

Call number: 97-66-27 SIDE A

Edith Egowa Tegoseak (and Evan Egowa)

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The tape begins with a lady's voice introducing a well-known community member, Edith, who has lived in town for at least 15 years. She is a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Fairbanks and a regular member of a choir. She never misses a Sunday at choir and they would miss her if she didn't come. Edith is going to tell about her early life in Barrow. The lady instructs Edith to talk as loud as she can.

At 00:57 Edith Tegoseak introduces herself and tells that she was born in Barrow on 1/14/1903. She says her father's name is Billy Egowa and mother's name is Eunice Egowa. Her father was a hunter and trapper. Edith is widowed at present time, and has 11 children. Some of her children are married.

Edith lists her children's names from oldest to youngest: Steven Tegoseak, Rhoda Peters, Silas Tegoseak, John Tegoseak, Joseph Tegoseak, Lance [Unclear], Sadie Tegoseak, Victor Tegoseak, Nancy Tegoseak and Billy Tegoseak. Edith herself is a "just home mother." She says she put question marks on 6th and 7th questions. [Might indicate that she was given a list of topics to cover during her talk.]

2:01 Edith went to school in Barrow, from 1st to 5th grade. At her young age, there were two villages in Barrow: One was at real Point Barrow and the other one on the present site of Barrow. The places are 10 miles apart.

2:22 Point Barrow whale hunter's names are Eskimo names: [?] and at Barrow there was Mr. Charles Brower, [Taaqpak, Kungusiq, Aapayauk, Itta, Max Egasak, and Kingaqtaq]. There was no marshal or mayor when she was young.

2:55 Bert Paniglo (possibly Panigo) was a dog team mail carrier from Barrow to Point Hope and Dr. Spence was the first doctor in Barrow. There was not even a roadhouse.

Edith's ancestors have lived hunting all year around. They had to catch their own hunting gears [?]. They already had guns to hunt, too. Edith has seen her father make a big snow house to make a skin-boat frame. He put ice on side in March. 3:44 When the frame was finished, the women got together and sewed ugluk [?] skins together and the men tied it to the frame.

4:05 The whaling season starts in the middle of April or [before] May 31st in the spring.

The interviewer asks how many children were in Edith's family and she says there were 7 of them. Three sisters died and the oldest from [unclear] and one sister. The interviewer asks if they are now living in Barrow. Edith says that her sisters and her youngest brother are in Barrow and one of them lives with her in Fairbanks.

The interviewer asks if the school had one or many rooms and Edith answers that there were two rooms: one for the little ones and the larger room for the older ones. They had teachers who came from States. They were white men. The first school teacher who Edith started alphabets with, was Mr. Hoxworth [sp?] and his wife. They didn't stay very long in Barrow and Mr. Grant [sp?] took over.

5:40 The interviewer asks if Mr. Hoxworth was the head of Indian Affairs in Anchorage, but Edith doesn't know. Then the interviewer asks if there was Dr. Marsh there and Edith says he was the first doctor she knew there. The interviewer asks if the first white baby who was born there was Elizabeth Marsh and Edith says she guess so. Then there was Lauren Marsh. Edith says she doesn't remember which one is the oldest one.

The interviewer says that Dr. [Horatio] Marsh was a missionary and a doctor. [Unclear question.] Edith says that they stayed in [unclear]. The school house is by itself.

6:25 The interviewer asks what they did for a living besides whale hunting. Edith says that in early fall they went up river by a dog team or went up with skin boats before it froze up. They fished the Meade River. They caught whitefish. After the

freeze up, they went caribou hunting. Every once in a while there were caribou, but they move around.

The interviewer asks what kinds of homes they had, and if they were mostly houses in the earth [semi-subterranean], or if they had wooden houses. Edith tells that their houses were made with wood frames that were covered with sod. That's where she was raised by her own grandmother before she died. Her grandmother died when Edith was 9 years old. Her house was a sod house and it had a hallway inside the ground. They put whalebones for steps in inner hole on the floor, and going out there was another whale head stairway.

At 8:15 the interviewer asks if there were bare floors on those houses. Edith says there was. [Unclear question.] Edith tells that they fixed the up frame first and covered it with sod from the outside. In wintertime, the hunters make snow houses or ice houses, unless they make [unclear]. The interviewer asks how they make snow houses, and if the snow is packed hard. Edith explains that when the snow is drifting and when it's hard, it is good enough to be sawn into blocks.

A man's voice asks what they used for fuel and Edith tells that the sod house in which she [lived] used seal oil storm lamps. They had two of them and they kept the houses warm. Her grandmother had to have the kitchen in the hallway where she cooked her meals, not inside the house. It's not a stove, but like an outdoor fire where she cooked the meals.

9:51 the interviewer asks if it was warm or cold in the hallway. Edith tells it was warm. There was also something [a chimney] to let the smoke out. [Unclear question.]

Then the interviewer asks if Edith knows how many seals would have to be caught to heat the house for the year, but she says she doesn't know. She tells they don't think about how many they have to catch, but they get lucky. They hunt at open water or with seal nets with which they catch seals in wintertime. Seal nets are made out of sealskin.

The interviewer asks if the seal oil was rendered first, or how it was prepared. Edith tells they freeze it after skinning the seal. The oil [?] it's hung on some kind of a [unclear] and melted. It's easy to melt. They use whale oil, which they call

whale blubber, in heating too. It keeps the stone lamps burning. Besides oil, the lamps have wicks. The wicks her grandmother made of something to which Edith doesn't know the English name for. It's not moss. It's called maniq [*Dicranum rugosum*] in Eskimo. It's some kind of a little niggerhead [niggerheads are grass tussocks]. That's how it looks like. It is dried. [Unclear talking.]

13:06 A man asks if the seal nets are set in the seal blow holes. Edith says that the hunters always have to find a good place to place the seal nets. The man asks if they use dogs for that, but Edith says the hunters always walk out to the ice.

When a person stays overnight at a good spot, sometimes they kill 7 to 15 seals overnight. The man asks if they stay close to open water or if they find places in ice where seal have holes. [Edith says something in Eskimo. A quiet man's voice (Evan Egowa, as identified in part 2 of the interview) says something unclear.]

The male interviewer asks if they made square snow houses or regular ones. Edith says that they were made in the old way, round or square. [Unclear talking.] Edith says they don't call them igloos in Barrow, but they are called apuyyaq. Snow is apun in her eskimo dialect, and snow house is apuyyaq. The place where she was born was a little snow house.

14:57 The interviewer asks how big the villages approximately were and how many people lived in each of the two villages. Edith says it's hard to guess. There was school only in Barrow, but not in real Point Barrow. The male interviewer asks if they called that [unclear]. Edith says that Barrow's name is Utqiagvik. The real Point Barrow's name is Nuvuk, which means point. The man asks if that was the original, real village. Edna says that that's where Charles Brower [unclear, sails from?]. He still has the first land from real Point Barrow. At one time at supper, he mentioned that when they first landed at Point Barrow, the people in Barrow were healthy and big.

16:09 The interviewer asks if Edith would say that their diet consisted of 2/3 of fish or seal or whale, and 1/3 of caribou. Then she asks if they sometimes made it without any caribou. Edith tells that the hunters could hunt over the winter or in the summer. When the caribou have the new fur, they are hunted for clothing, and in wintertime for fur. They hunt ducks and anything for their living.

Edith knows they have had guns for as long as she remembers. They stored the meat in a hole in the ground to keep it frozen.

The interviewer asks what kind of ducks they got “up there.” They got ducks, geese, and brant. They didn’t have limit in their hunting time because they didn’t have a place to earn money from unless they were lucky with foxes or polar bear. The trading post was set up from [by?] Charles Brower.

The male interviewer asks how long the men stayed on their hunting trip when they went out on the ice to find a whale. Edna says they look for open water and the best places to wait. The time of their waiting depends on how often the whales come. They can even hear the breath of a whale from way distance. They take turns on their resting times. Some of them sleep during the day, and some keep watch.

18:44 The interviewer asks how many people are in whale crew. [Edna speaks shortly in Inupiat.] Evan Egowa voice says there were 8 or 9 people. The man interviewer asks if they used black powder harpoons and the other man says they did. [Unclear talking.]

The interviewer asks if Mr. Brower had the first store that ever was there in Barrow. Edna says she only remembers what her mother and father mentioned. Edna says that they had flour already before she was born. [Unclear question.]

All the children were born at home at the time. Edna’s mother says that they usually had midwives and she mentioned that when a mother had to deliver a baby, the people make them a fresh snow house and the mother delivers the baby there all by herself in warmth of a seal oil lamp. She is not let out for 10 days in order to keep the baby healthy. The woman is brought food.

The male interviewer asks when the reindeer were brought up, but Edna says she doesn’t remember. She doesn’t remember seeing any [unclear] in Barrow. [Unclear talking.]

At 21:24 the interviewer asks what they did for entertainment, and Edna tells they did Eskimo dancing, [unclear game] and football. Eskimo football doesn’t have a limit and they play until they see which side is going to win. They have bunch of crews on both sides. They just take a ball and run away with it. The good runner

always catches the ball. They could go miles and miles. Other games are some field games that they learn from their school teachers like swing and tap.

The interviewer asks if Edna's father told her about any beliefs or customs or stories of years gone by. Edna tells that the first story she will never forget was from her grandmother. After she put Edna to bed, she wanted Edna to listen a little story she gave her. She mentioned two worlds and said that the world in which we live in is not the only one, but that there is another world somewhere. Some days they are going to get together and the honest people are going to go into the new world. The people who don't mind anything, they are going to stay in the world that they are living in right now. She told Edna to always keep quiet in the evening because they have to watch and listen. The interviewer asks what they are supposed to watch and listen to, and Edna explains that they are trying to be aware of when the two worlds are going to get together.

24:55 Edna's mother mentioned once that when a man or a boy dies from sickness or an accident, they have to be quiet for 3 days. On 3rd day, they have to watch very closely. When the daylight breaks, they know that the man or the boy is gone already. When a woman or a girl dies, they have 5 days when they can't do anything, but have to watch. After the daybreak of the 5th day, she's gone.

They bury their dead above the ground, on rafters. Edna's mother says that in spring they always clean the rafters [?]. The bodies were wrapped with anything.

The interviewer asks if they had coffin material. [Edna's answer is unclear.] Edna says she doesn't know if they had a ceremony when the body was laid on the rafters because she never went with them. She also doesn't know if only the intimate family went there, or if it was for the whole village.

27:01 The interviewer asks if they had witch doctors. She never saw that and doesn't know [laughter]. The man interviewer asks her to tell some stories. She says she hasn't even learned any stories. The interviewer asks her to tell stories of the tribes and what happened in "years before," but Edna says she doesn't remember.

Then the interviewer inquires if they had any famine. Edna says she heard that one time in real Point Barrow, a long time ago, they had a famine. Even her grandmother said so. She told that many people starved to death.

Edna doesn't know when the first airplanes came to Barrow. She was a reindeer herder then. They were married in 1919 and herded reindeer until 1939. When their herds grow to 1,200, they have to be split herds to other villages [not clear, the herd has to be split up into smaller herds and given to other villages after they reach a certain number of animals?]. Their reindeer came from Laplanders, as the stories say. They followed the herd all year round and they lived in canvas tent in summer and even in winter. They built snow houses in which they lived in in winter. Sometimes they could stay in one place for a week. They used little willows for fuel and some driftwood from rivers. For light they used kerosene lamps.

30:36 The interviewer asks if they got enough money from selling reindeers to make a living. Edna says they did and that they had enough for their own use too. They gave reindeer herding up when some people from Colville River, who owned the herd, took over. Then they lost all of the reindeers. Edna doesn't know what happened to them, and the male interviewer suggests that they joined the caribou.

The male interviewer asks if they killed many polar bears in Barrow, and Edna says they hunt polar bears on the ice. [Unclear talking.]

All the children had to go to school even in Edna's time. The male interviewer asks if the school only went up to 5th grade, and Edna says yes. Reverend Dr. Spence needed an interpreter and helper around the patients in the village of Barrow. He asked the principal if he could recommend somebody from school children. They called Edna and she worked for them for two years. She wasn't alone, but other girls and boys that were the same age helped too. They took turns being helpers when they were in the 5th grade. Edna corrects that the school goes further than 5th grade, but she didn't continue past that.

33:23 The interviewer asks if they used dogs for hunting and Edna says they did. Her grandmother had just 5 dogs, but her father never used dogs when he went out trapping. He just pulled his little sleds behind him on a trap-line. [Unclear question about skidoos.]

The interviewer wants to know how they moved from place to place with all their children and if they used reindeer to pull them? Edna says her husband made a good-sized sled and put a tent over it, keeping the children inside. The interviewer asks if the reindeer pulled them. Edna says yes, but then she says that dogs did too, since they had a dog team.

They didn't move too far each time. [Speaking in Inupiat.] The interviewer asks how many people were with them, and Edna tells that they usually had 3-4 boys with them. Then the interviewer asks if the caribou responded to wolves. Edna says that when the wolves come to the reindeer, it's terrible. They could even drive them [the herd] away from the camp, kill them here and there.

The interviewer asks if they can herd them if they get too far from Barrow. Edna says that reindeer herds usually stay way up inland and that they weren't the only ones in Barrow that had 3 herders. There was "one here, one here, one over there." [Showing from a map?]

36:29 The interviewer asks how many caribou they had in a herd. Edna says they had increasing herds that got up to 1,100, at which point they were "split up to the owners," and to some villages too. At present time, nobody is herding. They lost them all. The man says that Browers had the last herd and Edna confirms this, but says that her boys have handled some herd too.

The man says that soldiers scattered them "up there." [Unclear talking.] Reindeer joined the caribou. Edna says they didn't have enough herders at the Arctic Slope and that that's why they lost the herds. The man interviewer asks if that was because of lack of interest from the herders and why they dropped out if that was a good thing. Edna says she doesn't know.

The interviewer asks if women had any work where they could make money. Edna says that they didn't, but after a refocusing question, she says she sold caribou skins. Caribou leg skins are water-proof, boots or parkas, but Edna's mother never earned any money. She bartered, though. [Unclear question about black baskets.] Edna says she didn't make them, but they were made of baleen. They didn't use to make those when she was a child. The craft started "not too many years ago." She doesn't know who started it.

The interviewer says she got her baleen basket in 1940. Discussion about the nature of baleen: it's the tooth of a whale. The interviewer asks if those [baskets] are made under water but Edna says that she doesn't think so.

At 40:47 The male interviewer asks if she got paid in money when Edith was in Colville area to [unclear]. Their men got paid with live reindeers from owners. [Edith says something in Inupiat.] In 4 years, they got 20 reindeers and they had to eat those reindeer. Some people owned the reindeer and marked their ears with owner's mark.

The man says Edith started herding in 1919 and that she did that for 20 years. Edith confirms that she herded until 1939. They never earned any money from herding, unless they sold some meat or skins. They didn't even trade too much and kept their living with reindeer while they had them. After they left the reindeer, they started living by [hunting] other game. [Unclear question.] Edith answer is Charles Brower's trading post. [Another unclear question, to which answer is "with some foxes."] Edith explains about foxes: Sometimes when the foxes were around, they'd get lots of them, but sometimes they would be scared when they move somewhere. [Another unclear question about white foxes, and then about an Island.] Edith doesn't know where that island was.

43:30 The man says Edith has lived in civilization for a while now, and asks if she thinks her life was difficult back then? She says it is hard. [Unclear question about whether she had enjoyable times with her family.] Edith says she has never had easy life since they got married. They had children and whenever they move they have to manage their own life. That's why Edith says that "Alaska doesn't have any resting place to live." [Laughter.] The interviewer suggests that it's not much easier to live here [in Fairbanks] than it is to live there and make a living.

The man interviewer asks if Edith liked the old life better than she likes this life. She says her life was easier when her parents managed her life, but when she started managing her own life, it has been different. The old folks know how to hunt and how to get along.

[End of the recording.]