

00-00-17 Shawn Kong is interviewed by Dr. Wood
Voice of America
KUAC
Unknown date (1964?)

Meeting of the International Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Dr. Wood asked Shawn why he came to the far North. Shawn said he lived in a large city and wanted to leave the urban life. Dr. Wood asked him what program he studied. Shawn wanted to study biology but changed to mathematics. Dr. Wood asked what his first impression was. Shawn said he didn't know Alaska was so developed. He had visions of igloos. He didn't think it was as cold as he expected. Dr. Wood said without wind and high humidity it moderates the feeling of the cold. Shawn said people are very warm hearted. When he was sick he had help to go to a hospital in Denver for treatment of TB. He said he never knew such warm hospitality. Dr. Wood said the small population has created a great deal of interdependence. There is also a very independent spirit. Shawn said he didn't have a large English background but he had a lot of help when he first came to the university. He repeated the statement in Korean at the request of Dr. Wood. There is one professor from Korea who teaches economics. Shawn asked Dr. Wood to explain the history of the university. Dr. Wood said it really began in 1907 when President Roosevelt withdrew four sections of land for an agricultural experiment station in Alaska. In 1915 the congress of the United States set the land aside for a higher education institution. A few homestead parcels had been taken out of the original sections. There were about 2250 acres total. It was for the purposes of the agricultural experiment station and a college. In 1917 the Territorial legislature appropriated funds for a first building on this land. They didn't appropriate for faculty, lighting or heating. So after the building was erected it stood vacant for five years until a second appropriation was made. In 1922 the first students arrived. There were six students and six faculty. In 1935 the college was converted to the territorial University of Alaska. With statehood it was made a state university. Since 1935 it was a land-grant university. Which means it was one of the system of universities. The congress of the United States adopted a law that set aside lands to support a university program of instruction. The land-grant college was where the ordinary person could come and receive an education. The program was organized in the 1960s. Shawn said he was discouraged when he arrived in Alaska in January but the summers are beautiful. The campus is a beautiful campus. Since 1961 there have been many new buildings. He asked about the growth of the university. Dr. Wood said that depends on confidence of the people who support it. Alaska's people support the university strongly. There have been many new projects constructed in the past few years and there will be more activity in the years to come. They have construction plans for a library, dining halls, and dormitories as well as supporting facilities. They are looking at a higher enrollment in the future. Dr. Much's class. Shawn gives an abstract of his paper on cybernetics during class time.

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