

"First Medicine Man" is old story, new book

"First Medicine Man" is an Athabaskan folk tale recently published by O.W. Frost as the first volume in his World Discovery Book series. The tale is about Yobaghu-Talyonunh, an Indian hero who leaves home on a long and solitary journey to discover the spirit world in which he lives. Once he acquires the power of medicine-making, he is able to assert his superiority over animal adversaries.

As a vehicle to explain customs of the people, the tale is a basic primary source for the study of Athabaskan culture, and particularly that of the Upper Tanana River where Arthur R. Wright collected this version in 1924.

But on another level, the tale presents exciting adventures of a legendary Superman who survives by outwitting the Tailman, the Wolverine, the Serpent, the Eagle, and the Silvertip among others.

The son of a gold miner and his Athabaskan wife, Wright became an interpreter for Archdeacon Hudson Stuck and an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church. After serving with his wife Myrtle in missions at Tanana Crossing, Nenana, and Minto, Wright resigned from mission work in 1935 and operated a

transfer business in Nenana until his death in 1948. His widow continues to make her home in Fairbanks today.

Wright first printed his story in four installments in an Episcopal periodical between 1926 and 1930. With illustrations by artist Bill Engels, it is now available in book form for the first time. \$10 cloth edition, \$4.95 paperback.

"Citizen," a second volume in the World Discovery Book series now in press, is the true story of an American boy's two voyages to North Pacific whaling grounds during the years 1843-1849.

According to Frost, only authentic documents of discovery with potential for broad readership will be published by his firm.

This Athabaskan tale is available in Anchorage bookstores now and will be available in Fairbanks stores in the near future. The books are also available directly from O.W. Frost.

Interested persons should write:

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Illustration for FIRST MEDICINE MAN by Bill Engels, Fairbanks artist