



**DRAWING ON SEAL SKIN**--Ralph Kowchee of White Mountain, now of McGrath, executed a dramatic pen and ink drawing on seal skin which he is selling for \$150. The art piece is in the Tundra Times office in Chena Building in Room 220, 510 2nd Ave., Fairbanks. When the drawing is sold, Kowchee is donating a percentage of the money to the Tundra Times. The drawing was posed by our comic composer operator Susan Samson who presents an excellent picture of her eye through a hole in the seal skin. See story on Page 7. —MADELYN SHULMAN Photograph

# Ralph Kowchee Commissions Paper to Sell Skin Drawing

Ralph Kowchee, an Eskimo artist from McGrath, has commissioned the Tundra Times to sell his most recent skin drawing—one which may illustrate a new breakthrough in skin drawings.

The picture is drawn on the back of a seal skin from an animal caught last fall at Golovin Bay, east of White Mountain. It can be wiped with a damp cloth for cleaning without damaging the drawing.

Obtaining skins is the most difficult part of the drawings, according to Mr. Kowchee, who has sold about 100 pictures, 20 of them on skins.

"Some of my pictures are in the Washington, D.C. area, California," he wrote the Tundra Times, "but 90 per cent of them are here in Alaska. Besides this picture, I have art work displayed at Nome—in a place called the Arctic Trading Post, new owner is Dennis Corrington."

The skin drawing illustrated in this issue is for sale for \$150.00 and can be seen at the Tundra Times office in the Chena Building in Fairbanks. It goes to the first bidder, with a third of the price going to the Tundra Times as a donation from the artist.

Ralph Kowchee is an artist who is very concerned with the situation of those rural Alaskan Eskimos who do art work. The major problems, he says, are art supplies and putting the finished pictures on the market.



**RALPH KOWCHEE**—An artist from the village of White Mountain, Ralph Kowchee, is shown displaying his artistry at his home at McGrath.

"I would like to see a union or an organization formed," he told the Times, "operated by Alaskan Natives, to act as advisors or even sell the pictures for the natives. This issue may one day be put out in the open, but at the present time, only a very few persons (not necessarily natives) 'know the business'. And believe me this is a very touchy business, in the sense that everyone but the original artist is looking for a profit."

Hopefully, other Native people with talent will be able to find a way to market their work to a public which is now becoming aware of its value.