

Important Visitors at Unalakleet

By EMILY IVANOFF BROWN
(Conclusion of two parts)

Then there was the exciting day that the natives at Unalakleet heard through the Mukluk Wireless that the Governor of the Territory of Alaska had arrived. "Come and welcome George E. Parks, the Territorial Governor," was the message. Five hundred Eskimos came to greet him. And, because his plane did not return that day, he was forced to stay overnight in Unalakleet with the trader, Charles T. Traeger.

My father, Stephan Ivanoff, was the cook. Mr. Traeger asked him to hire duck hunters to supply the Governor with fresh meat, since there was no meat in the larder. My father knew the only kind of edible duck at this time of year (July) was the female Eider duck.

Dinner was served to the Governor, his aides and the Army officials. As the platter, laden with fresh duck, was passed to the Governor, he asked my father, "What is this?"

"Siberian Goose," my father replied.

The Governor's curiosity was aroused. He asked, "Do these birds migrate to Unalakleet?" Then, of course, my father had to explain that sometimes the stray young geese would get lost and migrate eastward instead of on their usual route to the Arctic. With this explanation, the discussion at the dinner table was mainly on game birds. The peak of excitement came when the Governor gave my father his 20 gauge shotgun.

Many of the well known visitors to Unalakleet stayed for several years. One such researcher in art was Frederick Machetanz, the nephew of



TEENAGERS IN UNALAKLEET are put to work removing herring from fishing nets before the fish is sold to the Japanese. Japanese cannery, who especially prize herring roe, furnish fishing boats and seine for Alaska native fishermen who work for them. Fish caught is preserved temporarily in salt and ice.

Charles Traeger. He took many valuable pictures of native activities. Now he has had time since 1937 to paint these pictures and write of his experiences in Alaskan story books such as "Howl of the Malamute" and "Where Else But Alaska." He is now a distinguished associate at the University of Alaska and teaches there during the summer session.

Another well known author, Sally Carrighan, lived at Unalakleet with the Traegers. When she arrived, she announced to the public that she came to study the habits of the lemming.

Instead, she wrote a very interesting book entitled "Moonlight at Mid-day," about the Northwestern way of life.

Perhaps the most distinguished visitor to come to Unalakleet in 1967 was Sergeant Shriver, the originator of the Rural Development Project. Not even Mayor Degnan knew that this man from Washington, D.C. came to visit our village.

As a result, a Federal Aviation employee brought Sergeant Shriver to the only restaurant in town—The Burger To Go—to

(Continued on Page 6)

Unalakleet Visitors...

(Continued from page 2)

eat dinner.

My daughter-in-law, the owner, is the cook there.

Sergeant Shriver ordered king salmon steaks.

"Sorry, mister," said the cook, "you have to order ahead of time if you are in a hurry."

He changed his order to three deluxe hamburgers—one for himself, one for his seven-year-old son and one for his aide. Then he stood there watching the cook prepare his food.

She ordered him to sit down. "I am not in the habit of having people watch me when I am cooking," she said.

In the meantime, I was cutting an 80 pound king salmon into steaks for the cook. I did not know that Sergeant Shriver was in our restaurant, and the cook forgot that she had ordered me to slice steaks for her.

While I was cutting the steaks, using my Eskimo knife (ulu), my guest, Louise Ober of the University of Alaska, came and said, "Emily, Sergeant Shriver is eating his lunch in the restaurant."

"What!" I replied, slashing my finger. Trudy ran back into the restaurant and asked the cook for a bandage for my finger.

Then, of course, in her excitement, she forgot to tell the cook that one of her guests was Sergeant Shriver. Trudy came back to bandage my finger and we discussed how to approach him.

Trudy watched for him to come out from the house, and, when he didn't appear, we went to look for him at the waterfront.

There we saw him talking to the fishermen who had hauled their catch to be salted in the saltern.

All of this time people thought he was one of the tourists. After we met him, Sergeant Shriver mentioned that the men were too busy to even take him up the river for fishing. He had asked several men to take him, but they had refused to leave their work.

Had he taken the time to introduce himself, some would have been willing to take him fishing.

During the evening, people listened to Sergeant Shriver's speech from Nome, and he had the opportunity to narrate his experience at Unalakleet.

He said, "Unalakleet is a beautiful village. Everyone there was busy and my son enjoyed watching the children fishing from the beach of the Unalakleet River."

But many of our famous visitors set their feet in Unalakleet before I was born. They included the first United States surveyors, the telegraph line builders in the 19th century, and the first anthropologists and explorers.

All of these people met my parents and brothers and some older Eskimos.