

Ticasuk wants Native language teachers

By P. M. IVEY

Emily Brown is everywhere at once; a tiny lady with button black eyes, a Clara Bow mouth, and an infectious laugh. She leans toward you when she speaks, as though her words are meant for you alone.

Everybody knows Emily here in Alaska. Born of Eskimo and Russian parents at Unalakleet, a teacher by example and in the classroom for nearly fifty years, she herself has been a student at the University of Alaska since the early 1950's.

She obtained her degree in education in 1964 after attending school in the summer for 13 years. Prior to that time, she taught school in the north-western part of the state as a teacher's aide. At 74, she is still learning; taking courses in journalism to aid her in writing her books.

Emily Brown, or "Ticasuk," along with other Native leaders hopes the state of Alaska will allow certification for those qualified to teach Native languages without necessarily having a baccalaureat degree in

education and providing they met all qualifications for teaching in this specialized area.

"Currently there are 14 tribes here in Alaska with 14 different languages. Currently, the University of Alaska only teaches Inupiat, Yupik and Koyukon.

Education has had great inroads in the bush communities, but unless a certification program is initiated for Native languages in Alaska, Emily fears that most tribal languages may be lost, like that of so many tribes in the rest of the country.

An Eskimo song book flows forth from Emily's pen these days. She wrote each song down with three sets of words; her native Inupiaq in original form; the same words again spelled out phonetically, and the final set of words translated into English.

The clouds of mystery that enshroud the strange chanted words blow away and the poetry of the Eskimo basks in the sunlight of understanding as Emily sings her songs in English.

"Ugly old grandma," she sings of the greyling.

"May I sit with you in your kayak?" the Eskimo maiden

sings to her true love in the "Kobuk Love Song."

Songs gathered from her mother, other relatives and friends Emily has saved from forgotten time through 20 years of gathering and translating. The stories behind the songs are also included with the collection.

Emily plans to present the manuscript for approval to the 1977 Bilingual and Bicultural Conference in Anchorage, April 5, through 7.

She then will have them published, and copies will be placed in schools all over Alaska and elsewhere, the first cross-cultural textbook of its kind in Alaska. The book will be named *Eskimo Music and Themes*.

Grandfather of Unalakleet, Emily's first book is in its third publication since she wrote it for her Master of Arts these.

The Longest Story Ever Told, An epic Eskimo legend beautifully illustrated by Robert Mayukuk is Emily's second book.

But that's not all. She wrote *Authentic Legends and Folk Tales of the Eskimo People*, scheduled for early publication,



Emily Ivanoff Brown — Jimmy Bedford Photo

has the song book near completion, and plans an autobiography, an Eskimo food book, plus one or two more mapped out in her mind. She has done much to preserve her native culture, and wants to do so much more.

When a friend asked if she shouldn't rest one day when

she seemed particularly tired, she said shyly, "Perhaps, but my old gray noodle won't let me."

Emily Ivanoff Brown, Ticasuk, wants the best of two worlds for Alaskan Natives: a people literate each in their own language and history, with a firm grip on the best modern education.