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Morris Thompson, Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

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Peter LaFarge

Frank Brink talked about Alaska bush pilots. He said Alaska has challenged the ingenuity and stamina of pioneers for many generations. Only a few bush pilots are left and they all have stories to tell. One story was told by Jack Jefford. He flew in Alaska before radio, instruments, and controlled airways. He is one of the men most responsible for instrument flight in Alaska. One day he was flying a Stinson one hundred miles east of Nome. He hit a large downdraft. Jack Jefford said he was up about 3000 feet and started down in a downdraft. The next thing he knew he was in a ground drift. His plane was shaking. He figured out that he was down. He still felt like he was flying. He had hit a mountain top. His Stinson had a radio which had just been installed. The next night he could signal an SOS across the band. He was surprised to hear a call. He established communication and told them approximately where he was between Golivan and Elum. He was rescued seven days later proving the value of radio in air rescue. Jefford had a story about Noel Wien. Frank Brink said in the summer of 1935 Will Rogers and Wiley Post crashed near Point Barrow. Al Loman was hired by the Associated Press to get photos of the crash. Noel Wien flew the photographs from Fairbanks to Whitehorse. From there he planned to take off the next morning to fly Loman with his photographs to Seattle. They learned that a rival news service had gotten photographs and were already in Juneau ready to take off for Seattle. Loman wanted to beat the rival news service. He induced Wien to consider the greatest calculated risk of his career. Wien told this story about himself. This is the first recorded version of the story told by Wien in Fairbanks and Jefford in Anchorage. Wien said he didn't like the idea much. He hadn't flown at night. He was conservative. It was 650 miles direct to Seattle. Loman said now or never. He decided to risk everything. The didn't have any moonlight. Jefford said Wien went off by himself and then decided to do it. They stuffed a blanket full of gas cases. Wien said the little field at Whitehorse was a dirt runway. An American station man drove down to the other end of the field and turned his car lights toward the runway and they took off. It was absolutely dark from there on. They couldn't see the ground below. Bob Ellis took off from Juneau on floats and he got as far as Vancouver. He couldn't go any farther and stayed there over night. Wien said he arrived in Seattle two hours ahead of Ellis. It was a risky deal. Frank Brink talked about Archie Ferguson and was known for his laugh. His stories were legendary. Archie Ferguson talked about hauling his first passenger the day after he got his pilot's license. He picked up Jimmy Donavon in Deering. He wouldn't take his baggage. So the passenger put on all his clothes at once. He went to land at Chegnak and missed the bend and landed on the next bend. He made the passenger get out of the plane when they landed and help steer the plane. The passenger worked up quite a sweat. Archie said his mother and father were living in Kotzebue at the time. He told them to build a fire when they saw him fly over so he could determine which direction the wind was blowing when he was trying to land. He came over

the store and saw the biggest cloud of smoke. He landed and he stopped to visit with them. His mother had burned his father's pants to make a lot of smoke. Frank said other old time great pilots like Bob Reeve, Ray Peterson, Mudhole Smith, Sig Wien, bob Ellis, Terrence McDonald, Gordon McKenzie, Oscar Underhill, Shell Simmons and others round out today's still living hall of fame in Alaskan bush flying. Jeff Kennedy said this record "The legendary bush pilots with Frank Brink" was produced in the early 1960s.

Public service announcement about actions to take when fire strikes and fire extinguishers.

Morris Thompson said he was born and raised in Tanana, Alaska. He attended school in Tanana and attended high school in Mt. Edgecumbe High school. He graduated in 1959. He then attended the university for several years. He took an electronic course in Los Angeles. He worked at Gilmore Creek for several years as a satellite tracker. He then worked for two years in state government and then worked with Governor Hickel. He was staff assistant to Secretary Hickel in Washington, D.C. He returned to Alaska to assume the Bureau of Indian Affairs area directorship in 1971. He was appointed Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1974. Jeff Kennedy asked him if he saw similarities or differences in the situations of Alaska Natives and Native Americans of the lower forty-eight states. Thompson said there are similarities. Until recently the Alaska Native population had severe health problems, severe unemployment and lack of education opportunities. Those three areas were also true in the lower forty-eight states. The differences are the Alaska Native community has great promise in developing the Native claims bill that will address all three of the issues and improve the quality of life for the individual Native in Alaska. The relationship between his bureau and the American Indian and the Alaska Native is somewhat different. In the lower forty-eight states they are trustee over the Indian lands and resources which means they assist in managing the resource. In Alaska the land and the resources of the surface and the subsurface rests solely with the Alaska Native community with assistance from the bureau if they want it. Those are some of the major differences between the Indians of the lower forty-eight and the Alaska Native community. Jeff Kennedy said Commissioner Thompson outlines the housing services the BIA provides for Alaska: Thompson said the HIP program (Housing Improvement Program) is a small program to bring substandard housing up to decent living standards. The new construction program is also small. He points out that the bureau housing program isn't intended to address all housing programs of the Alaska Native community. The new program brings 500 units of housing to different communities in Alaska. They are trying to solve some of the housing needs. In the Fairbanks area they are working in Ft. Yukon, Northway and Tanacross. The houses are small low income houses. They have been tested in the arctic over the last several years. The design they have goes a long ways to deal with unique problems of the arctic. They are working with Native Regional Housing authorities to implement the act. They are playing a key role in working between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Housing and Urban Development. Jeff Kennedy said some residents in Minto complained about houses recently constructed. Thompson said the houses in Minto were constructed jointly. The Alaska Housing Authority constructed most of them. The Bureau of Indian Affairs constructed houses for the elderly and others. He said there has always been a problem about design techniques for condensation problems and frost heave problems and building a quality home with the amount of money allotted. This is true for all federal agencies. One of the things that has come up is the problem of low prototype costs and high construction costs and trying to keep the financial

package within everyone's means. He talked about a problem with one project because of the excessive cost of each unit. He said now they utilize some Bureau of Indian Affairs designs which is a smaller house and HUD dollars to match the two to try to solve the problem. The 500 units are on an experimental basis. Jeff Kennedy asked Thompson if there are still Native high school students in Oregon and Oklahoma. Thompson said there are a few students who elected to finish in Oklahoma. Other than that there are no students outside the state of Alaska. There are 400 students in Mt. Edgecumbe. He talked about the growth of education in rural Alaska and very small high school populations in some communities. The state which has the primary responsibility for the education of all Alaskan children would not be able to build a high school in such places so they have gone to a boarding home concept or a dormitory concept for attending public schools. Another trend is the state is moving to regional centers such as Bethel, Barrow and Nome and constructing facilities for students from that region. The students live in private homes for the school year and returning to their homes for the summer. He said it is exceedingly difficult to provide education to students by taking them away at a critical age of their lives and putting them in a dormitory setting. Care and love can only be gotten at home. He said he had a very positive experience at school. He returned home often. He enjoyed meeting students his age at Mt. Edgecumbe. At one time the BIA operated 100 day schools in Alaska and they now have 53 day schools. This trend will continue. The bureau stands ready to work with the state and the local community to provide education. The direction is to move to total state responsibility for education in the state. Jeff Kennedy said Commissioner Thompson told him about his recent trip to western Alaska. Thompson said he witnessed a reindeer drive from Nome to Kotzebue. They were herding 943 animals over a two week period. He talked about the introduction of reindeer to that region. Jeff Kennedy asked him if Alaska Natives have enough power to influence the events, forces and agencies that affect them. Thompson said more and more that is happening. He thinks through media and the Native Claims Bill more and more decisions are being made at the local level. The people in the villages have money to address some of their social and economic needs through the Native Claims Bill. They are given a management corporation that they themselves control. They have an effective clout in state government.

St. Louis Jazz Quartet.

The moderator said Potlatch is produced in the KUAC studios in College in cooperation with KTOO Juneau, KOTC Kotzebue and KYUK Bethel under Title One of the Higher Education Act.