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*Tundra Times file photo*

## Alfred Starr, village leader, was active in Alaska Native claims movement

A respected and well known leader in the Alaska Native land claims movement, Alfred Starr, died May 4, 1986, and was buried May 8 in Nenana.

The burial was followed by a potlatch attended by 500 people.

Born in 1898 at Old Station, 17 miles down the Yukon River from Tanana, Mr. Starr spent his childhood learning the secrets of the land. Always an active man, he used the talents he developed, and he enjoyed a subsistence lifestyle of hunting and fishing.

A memorial proclamation was passed by the Alaska Legislature in May, honoring Mr. Starr. It described him as bold, inquisitive and adventurous by nature.

He traveled 11 years through the western United States. During the Depression years, he worked as a logger and farmer.

Mr. Starr returned to Alaska in 1937 and married Elizabeth Evans of Tanana. They soon moved to Nenana where they raised seven children, and

Mr. Starr worked various jobs including section laborer on the Alaska Railroad from 1950-1966.

In the mid-1950s, Mr. Starr became involved with the movement for settlement of Alaska Native land claims.

During the 1960s Mr. Starr served as Nenana Village Council chief and traveled extensively throughout the Interior, speaking at countless potlatches on the subject of land claims issues. An avid reader and an impressive and articulate speaker, he sought jobs and a right-to-hiring preference for Natives.

Some of his teachings are still available through the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Archives. In 1984, Mr. Starr testified before Thomas Berger's Alaska Native Review Commission.

Mr. Starr is survived by sons Paul, Alfred Jr., Randolph and Stanley; daughters Anna and Martha; grandchildren Michael and Ali Michelle Starr and Christina McMath; and mother-in-law Abbey Joseph of Tanana.