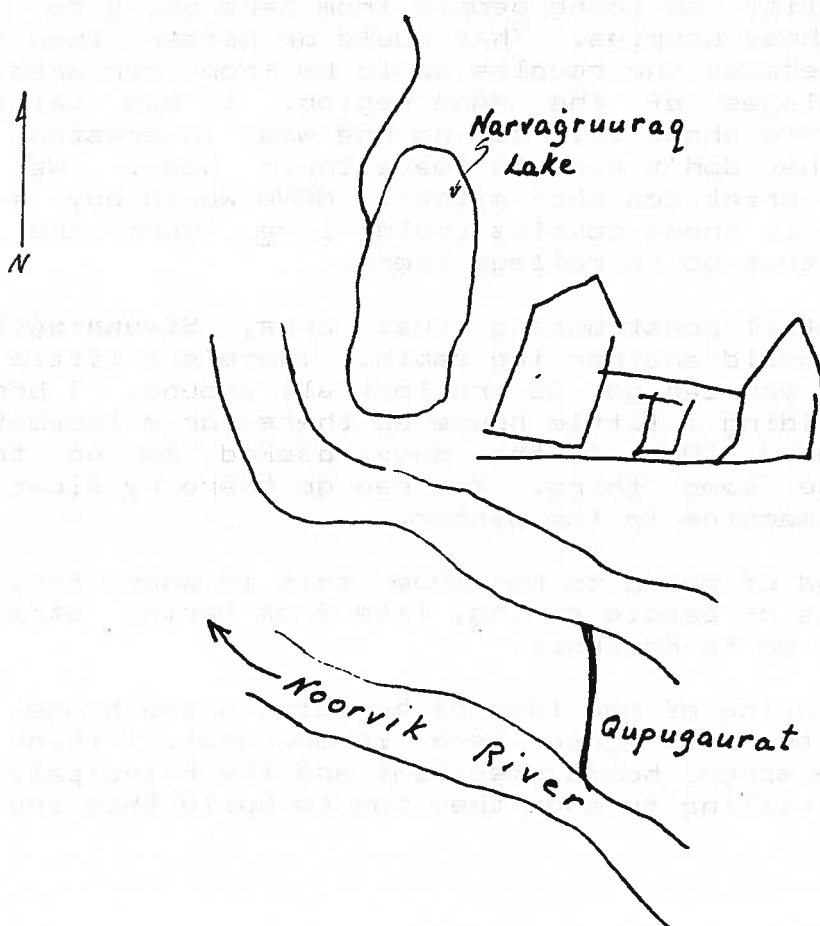


Entrance to Ingnik asbestos mine. 6/29/55. Irv Tailleir. USGS, Alaska Geology Branch.

That's the tunnel they worked on up top of the mountain. That's where they thought there would be more asbestos but there was nothing. That's where they found out. Those are the wooden tracks to haul the buckets out.

secretary. When I was down in Kotzebue this winter I was made President because Paa~~uk~~uk doesn't go to Kotzebue to attend meetings; he would send me instead. I think he felt uncomfortable talking in front of a lot of people and he was not always sure of what he was going to say. That's why I became President. When Qiu~~g~~ugana passed away two years ago they replaced him with Aliqsa~~i~~ya~~a~~aq (Aliqsa~~i~~ya~~a~~aq and spouse, Wilson and Daisy Ticket) with the stipulation that either of them could go. So this is what we organized after that meeting with the elders. We had two younger guys, Agarraaq, (Levi Cleveland), and I~~i~~uppaq, (Edwin Douglas), as group leaders to organize the meetings. But they missed a lot of meetings here in the village. Maybe after we come back from Nunataaq we'll try to get somebody else, two other people really interested in this Elders Council.

There's a place they built, log cabins, called Si~~v~~unniugvik. Here's the Noorvik River right here, its an outer river on this side -- someplace around there. Si~~v~~unniugvik means "a place where you plan before you start going further ahead on your future." There's five little log cabins right now and one big



SIVUNNIUGVIK

building for the meetings. Here's the ocean and there's this lake called **Narvagruraq** and there's five little cabins along side the river, and then here's the two buildings, 40 feet by 40 feet, each connected by a hallway with an entrance. The left side is used for meetings and the right side is a cafeteria. It's closer to **Noorvik** than **Kotzebue**. There's a little creek crossing over from **Noorvik River** that you go through into that camp. That creek is called **Qupugaurat**.

I'm President of the Elders' Conference and when they built this place they would call for me once in a while and we would meet in that area instead of going to **Kotzebue**. About the first part of September I'll be called down there again to plan things for the year. This place has people all year round to watch the camp, two families. Right now, before school starts, there are students there. They show the kids how to check a net, how to cut fish, where to go pick berries, how to balance in a **qayaq** and how to survive out in the wilderness. All kinds of traditional things, from high school down to sixth or seventh grade.

In September **NANA** and some other people are going to plan there at **Sivunniugvik** to get two couples or more for foster parents at the University so young people from here going to college can stay with those couples. That would be better than staying with strangers because the couples would be from our area, one of the eleven villages of the **NANA** region. I was talking to the villagers here about this but no one was interested; it's a new thing and they don't want to leave their home. We want people who don't drink too much either. **NANA** would buy a real nice house, big, so these couples could live there and watch over these kids that go to college there.

They're still constructing that area, **Sivunniugvik**. They're going to build another log cabin. There's a little hill back there where you can go up and look all around. I brought up the idea of building a little house up there for a lookout so you can see all around. One of the guys backed me up too, he was thinking the same thing. You can go there by float plane, boat or by snow machine in the winter.

So instead of going to **Kotzebue** this is where they go. But if there's lots of people coming, like from **Bering Straits** or other areas, they go to **Kotzebue**.

I was thinking of the idea of building a sod house, an **ivruilik**, outside of the high school here in **Shungnak**. I think I'll try to talk to the school board president and the Principal. When school starts I'm willing to show them how to build this sod house.

CHAPTER 10

UNIPCHAAQ--OLD STORIES BUT TRUE

Saityat

I'm going to tell a story about Saityat. He's from the Kuukpak area, the Indian River. Kuukpak is what we call the Yukon River. Anyway, he's an Indian. They call these people from the Kuukpak area Iyagaagmiut because this Kuukpak area might be a rocky area.

When he came to the Kobuk area he stayed with a couple that had a son. The son became like his own brother. The son's name was Qatiya'aana. The relatives of Saityat lived at the end of the Nunataaq, in that area, and in the Kuukpak area which they call Iyagaagmiut.

One of the times that Saityat went into the Kobuk area the Kobuk people didn't treat him right and he got mad and went back to Kuukpak and didn't come here anymore. From that area he would be coming this way and go on top of a hill because there would be Kobuk people around there camping. He was thinking to go down there at night while they're sleeping and kill them all come morning. That's how mad he was, for some reason.

So one time this boy who had become like his brother and another guy, Kataksiñaq, went out there, maybe to hunt. Saityat was in the area and he saw these two boys' fire during the night. Saityat had two guys with him. One was his nephew named Qivliiguraq, but I don't recall the other one's name. But he had two people with him. The two young guys were backpacking home from the Nunataaq area after their hunting. But Saityat didn't know who they were. He had spotted their campfire. During the night he went toward their fire.

A long time ago these people would be wary of other people coming upon them, so they would have their campfire, but they wouldn't sleep by it, they would go a little away, some place close by to sleep, being wary of other people coming and getting them. So they went to a little hilly area where there were a lot of trees. They overslept and it was bright--morning. One of them had left his pole, a walking stick, leaning against a tree. The guys down below, Saityat and the other two, spotted that stick and started coming towards them.

When they reached these guys sleeping up there they had their

bows and arrows ready and they shot one and killed him in his sleep. The other guy had heard the noise of the bow string and jumped up and ran without his clothes on. They couldn't catch him because he was a good runner. They wanted to know who they killed so they looked him over. *Saityat* knew that *Qatiya'aana* had like a lump under the skin at the palm of his hand. And sure enough, when he looked at his hand he knew who it was by that spot. When he saw that he cried saying he wouldn't have done this if he had known it was the boy who was like a brother. They buried him so animals wouldn't get at him.

The other young guy, *Kataksiñaq*, when he went running away, traveled out through *Maniilaq* River. Here's that *Avaaragaat Lake* on the *Maniilaq* and there's this hilly area right here with a lot of trees. There was one person from the Kobuk area hunting here by the name of *Aaquuraqpauraq*. Anyway, he heard somebody up there in these trees above the lake crying, hollering. He didn't understand if it was human or an animal and didn't get to him. But later on when people started roaming around hunting in that area they found the bones. They have always thought it was this other young guy who had been with *Qatiya'aana*.

Here's the *Nunataaq* area and here's the *Alatna*. The three guys were on their way home by *Alatna*. When they reached here there was a couple with a child. The husband's name was *Aapiaq*. They had been hunting too. After they had buried the body they had started home and they reached this couple that was hunting in the *Nunataaq* area. The wife noticed that these guys weren't any good by their actions. She told her husband to be alert, these people weren't any good. But her husband was holding the child in his lap. One of the guys was walking around and suddenly he spilled a bucket of water, a wooden bucket with a handle, he was doing something with it and the handle broke off. He called for the husband's knife. He got it and then stabbed the man holding the child. So he only killed the husband. The wife was alive to tell the story.

So these three guys continued on home. But in those days when they kill a person they don't go right straight for home, they settle down a little out from there and stay there for three days before going home. So they made a place and stayed there for three days.

There was a person named *Aakaŋukpak* amongst the Salmon River people. Remember when we first started taping I said these people don't care what they do, they are very courageous and brave? They can fight anybody. He started getting some men together to travel. As they got a little ways from Salmon River they came upon a woman and her son, a young man. So *Aakaŋukpak* wanted that boy to go with him, if he wouldn't he would kill them right there. That's how those Salmon River people were. So the boy had to follow. They were planning to go to the three people

that had killed that guy. The woman's son's name was **Uularaḡauraq**.

So they resumed their journey taking this young man. Those three were still out there where they had to be for three days. So these Salmon River people started coming toward them. Now, the mother of this young man had told her son, "You have nothing against those people, so if you start fighting against them only shoot three times from your bow and arrow and then quit." As they started to approach it was evening, fall time. From the settlement they saw a young man going up to a hill and he didn't come back all night long. There was a mother living there in the settlement who always told her son to go sleep up there in the evening and come back in the daytime. The mother knew something would be happening, danger. That's who they saw. He wore a shawl made out of skins and walked up to the hills to sleep and came back during the day. The shawls are made of two caribou skins sewed up side by side. They're tanned. He used it also as a blanket for sleeping.

When they got close they could see this place where those three men were. But a long time ago when a girl reaches puberty they keep her away from the settlement and these Salmon River guys thought there was a young woman in that place. So they told **Uularaḡauraq**, the young man with only three arrows, to go to that place. Sure enough, when he got there there were the three men sleeping instead of a woman as had been thought. So he shot one of them with one of his arrows, and another one, the middle one, he shot but the guy got up and ran away. The third guy picked up the drinking water bucket and used it for a shield. Because he knew he couldn't get him in the heart the young man shot him between the legs. The wounded man got the arrow out but the flint was still in there.

The rest of the Salmon River people went to the settlement and started killing the people there while the young man was still back there. He could hear somebody call out, "OK, **Saiṭyat**, this is what's going to happen for what you did. Now it's your turn!" They killed all the people, then went up to the caches and started throwing down good skins to take with them. **Uularaḡauraq** told them to watch out for the third person who had gotten away. "He's out in the willows and he might get you!" And sure enough, he got up close to the guys throwing down the skins. There were two guys standing near each other. One of them saw two arrows coming and he quickly moved out of the way. The other one got hit and rolled down the hill. The one who shot them then hollered--"For victory!"--saying he shot the guy. The one that was killed with that arrow was **Aakaṭukpak**'s son-in-law, married to his daughter. He was the one who got all those guys together to fight. When he saw his son-in-law killed he turned against his partners and tried to fight them. But an older person who was with them said, "Are we to fight among ourselves? Why not

get that person who shot your son-in-law instead." So **Aakaŋukpak** changed his mind and went to look for his son-in-law's killer. When they reminded him of that person back there he said, "I'll need someone to go with me to fight that person." So they picked a guy named **Pisruktaatchiaq**. He was so fast that even someone else's arrow couldn't hit him.

When they got there that guy couldn't walk because he had been hit between the legs. He came into view thinking he might as well let them fight him. They shot arrows at him but he just brushed them away and his wounds healed instantly, he was that kind of person who heals his wounds by himself.

At that time when they went to fight they would wear two feathers behind their head. **Pisruktaatchiaq** was a very fast person. Even arrows couldn't hit him. Every time an arrow came towards him he moved real fast and only the feathers got hit, not him. Soon the feathers were almost gone. Only the center stems were left.

Finally one of them hit that wounded guy in the nostril. He tried to brush it away but it was inside him already. In those days when they're fighting and one person turns his back they quit fighting. So that's what he did when he couldn't take that arrow out. And those two guys left him alone.

The only ones left living were the guy with the arrow in his nostril, who turned out to be **Saityat**, and the young man who went up there to sleep when his mother told him to and the two wives of **Saityat**. The two wives and the young guy took care of him with the arrow in his nostrils, moving here and there, never living in one place but living sometimes in one place, sometimes in another. The two women worked on that wound. It had gone through the upper bone of the mouth. They carved it and got the arrowhead out. But he still had the arrow between his legs and that's what killed him. Just before he died he said, "If I had just taken care of that young boy, **Uuluraḡauraq**. I could have taken him back in the trees and beat him to death with my bow. I should have done that."

So **Saityat** died. They left him there and moved on to Fort Yukon. Those people are still living over there. They used to live along these areas here, **Nunataaq**, **Alatna**, in there, but then they went back to Fort Yukon where they really came from.

The Salmon River people will be the last of our story--how they got back from their fighting.

These guys went back to Salmon River and started living there again. Amongst these people was **Uuluraḡauraq**. The following summer people from the Kobuk area went down to a little creek, the mouth of that creek a little above **Kiana**. And they told those

guys who had fought the Indian people that Saityat had died. They told Uulurağauraq what Saityat had said, that he should have beat him with his bow, otherwise he wouldn't be dying right now. He had been wearing that shawl they always wear when he died. They had witnessed it. This area they call Nalluq is a seining place for fish, white fish. When they told Uulurağauraq what Saityat said Uulurağauraq stood up and said, "Look at me. See what I would do if Saityat had tried hitting me with his bow!" He ran real fast. Where that seining place is the creek was about so wide, and he flew up and clear across the creek. That's how fast he was.

A long time ago when people kill other people they make songs which they call aniqsrausriq.

This song was made by Uulurağauraq. He made this song against Saityat. The first part of the song starts off saying, "It's so funny seeing the two wives of Saityat carrying him around." The second part says, "Go ahead, go ahead, go towards Kobuk and fight again."

That's it.

Mammoth Hunters

It's said a long time ago there were people living above us. And when they decided to hunt they would have the sky form a lot of clouds. When they are going after a mammoth the mammoth comes to the earth but the earth is too soft and it sinks into the ground. And that's where they would kill it. That's how they hunt mammoths, those people from above us.

There was once a man down by Puivlitch, those little mountains above Kiana. He was on top of those mountains and without even realizing it suddenly there were two people right beside him. These two people told him, "We're trying to bring an animal to the ground so it can't get away from us. If you want to watch come with us." Sure enough, they took him with them. There was a little lake a short distance from them and there was a big mammoth knee deep into the ground already. They killed it with whatever weapons they had and told the man, "Stay here and watch us butcher it up. You can see how we do it."

After they cut it up one of them told this guy to build a fire so they could cook and eat. So he gathered dry wood and things to make a fire real fast. He tried and tried to light this open fire but he couldn't. You know how rain makes a fire sizzle and go out? It would just go out like that. These two men went to the one trying to start the fire. They were just smiling at each other. They were carrying a piece of meat with them. They saw

he was having problems. One of them went down to the lake and started picking up this real heavy water-soaked wood and brought it up. Sure enough, when he ignited it it lit right up with big flames even though it was real wet.

They started cooking up the meat. This is how they cook mammoth meat, with soaking wet wood. When I was small and I was gathering wood and found wet driftwood from the sandbar my mom would say, "Oh, you're getting wood that they use to cook mammoth with."

The man they had taken with them really liked the meat, it was tasty. So after they ate there by that fire they went back to where they had been butchering the mammoth and gave him a piece of the meat saying, "Take this back to where you came from and put it in your ice cellar. Tell your wife each time she is getting some meat to eat not to bring it all in the house. Just cut a piece at a time. See what will happen."

So he backpacked this meat to his home. He told his wife all this and that's what she did. Each time he went out there to get some food she would cut a piece of that meat. She would cook it and they would eat it and the next time they went to the ice cellar that piece of meat would be back in place. It would be whole again. And the meat looked fresh all the time. It tasted fresh and never got old. Every time she cut a piece of it the next day the piece would be back in its place. And the meat that the husband brought there would look the same all the time.

That's the end of this first guy but there was another one that went to these mountains called Puivlich. This guy had a name. He was Ataugraitchiaq. He was the second man who went to these same mountains where this guy experienced all this. Each time this guy went up those mountains he never wore mukluks or any kind of boots. He just oiled the bottoms of his feet with some kind of oil and would be on those mountains all day without any boots. He might have had traps up there and he would be hunting also.

So this guy was up there one morning and when he woke up all of a sudden there were these two people again from up there, the ones who had appeared to the first person. And these two told that guy that they are going to have an animal sink into the ground and just get it there and if he wanted to watch to go with them. But this guy refused, "If I were to become a big shaman I would follow you but if I won't be then I'm not going to follow you." "If that is what you wish that is what you will become," they told him. "Will I be able to make a dead person come back to life?" he asked. "Sure enough, that's what you'll be doing if you just follow us," they said. There was another question, "If I see a little mountain, a certain one out of all those mountains, will I be able to move that mountain to another place?" And these guys said, "Yes, that's what you'll do if you

just follow us." Then there was this last question that he asked them, "If I lick my little finger will I be able to slice this jade up with my hand?" and he pointed to a jade boulder at Shungnak Creek. And these guys just smiled at each other saying, "No, that's one thing you won't be able to do," and they said, "So you're not going to follow us then," and they just left him behind.

So these old bones that you guys are finding today are from the ones that these guys brought down to butcher here on this earth. That's where they come from. This is how these people from above us hunt these mammoths, bringing them down to earth and having them sink in the ground and killing them there and butchering them up. Those old bones, not just one place but anywhere. I found a mammoth tooth a long time ago when I was young, upriver where our summer camp used to be, in the sand bar across from there. It must be from there that I found this thing. When I found it my relatives and other people said, "This is the tooth of a devil!" but it was the tooth of a mammoth. It was so big.

That's the end of this story. That's the end of the mammoth hunting by those people from above us. Now I'm going to talk about that great flood that happened long ago. The water was so high it went up to the tops of the mountains.

The Flood

Just above Quġluqtuq River there's a mountain called Umiaviuraq. During this big flood there were people living on the mountain tops because there was so much high water. And there were people living on top of this mountain, too, that they call Umiaviuraq, just above Quġluqtuq River, and just above California Creek. There were people, too, living back there on that mountain top you can see out there if you go out, that mountain back of us, its named Ingivak. There was one person named Qasiġayuaq living amongst these people. He lived up here on top of Inġivak. He had a brother living some place and one day he took some other guys with him and got a boat ready and flew through the air. They were going towards these people at Umiaviuraq. They were just approaching that settlement there when these people hollered, "There comes Qasiġayuaq flying over us!" And all of a sudden that boat landed close to those people up on the mountains. And when you see that mountain from the river it looks like a boat and there are a few rocks that look like two or three people in this boat. That's why they call it Umiaviuraq.

So when the people forced them to land by hollering at them they turned into rocks; the people and the boat. That's why that mountain is shaped like a boat. When you climb up there and look around it doesn't look like a boat, but it looks like a boat when

you see it from a distance from the river. And there are people in the rear of the boat.

The Origin Of Land

When they were living on top of the mountain at that time there was this one little old lady that had a grandchild. And on this big body of water there were tussocks floating around once in a great while, anyplace on the water. People tried to spear them and hit them with their arrows but they couldn't. They had heard that if they hit one of these the water would disappear and land would come up. So this old woman got her grandson ready, got his spear ready. This boy's name was **TuIugaq**, which is our raven today, **TuIugaq**. She gave him a song to sing, too, while he was out there. So this boy got his **qayaq** ready and his spear with a rope attached to it so he could hang on to it if he speared something.

He started off singing "water be calm." When he first started singing the tussock appeared out of the water but it was a little too far away. The second time around he started his song again and sure enough, right in front of his **qayaq** it appeared again. He hit it with his spear. The water became like a storm, waves. Soon it was all land. That's the end of this story. That's our raven that we talk about today. Now I'm going to add on another little story about this raven.

Origin Of Light

Long ago here on our earth there was no light in the daytime. When people went out to gather wood they would smell around to see if they could smell wood, it was so dark. They knew of this wealthy person living some distance from them and he had this ball-like thing at his place which they call "daylight." If they could get to this ball and somehow burst it open daylight would come out on earth and it would be like this. But they couldn't reach it and somehow they had to do something in order to get it. Even the really strong shamen tried to get at it to get the light but they couldn't. One day this **TuIugaq** said to these people, "I think I can be the one to get this ball of light from that wealthy person."

So he took off flying as a raven, our raven today, and as he flew over other settlements he would say, "I'm going over to this man and get this ball of light which the shamen can't even get!" And the people would say from down below, "Yes, maybe you'll get it this time. Even the strong shamen can't get it, maybe you will!" They doubted him.

When he reached the land of this wealthy man, outside of the village it was just bright. There were two balls of light in this man's house. But even though those two were inside the house the village was bright. When Tuŕugaq reached this place he noticed the house right away because it was bright in there.

There was a place a short distance away where they got their water from, a water hole. So he turned himself into a little feather, one of those soft down feathers, and stayed there observing from this place thinking that one day a person might come out of this bright house and get water too. And in the evening, when its close to bedtime, a woman would come out to this place to get water. One evening the feather was there by the water well when the woman came out from that house carrying a little dipper in a bucket. She filled up her bucket and the raven was thinking, "I wish she would get thirsty and take a drink of water using the dipper." After she filled up the bucket, sure enough, she started filling her dipper. And the raven started thinking again, "I wish somehow there would be a little breeze so it could blow me into the dipper." And that's what happened, a little wind blew him into the dipper and the woman drank him down.

Now this woman was the daughter of that wealthy man. So she drank water and went back to the house. One day she started feeling something strange growing in her stomach. She had no husband or man but she could feel something in there. So her mother felt around inside her and said, "There's a child growing within you, you're pregnant." When the time came she had a baby boy. He was really cute, this baby boy, and the grandfather, the father of this woman, really loved this boy too.

So he started growing up. Soon this little boy realized there were two balls, one bigger than the other, and there was a bright thing within them. He noticed these two balls of light when he was old enough to play. When he was old enough to sit up by himself and play around the house every once in awhile he would cry and cry. They tried to comfort him but he just cried and cried, quit for a while, then cry again.

One day this boy was sitting up, he didn't walk yet, and he would cry and cry. And every so often he would look at those two balls that were by his grandfather's bedside. And his grandfather started wondering, "I wonder if he wants to play with one of those balls?" He didn't let anyone else touch those balls, but the baby wouldn't stop crying so he gave the smaller ball to his grandchild. The baby started laughing and was real happy playing with this ball, touching it and rolling it and everything. When he quit playing with it the grandfather put it back in its place with the other ball. When he started crying again he would give him back the ball of light.

The baby, even though he was so young, watched his grandfather really close. But the grandfather really watched the baby too, when he was playing with this ball. So they were watching each other closely. Then one day the grandfather turned his back and was doing something else. When the raven realized he had his back turned he punctured the ball. It burst open and the baby turned into a raven as he was before and flew out through the skylight. He flew out and everything became bright when the light burst out. When the grandfather realized it was too late to save that ball of light he said, "OK, let it become day and night, not light all the time." So this is how it is today.

There's an old saying from the old people that we shouldn't bother the ravens or kill them or get rid of them because they saved the world from that big flood and they also brought light to this world. That first raven song when he was trying to spear the tussock, they used to sing that when the wind is getting strong and there are waves or in winter when there is too much wind. And it would calm down. It really happened to this one woman. She was out there and the wind became strong. She sang the song and it calmed down.

The Man Who Lived Through Three Generations

This guy lived through three generations. The people that were his age died and he was living with their children and then on to the third one. He had three wives during his lifetime. His first wife became old and died, so did his second wife, died of old age, and then his third wife died before him again. This *Qugruligauraq* was a great hunter. He could get a catch on any kind of animal. In the wintertime he put out traps in all the creeks that have them. Every year.

A long time ago when they were trapping for animals like wolverine or fox, those things, in the wintertime when you check your trap that animal is frozen. So they go to a place, what we call a "hot spring" today, that never forms ice, even in the wintertime. It's at the head of the Selawik River about one day's travel from here. They build a little rack, like a cache, so the animal won't touch the water. They cut branches from these spruce or pine trees and cover the animal with these branches and then cover it with snow on top and it melts the animal overnight, enough so you can skin it. So when this person trapped an animal he did this, went to a hot spring. When you're not in an area where there's a spring you can thaw them too, by an open fire, but it's much slower than thawing it out at a spring.

So he gathered these animal skins in the winter time so that he could go trade them. And then when he's coming back upriver

after trading he would have them drop him off, probably in the area around Ambler River, and he would go out to Nunataaq and start hunting again for meat. Then he would come back through Maniilaq and back home.

A long time ago when there was a death in the family they took them out and put them away some place. But when one of this guy's wives died, maybe the first one or the middle one, he was going to take her out and put her away. So he tied a rope under her arms and was taking her out through the skylight or smoke hole opening. But the rope broke and his wife landed back on the fireplace. Long ago, if for some reason the dead stop there, they don't continue the journey with this death but just bury or leave them there. So this is what happened to that man. When the rope broke and his wife fell on top of those ashes, there wasn't any fire at the time, he left her there, leaving his house saying, "Too bad this happened, your staying right there." If the rope hadn't broken he would have taken her away some place else.

His last wife became sick and he knew she wouldn't live for long. So he started packing up his stuff, all his belongings, and he was just leaving out the door but he dropped one of his mukluks on the way out. His wife said to him, "You dropped your mukluk." So he went back and picked it up and just left his wife there. She was still alive but he was leaving her because he knew that she wouldn't live long.

This man was a great hunter. But he became old and couldn't hunt anymore. When he saw people wearing wolverine belts he would say, "When I was younger like you I would go out when the weather gets really cold and gather all my wolverines instead of just showing off a belt like that." He knew these men weren't as good as he was; they wouldn't travel out in the real cold weather like him. "If I wanted to wear wolverine belts like that I would go out in real cold weather, so cold you could hear it."

His place had everything. You wouldn't starve in his place. All his belongings, everything, he made himself, dog team, qayaq, everything. One time he saw this man wearing a jacket made out of the back parts of muskrats, some kind of parka, and he said to him, "This man is wearing a fancy parka but I wonder how his place is? Maybe not as good as mine used to be."

This old man became very old and he had a dog named Aasuk and in the evening this dog would start hollering that it wanted to eat or something. So when all the people were in their houses in bed he would untie his dog and let it go saying, "Go wherever you want to go and just help yourself." The next day he would hear people say, "This dog, Aasuk, has been eating again from my meat." And the old man would say, "Oh, I tied him pretty good last night, I'm pretty sure he wasn't loose." After he was the

one who had let him go.

This man became so old that--have you ever seen these things growing on rocks in the mountains, rocks that are very old?--that's what happened to his head. These things started growing right there like on rocks, he was so old. He said, "It's really true when they say that we come from dust, how God made us." So that's what grew on his crown. His relatives right now call him *Qugruat*. It's almost saying his name but it means that they come from this person. His relatives living today, they call them *Qugruat*. That's the end of that story. Now I'll tell another short one that I know myself. This story is about a man named *Aaquuraqpauraq*. I was old enough to know him too.

The Man Who Liked To Eat

When Kobuk first formed into a village he was living there but then he went downriver to die someplace down there. So I knew him when he was there in Kobuk. This man was a real strong person. They couldn't even handle his bow to string it, it was too strong, but he himself could handle it. When he shoots at a grizzly bear his arrow would go right through the bear and land on the ground. His bow was that strong.

This person liked to eat. When people were not looking at him, observing him, he could probably finish a whole black bear all to himself. That's how much he liked to eat. So one day these people were hunting, probably out at *Nunataaq* after going through the mountains by way of *Maniiĭaq*. Anyway, this old man was hunting out there too. He had quite a few ground squirrels with him but these guys that met him had caught a black bear. They settled down for the night making camp. He said, "Go right ahead and make your places to sleep, you guys are young, just go ahead and sleep. I myself will just sit by the fire and keep it going." Before they went to sleep one of them suggested they put the bear away because he knew about this man. But the others didn't know and didn't listen to him and, sure enough, when they awoke the next morning the black bear was all gone. This old man ate it all up. In the morning when they started waking up they heard somebody go, "Uhh! Uhh!" like with a full stomach and when they looked around their meat was gone.

A long time ago they say people came from animals. This man came from wolverines. That's how come he could eat so much and he's so strong. There's a man named "Peter *Aaquuraqpauraq*" in *Kiana*. That's his grandson, the son of his daughter. He lives in *Kiana* today and he's named after him. Oscar *Nuiqtun* is also his grandson. These people were from the Kobuk area up here. But now his two grandsons live in different places, one in *Kiana*, one in *Alakaket*. But they all come from this area, Kobuk. That's the

end of the story.

The Story of Walker Lake and Papiġuq Mountain

Those real steep mountains there by Walker Lake, that tallest mountain looks like a fish tail. That's why they call it that, Papiġuq. They put it on the map as Igikpak but that's wrong. They switched them. There is a story of an old lady and her son living some place around here and they saw a caribou swimming in this lake, Walker Lake. Her son went down to this lake to try to get this caribou and a big fish swallowed her son and his qayaq. So the lady climbed up these mountains right here, Qauriaaq Mountains, and started heating a rock. She heated the rock red hot and when it was hot she rolled it down into the lake and the lake started boiling. That's how she killed that fish while it was swimming around. And when it died it's tail was up in the air. That's why they call that "Fish Tail Mountain" because that's where it died. If you travel out that way you might see that mountain. And there's a little island in this area of Walker Lake where that rock was rolled in.



INDEX

aagruk-stars 29
 aagrutchaak-stars 29
 Aakaŋukpak-person 114
 Aapiaq-person 114
 Aaquuraqpauraq-person 114, 124
 Aaquuraqpayraq, Peter 124
 aataq-fat 72
 age groups 1
 age relation-suunaq 110
 age relation-uumaa 28
 agraataa-fireplace 45
 aŋviq-bowhead whale 9
 aiparuq-stored raw fish 2
 airplanes 7
 airstrip construction 108
 Aivluna-person 99
 Akiŋuq-person 5
 akiŋugitit-shelter 55
 akŋapiaq-brown bear 74
 Akuliŋaq-placename 28, 84
 akulliŋsuqtuq-backpacking 64
 Alaasuppaaniŋ-placename 7
 Alakaket-village 7, 124
 Alaska Commercial Co. 85
 Alatna River 114
 alatkaŋnaiŋat, story about 10
 Alugvik-placename 17
 aluminum coins 84
 amaguq-wolf 3
 Ambler River 123
 Ambler-Ivisaappaat 9
 Amilŋaqtuayaaq-people 5
 Amilŋaqtuayaaq-placename 1
 Anaktuvuk Pass 87
 Aŋarraaq, Joe's grandfather 5
 Aŋarraaq, Joe's brother 14
 Anatkuuraq-person 99
 ancestors 5
 animals-half beaver, half marmot 10
 aniqsrauriaq-songs 117
 Aniyaak-placename 26
 aniyyityaq-shelter 42
 Aqa'aniuraq-person 6
 Aŋmaluaŋatkut-placename 11
 Aqusriuŋvik-placename 10

archaeological site at Shungnak 17, 76
 Arctic Lighterage Company 107
 Argaitchuuraq-person 87
 Argumun Ittuaq-placename 87
 asbestos discovery 108
 Asbestos Mountain, photo caption after page 109
 Asriqsat-placename 6
 atalisaġviich-shelter 40
 Atauġraitchiaq-person 118
 atliqqat-bedroll 63
 Aulakut-family 20
 Aulaqpatkut-mother's family name 5
 Aulaqpatkut-placename 6
 Aumalutkut-family 20
 auriviuraq-shelter 37
 Aurora Mountain, photo caption after page 109
 automatic gate 95
 Avaaragaat Lake 114
 avalanche 5
 Avilutqugruaq-placename 21
 avraat-hunting group 86
 Ayauniġruaq-a shaman 9
 Backland, Capt. John 82
 backpacking-akulliqsuqtuq 64
 backpacks 62
 Barrow-Utqiaġvik 7, 90
 bear hunting 2, 73, 86
 beaver 10
 Beaver Creek 11
 bedroll-atliqqat 63
 bedroll-tunusrunmiutaq 63
 Berg, Rhiny 108
 and photo caption after page 109
 Bering Straits 89
 Bernhart, Herman 20
 Bernhart, May 85
 Berriman, Tom 82, 84, 106
 berry picking 17
 birth practices 7
 Black River 14, 20
 Black, Napoleon 14
 boat making 87
 Bornite Mine 100, 108
 bow and arrows 3, 70, 73
 Bristol Bay 108
 brown bear 74
 Brown, Harry 21, 106, 108
 burial practice 123
 butchering place 76
 cache 74
 cache-unalut 51
 California Creek 100

California Creek dates 107
 camp, fall 15
 camp, spring 20
 camp, summer 20
 camp, winter 14
 Canada 79
 Candle-placename 107
 cannery work 108
 caribou drive 71
 caribou hunting 2, 71, 98
 caribou hunting technique-puugriruut 71
 caribou migration 4
 carpentry work 108
 Carrie-teachers 21
 catskinner 108
 Cleveland, Levi 111
 Cleveland, Robert N. 106
 Coal Mine 1, 20
 coastal people 81
 Coffin, Charlie 97, 105, 106
 and photo caption after page 21
 Coffin, Jacob 99
 Commack, Louis Sr. 104
 copper discovery 108
 corral, caribou 71
 cultural planning center-Sivunniugvik 111
 Dahl Creek 93, 105, 108
 Dahl Creek dates 106
 dall sheep hunting 2
 dam, sheefish 23
 Danket, Charlie 105
 day of rest 9
 descent from animals 124
 Diomede 89
 dipper-patkutaq 69
 division of labor 2, 3, 16
 dog freighting 100
 dog pack 62
 dogs 59
 door-nuiyagiak 45
 Douglas, Edwin 111
 Douglas, Florence 110
 Douglas, Irene 21
 Douglas, Walter 34, 110
 dragline 104
 driller's helper 108
 Dugan, Billy 107
 Elders Conference 110
 Elders Council 110
 Ella, Joe's granddaughter 28
 Eskimo Building 107
 eye operation 76

FAA Station 108
 Fairbanks 108
 fat-aaktaq 72
 Ferguson air taxi, lighterage service 107
 Ferguson and mining 99
 Ferguson, Archie 83
 Ferguson family 107
 Ferguson, Don and Ray 107
 Ferguson, Frank R. 98
 Ferguson, Old Man 98, 100
 Ferguson, Warren 84, 100
 fireplace-agrautaa 45
 fireplace-sinigutit 37
 first catch 22
 fish catch, division of 16
 fish dam-paugich, napaaqtuqs 2
 fish dams 27
 fish eggs 21
 fish spear 24
 fish spear-kapuuqqaun 67
 fishing, net 15, 20
 flint station 76
 flood story 119
 food competition 4
 food for traveling 67
 Fort Yukon 116
 fungus-tunnuuraq 27
 fur harvest 29
 fur trade 84
 game wardens 3
 gifts 80
 gold discovery, Calif. Ck. 99
 grave-mother's 14
 Greenland 79
 ground squirrel hunting 72
 Gus, story about 105
 Hanson, Axel 106
 Hensley, Willie 110
 hot spring 122
 house-ivruulik 45
 hunting, learning 26
 hydraulics 101
 hypnotism 91
 ice cellar-sigluaq 49
 ice cellars 90
 Igikpak Mountain 125
 Igliqtiqsiugviguagmiut-people at mouth of Kobuk River 10
 igluktuulik-knife 90
 Ikaatchialik-placename 20
 Ikikik-placename 108
 Ikpiipak river 90
 Ilaganniq-person 88

iluilaq-no stomach 72
 ilutigich 1
 Imqusriq-person 6
 Indian ancestors 7
 Indian River 113
 Inqivak Mountain 119
 Inupiaq identity 110
 Inuqtuaq-person 5
 Ipnaigrualik-placename 17, 76
 Ipnatchiaq-placename 6
 isigagutik-mukluk 64
 Isigakpak-placename 9
 itchalik-shelter 53
 Itiqsraq-person 5
 Itqiliagruich-Indian descendants 7
 iuvauraut-travel term 87
 ivaqsaat-afterlife 9
 Ivisaappaat-Ambler 9
 Ivisaaq-placename 27
 ivruligauraq-sod house, photo caption after page 58
 ivrulik-sod house 14, 45
 Iyagaagmiut 79, 113
 Iyagaagtat-storage 75
 jade 107, 119
 James, Billy 106
 Jim, Riley, photo caption after page 21
 John River 87
 Johnson, Fred 106
 and photo caption after page 96
 Kakiaq-person 106
 kakiaq-spear 24
 Kalugruaq-placename 11
 kangalanniaq-caribou drive 71
 Kangigiuqsivik-placename 98
 Kanuaq-person 2
 kapuqqaun-fish spear 67
 katak-storm shed 45
 Kataksiñaq-person 113
 kayaks 71
 kayuqtum sisaa-shelter 44
 kayuqtuq-fox 3
 Kennecott Co. 108
 Kiana-village 5, 104, 116, 117, 124
 killigutit-shelter 55
 kinship term 124
 kinship terminology 6
 Kisiuraq, a person 14, 82
 Klery Creek 104
 Kobuk-village 78
 Kobuk Alaska Mining Company 106
 Kobuk Canyon, photo caption after page 13
 Kobuk River 87

Kobuk store 84
 Kobuk teachers 93
 Kobuk boat landing 93
 Kobuk, founding of 93
 Kobuk, naming of 21
 Kotzebue 7, 28, 82, 84, 105
 Kotzebue area 88
 Kotzebue-trade fair 5, 9
 Koyukuk River 87
 Kuġluqtum Qanigani-placename 5
 kuluutagnaq-mother marmot 72
 Kumak-person 9
 Kuugaatchiaq-placename 15
 Kuugiiġaq River 11
 Kuugruaq River 28
 Kuugruaq-placename 14, 83
 Kuugruk-placename 109
 Kuukpak area 113
 Kuutchiam Paananiit-placename 1
 kuviqsugaurat-storage technique. Also a placename 17
 Kuvrarak-person 89
 Laugviik=Long Beach, Kobuk 21
 Lee, Alec 99
 Lee, Annie 20
 Lee, Charlie 110
 lick, mineral 17, 70, 76
 Livengood 108
 Lloyd, Lewis 105
 Lomen brothers 82
 Long Beach=Laugviik, Kobuk 21
 Lucky Treat Mine 105
 Lynx Creek 98
 Magdalene 26
 Malemute Creek 87
 Maniiġaq, his prophecies and teachings 7
 Maniiġaq, story about 9
 Maniiġauraq, the prophet 6
 Maniiġaq River 78, 114, 123, 124
 marmot 10
 marmot hunting 2, 72
 marmot, folktale about 72
 marriage, residence 27
 marten hunting 67
 Mary Ward-Tiriq 14
 Masruagruaq-person 5
 Matuligauraq-person 29
 Matulik-person 84
 memories, earliest 20
 messengers 5, 80
 Midas Creek, photo caption after page 58
 miġiq-shelter 34
 mineral licks 17, 70, 76

miners, first 93
 mining 93, 100
 mining technology 95
 Mitigi, Louis 103
 monster 90
 moose 4
 mukluk-isigagutik 64
 muskrat hunting 28
 muskrat trapping 2
 Nalluq-placename 117
 naming prohibitions 71
 NANA Corp. 3, 5, 110
 Narvaguuraq Lake 112
 Nasruk-person 1, 30
 natmaktuġiaq-trap 75
 natmautalik-trap 69
 and photo caption after page 69
 net, seining 16
 niuvaala-shelter 44
 niuviq-trading partner 80, 84
 Noatak area 3
 Nome 108
 Noorvik River 111
 Noorvik-village 14
 Nuiqtun, Oscar 124
 nuiyaġiak-door 45
 Nuliyuk-person 7
 Nunataagmiut 6
 Nunataaq 2, 26, 32, 61, 71, 75, 78,
 85, 109, 113, 114, 123, 124
 Nunataaq-travel routes to 67
 old lady 12, 125
 Paa River 87
 Paaniikaaluk, Joe's sister 15
 Papiġuq Mountain, story about 125
 partner 80
 Partner's Hill, photo caption after page 109
 patkutaq-dipper 69
 Patqurak-person 28
 Patterson, E. E. 106
 Pick River 87
 Pigliġiaq-person 5
 Piġagvik-placename 76
 pilot, river boat 108
 Piguqsratchaat-placename 111
 pipeline construction 100
 Pisruktaatchiaq-person 116
 Pohl, Herman 107
 porcupine, birthing 27
 porcupine, hunting 27
 prospecting 93
 puberty 7

Puivlich-placename 117, 118
 puugriruat-caribou hunting technique 71
 Qaalgiqsuuq Lake 98
 Qaanauraq-placename 98
 Qala-placename 1
 Qalamiu-father's family 5, 6
 Qalugriivik-placename 73
 qanattaq-shelter 32
 Qapuk-person 5, 6
 qapvik-wolverine 3
 qargi 80
 Qasiqayuaq-person 119
 Qatiya'aana-person 113
 Qatugrualuk-great grandfather, story about 6
 Qauriaaq Mountains 125
 Qayaq-person, story about 70
 qigniqtuam amia-black bear skin 74
 Qivliquraq-person 113
 Quqluqtuq-placename 105
 Quqluqtuq River 98, 119
 Qugruat-family 124
 Qulitigiik-placename 87
 Qupilguuraq-person 5
 Qupugaurat Creek 112
 qutiguqtuaq-travel term 87
 rabbit drive 3
 raft construction 83
 raft-umiagluich 66
 rafting 28, 64, 79
 raven 120
 raven folklore 122
 Reed River 11
 reindeer corral 76
 reindeer-first arrived 16
 retirement 109
 rifle, first 22
 Riley Camp
 Riley Creek 107
 Robbins, Jim 108
 ruins 88
 Saityat, story about 113
 saiyu-storage place 1
 saiyut-shelter 41
 Sakmaliagruich people 89
 sallisit-flint chip 76
 salmon bait 68
 Salmon River people 114
 Saulluq-person 81
 sawmill 104
 Schaeffer, John 110
 school 21
 Schuerch, Lorenz Sr. 104

seal oil 89
 seasonal round 2
 Seattle 85
 Selawik-village 6, 28, 104
 shaman 9, 10, 77, 88
 shawl 117
 Shea, Tom 106
 sheep hunting 70, 75, 76
 sheep, butchering 17
 Sheldon, Bertha 110
 Sheldon, Charlie 106
 shelter-akilugutit 55
 shelter-aniyyityaq 42
 shelter-atalisaḡviich 40
 shelter-auriviuraq 37
 shelter-itchalik 53
 shelter-kayuqtum sisaa 44
 shelter-killiḡutit 55
 shelter-miliq 34
 shelter-niuvaala 44
 shelter-qanattaq 32
 shelter-saiyut 41
 shelter-suluutit 41
 ship-Baldwin 82
 ship-Boxer 82
 ship-Durplay 82
 ship-Holm--Midnight Sun 82
 ship-North Star 82
 Shungnak 14, 17
 Shungnak Creek 97, 119
 Shungnak Creek, mining dates 106
 Shungnak, naming of 21
 Siberia 81
 siḡluaq-ice cellar 49, 90
 Siiqsiniḡruaq-placename 6
 Siksriḡpalik-person 105
 Siḡalliḡmiḡ-placename 5
 Siḡiagaq-person 2
 Siḡaana, Joe's grandmother 14, 20
 Siḡaana, story about 6
 siḡiḡutit-fireplace 37
 Siḡiḡiḡ, Joe's father 1, 5
 Sisualik-placename 9
 Sivunniugvik, cultural planning center 111
 Skin, Harry 83
 skins 81
 sleds 61
 sleep prohibition 12
 sluice box construction 95
 snares 70, 71
 snaring 3, 6, 15, 22
 sod house-ivruḡlik 14

song 117, 120
 song folklore 122
 spear heads 76
 spear hunting 73
 spruce ptarmigan has landed 80
 stars 29
 steam boilers 104
 steam thawing 100
 sternwheelers 7
 Stoney, the explorer 21
 storage technique-kuviqsugaurat 17
 storage, fish 2
 storage, food 40
 store, Kobuk 82
 storm shed-katak 45
 story about the Alatkagnailat 10
 story of the flood 119
 story of three brothers 85
 story, Lost Hunters 77
 story, Mammoth Hunters 117
 story, Man Who Lived Through Three Generations 122
 story, man who liked to eat 124
 story, origin of land 120
 story, origin of light 120
 story, Papiquq Mountain 125
 story, Qayaq the traveler 70
 story, Saityat 113
 Stout, Al 106
 suffering 9
 suicide, Gus' 106
 suluutit-shelter 41
 summer camp 16
 Sun Camp 1, 28, 82
 suunaags-age relations 1
 taboos 7, 10
 Tagragvik-placename 87
 Tapqaq-placename 89
 teachers, Kobuk 21
 Ticket, Wilson and Daisy 111
 Tikiqasrugruk Lake 105
 Tikiqilaq-person 85, 88
 Tilak-person 14
 Tiriq-Mary Ward 14
 trade 2, 80
 trade ship 81
 trading partner 84
 trading posts 1
 traditional education 112
 trails, dog team 98
 trap-ground squirrel 85
 and photo caption after page 92
 trap-natmautalik 69

trapping 26, 109, 122
 trapping muskrat 22
 trapping-Joe's first catch 16
 traps 68
 travel term-iuvauraut 87
 travel term-qutiguqtuaq 87
 Tulugag-placename 81, 82
 Tulugaq Lake 87
 tulugaq-raven 120
 Tumitchiauuraq-person 77
 tunusrugmiutaq-bedroll 63
 Tuuyuq-a shaman 9
 Tuuyuq-person 5
 ugni-fish eggs 21
 Ulugaagruk-person 2
 umiagluich-raft 66
 Umiaviuraq Mountain 119
 Umitaq-placename 3
 ugalut-cache 51
 Unaqtaam-placename 6
 Unipchaaq, old stories but true 113
 Uqququfiq-placename 93, 105
 Uqququfiq defined 105
 Uqququfiq-placename 2, 20, 20, 28
 Utqiagvik-Barrow 7
 Utokokmiut, photo caption after page 58
 Uularagauraq-person 114
 Uyaan-person 30
 Wainwright, photo caption after page 58
 Wales-village 89
 Walker Lake 4, 125
 walrus 89
 warfare 50
 weaving, learning 23
 whiskey 81
 Whitlam, Capt. Frank 83
 windless construction 93
 wolf hunting and raising 28
 Wright, Mr. 106

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Joe Sun is a well known elder in Northwest Alaska respected for his knowledge about the area and about his peoples' history. For some time the National Park Service in Alaska has been interested in preserving Joe Sun's knowledge by way of a life history. So when Ray Bane, a pilot and anthropologist with the National Park Service and friend of Joe Sun's for fourteen years, approached Sharon Moore, former director of the NANA Museum of the Arctic in Kotzebue, Alaska, about doing a life history with one of the region's most distinguished elders the response was enthusiastic.

From that point on things moved swiftly. The NANA Museum received a matching grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum and made arrangements with anthropologist, David Libbey, to work with Joe Sun at his home in Shungnak, Alaska with the help of Joe Sun's daughter-in-law, Susie Sun. The majority of the interviews were recorded during the summer of 1983. In November of 1984 Libbey returned to Shungnak to review the life history with Joe Sun and Susie Sun. At that time corrections were made and some additional information added.

At the NANA Museum the original tapes have been reviewed by Sophie M. Johnson and Linda Lee. Since Sharon Moore's transfer to Anchorage in the fall of 1984 the project has been administered by Suzy Erlich who replaced her as director of the museum. In Shungnak Doug Walker and his wife Carolee were very helpful in getting the anthropologist situated upon his arrival in Shungnak. Lottie and MacArthur Tickett kindly lent their house as a base of operations during the summer of 1983.

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The original life history tapes and transcripts are located at the NANA Museum of the Arctic in Kotzebue, Alaska. Copies of the tapes and transcripts are on file with the Oral History Project, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Rasmuson Library, the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska.

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