

Arthur Nagozruk, Sr., 40 year village teacher, is dead at 88 in Nome

Arthur Nagozruk, Sr., an 88-year resident of northwest Alaska who spent almost half of those years as a school teacher, died on Friday, June 23, according to a report in The Bering Straights in Nome.

Nagozruk had been a teacher for over 40 years. He taught in his home village of Wales, as well as Shishmaref, King Island, Nunivak Island, Napakiak, Noatak and Point Hope. He was awarded a Meritorious Service Award from the Bureau of Indian Affairs for his work in education.

Nagozruk received no formal education himself. He was instructed by two teachers who stayed in Wales, and he told The Bering Straights in an interview before his death that at

the age of 14, he was the only Wales resident who could read or write, "so it was he who signed the official papers to have a school built in one of the villages."

He was teaching in Wales in 1918 when the flu epidemic struck. Nagozruk survived after being very ill, but his wife and three children did not. Later, he married his present widow, Lucy, who had herself lost a husband and son in the epidemic.

In 1898, when Nagozruk was only 8 years old, he sailed with an uncle from Wales to Unalakleet. At that time, Nome was only a stretch of beach. On the way back the next autumn, there was one tent pitched on

the sand spit. He remembers that "it was not a Native tent." He says that it must have been a miner panning for gold along the Snake River.

Art Nagozruk, Sr., is survived by his wife Lucy, and his children: Laura Baker, Margaret Trigg, and Elmer Nagozruk of Nome; Grace Lucier and Evelyn Hendrickson of Anchorage, Gordon of Clear, Howard of Chicago, and Floyd, who is serving in the U.S. Navy in Alameda, California.

Nagozruk died in the Norton Sound Regional Hospital at Nome.

Funeral Services were held Tuesday, June 27, at the United Methodist Church where he had been an active member in his lifetime.