

Otis Ahkigvuk
Barrow, Alaska
Mixed Eskimo and English
Ahkigvuk in Eskimo, daughter translating

Interview by N. Jacobs
At Ahkigvuk Residence
September, 1974

Otis Ahkigvuk was born near Wainwright in 1891. His parents moved when he was a boy to Barrow. Growing up he whaled with his father, then obtained his own boat. He followed his father, did as his father did, and in this way he became a whaler.

Otis tells a legend about a man who turns into a whale, a polar bear, and finally into a bird who flies away after various exploits with men.

There are many minutes wasted on translation and communication problems. Otis was impatient to leave to get to the food stamp office so after about 45 minutes the tape ends. Ahkigvuk understood the purpose of the tape however, and there is much on it to be edited by an inupiat speaker--things he put on the tape that I did not understand.

The Ahkigvuk residence was a very small building which looked like an outbuilding for a larger nearby house. He, his wife, daughter, and her son live in the dwelling which is about 8' x 15', containing a chair, couch, and small bed, stove and table--with enough room to slide in sideways. The walls are lined with books and tapes--communications in the Arctic are quite good it seems, in spite of simple accommodations.

Series: Tanana Yukon Historical Tapes