

H97-66-27
Edith Tegoreak
March 24, 1966
TYHS

Side A

Edith Tegoreak is introduced. She was born in 1903. Her father and mother were Billy and Eunice Egowa. Her father was a hunter and trapper. She is a widow with eleven children: Steven, Rhoda Peters, Zylas, Jonah, Joseph, Blanche, Sadie, Victor, Nancy, and Billy. She is a homemaker. In Barrow she went to school until fifth grade. The village was once at Point Barrow. The whale hunters named Point Barrow. There was a dog team that carried mail from Barrow to Point Hope. Dr. Marsh was the first doctor at Barrow who was also a missionary. Her ancestors lived on hunting year around. When she was young, men had guns for hunting. Her father constructed a snow house to make a skin boat frame. He used ice for windows. The women sewed oogaruk skins together and the men tied it to the frame. Whaling season starts in the middle of April and lasts until the end of May.

Edith had seven children in her family. Three of her sisters died. She has two brothers and one sister living. One brother and one sister live in Barrow.

Her school had two classrooms. The teachers were from outside. The first school teacher she had was Mr. Hawksworth and his wife. Mr. Kran took over after that.

Her father would go up the river by dog team in early fall to stay at the Mead River for fishing. After freeze up they had caribou hunting.

They had wood frames covered in sod for their homes. Her grandmother raised her.

They used whale head bones for steps. The floors were wooden covered in sod. In winter the hunters used a snow house. They used drifted snow and it is hard enough to saw into blocks. Their sod house had seal oil stone lamps. Her grandmother had a kitchen in the hallway to cook the meat. She used a fire and had a vent for the smoke.

They caught seals with seal nets. The nets were made out of seal skin. The seal oil was frozen and then pounded. Whale blubber was also used to heat. The hunter would have to find a good place to hunt. The hunters would walk out on the ice. Some of them used dogs. They would make the holes in the ice to hunt the seal. They don't use the term igloo in Barrow for snow houses. They use the term "upooyuk" for snow house.

She gives the Inuit names for Point Barrow and Barrow.

Their diet was mainly seal, whale and caribou. They hunted for food and clothing. They would also hunt ducks. She said they hunted Eider ducks, geese and brants and others.

They didn't have a place to earn money until the trading post was set up by Charles Brower.

For whale hunting they look for open water and just wait. They can hear the breath of whales from a long distance. The crews take turns watching for whales. They would have eight or nine people in each boat. They used harpoon guns to hunt the whales.

She said her father and mother said Charles Brower had the first trading post. She said they had flour before she was born.

Most children were born at home. They sometimes had midwives. When the mother had to deliver the baby they built a new snow house and the mother delivered the baby by

themselves. After the baby was delivered they stayed in the igloo for ten days. She was born in a snow house.

They had Eskimo dancing and football for entertainment. They had two teams playing against each other. They just kicked the ball and ran away with it. They also played field games that they learned in school.

Her grandmother told her stories when she was put to bed. She talked about two worlds. There is another world and someday they will get together. The honest people will go across to the other world. You have to watch and listen. Her mother talked about when a man or boy dies they have three days to be quiet. On the third day the man or boy is gone. When a woman or girl dies they wait for five days. They believe that she is gone already. They were wrapped and left on the ground. They would clean up the wraps of a body in the spring.

She heard stories about medicine men. She never saw one.

There were years when there was famine. Point Barrow had a famine at one time. A good many of the people died of starvation.

She was a reindeer herder with her husband. She was married in 1919. They were herders until 1939. When the reindeer herds became large about 1100-1200 then they were split and given to other villages. The reindeer came from Lapland. They followed their herd in the summer and winter. They would fix a snow house and put their tent inside. They would use small willows and drift wood for heat. They had kerosene light. They sold their reindeer. The owners from the Colville River took over in 1939.

Polar bears were hunted in Barrow. They would walk out on the ice.

All of the children in Barrow attend school. She had to attend school when she was a young girl. She attended up to the fifth grade.

She worked with Dr. Spence for two years. She was the interpreter for the doctor. They took turns working for the doctor.

They used dogs for hunting. Her grandmother used five dogs. Her father never used dogs for trapping.

When they moved around they used reindeer or dogs attached to a sleigh.

They had problems with wolves attacking the reindeer. The reindeer might be driven from their camp because of wolves. There were three herders around Barrow. They weren't herding reindeer in Barrow at the time of the interview.

Women could sell clothing. Her mother would barter instead of exchanging for money.

They made baskets out of whale baleen which were sold.

When Edith was at the Colville River area they were paid with reindeer from the owners. The herds were owned by other Inuit. They never earned money for their herding. They sold some of the reindeer meat or skins. After they stopped herding they hunted other game. They traded fox at the trading post in Barrow owned by the Browers. Some years there were not many foxes.

Edith said it wasn't an easy life since she married.

Side B

Jim Cassady asked if the newer generation is able to live the way she did. Edith didn't think there were enough teachers for the younger generations. She had aunts and uncles to help train her. She doesn't know who to blame for this. She wondered if the schools

took up the children's time. She thinks her younger children learned more in the high school. Some of her older children didn't have much of an education. She has been working in the church since she was fourteen years old. She was an interpreter in the church in Barrow. In Fairbanks she translates the lessons and leads the Eskimo songs. Her language was first translated into hymns and Bible readings long ago. All of her school lessons were in English. There are differences in dialect between the different Inuit but they are able to understand each other.

She just traveled between Barrow and the Colville River where they had their reindeer herding.

Mr. Egowa talked to the audience. Jim Cassady asked about seal oil lamps. He describes a seal oil lamp he saw and asks how large a flame is needed to keep a home warm.

Mr. Egowa said you needed about a foot of flame to cook. They cooked outside with driftwood or moss for cooking outside. They used the seal oil lamp for light. They used clay pots for cooking. They used flint to start fires. They would also use friction with wood to start fires.

Jim asked about whale hunting. Mr. Egowa said at one time there were lots of whales. They would use eight or nine people. They would take a lot of food with them and cook with kerosene. They used a sled under the boat to pull it over the ice. They would use dogs to pull the sled. They would set up a tent at the edge of the open water. Someone would sit on watch all the time. They used heavy ropes. When they catch a whale they would pull the whale in with a pulley on top of the ice. Everyone would work butchering the whale. After the meat is hauled up to the village it is frozen. They divide the meat up for each family. The owner of the boat would get the tail of the whale. They would save it for holiday or a special occasion. They used all of the whale. The baleen was used for fish hook lines. They would catch cod. Jim Cassady asked about the baleen baskets. Edith didn't know who started using baleen for baskets. They were not made when Edith was a young girl. Discussion in the group about making baskets.

Someone asked Mr. Evan Egowa about his daughter, Katie. He was born in Pt. Barrow in 1910. He first went whale hunting when he was twenty-six. He was about the same age when he started hunting polar bears. He would follow them with his rifle. They would use dog teams to hunt the bear. Sometimes they would loosen one dog to fight the bear. The dogs always try to get the bear. Someone asked about totally subsistence hunters. Edith said there were still some people who hunted that way.

Jim Cassady asked about seal hunting. Evan Egowa said you would go out at night with a seal net. The net was square and four fathoms long. You make two holes in the ice about four fathoms long apart. A third hole is cut. The net is sunk under the ice.

They use a line on a stick to put the net through one hole and out through another hole.

They put a piece of tin on the line so they can hear when the seal is caught in the net.

The seal is tangled in the net. The size of the opening in the net is about ten inches. It is better in the night when the seal can't see the net. They hit the seal with their fist.