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Excerpts of the dedication of Heritage Park with Dr. Hiatt

Fairbanks, Alaska

Moses Wassillie, moderator

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Series: Potlatch series

On July 29 the ceremonies kicking off the 1976 WEIO were held near the commons of the University Campus. Dr. Hiatt talked about the symbolism of the lamp at the park.

Dr. Hiatt said this park and lamp are possible through the inspiration and perseverance of Emily Ivanoff Brown -- Ticasuk, 1904-1982. On the first or second day of his arrival on campus Emily and some of her friends came into his office to show him what they had in mind for the heritage park which would feature the Eskimo lamp. He remembers poring over the plans. He gave his blessing for the plans. He said it took real perseverance to get this done. Emily Brown has been a student at the university. She has a natural curiosity about the origins of her people, their culture, and the origin of their cultural traits. None of these were documented in writing but kept by word of mouth. Hiatt talked about her master's thesis. He talked about the symbolism of the lamp in the Eskimo life and other lamps. He said the Heritage Park also has symbolism. It brings the Native people of the north to the principle place of higher learning in Alaska. It stresses the oneness of all people in the social institution where knowledge dispels ignorance. Even the propane gas represents an Alaska product. This symbolically fuses much of Alaska's cultural heritage with the resources of this state.

Song by Joan Baez

Willie Hensley talked about uses of seal oil among the Natives of the north. He said he recalled in the early days when they had to use seal oil for light. When they ran out of gasoline they used seal oil to provide light. In the earlier days they used it as a cooking fuel. He remembers the days in Kotzebue when there was not power in the community. There are still communities that don't have power except gasoline lamps. He thinks this lamp will serve as a symbol of the struggles of the Eskimo people for conquering the arctic. They did it with their ingenuity, a spear, bow and arrow and a lot of courage. He said they see nowadays people spending billions to survive in the arctic. He said this lamp will serve as a symbol of those who came and conquered the arctic. It will be a symbol to those coming to the university that the Native heritage is alive and thriving and it will continue to be a part of Alaska.

Deb Gustafson gave some background of the lamps and some history of the Alaska Heritage Writer's Association. She said that the Eskimo lamp throughout the history of the Native people in the north the lamps has been the focus of domestic life. The women were the lamp tenders, keepers and owners. It is appropriate that the great lamp was originated by Emily Ivanoff Brown. In 1967 a group of UAF Native graduates organized the Alaska Heritage Writer's Association. The lamp will remind people of the spirit and determination of Emily Brown. The lamp will serve to remind us that although it reminds us of domestic life in the past higher education has become a focus of her people and all of Alaskan people.

Song by Argent

Emily Ivanoff Brown sings several songs. She introduced a song that originated in the Kobuk area when the Indians first moved to Kobuk Valley.

Song by Don Knix

Dr. Howard Cutler outlines some of the functions of the Institute of Higher Learning. He said it is the function of the university to help each of us define our heritage, examine our heritage and renew our heritage. At this university there are rich heritages. This is the site of an archeological dig which connected a hypothesis of a land bridge. This university has done much to revive Alaska Native languages. One out of every twelve students is a Native student. He mentioned students who have graduated from this university as well as recipients of honorary degrees.