

Marston has timeless quality

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Have you ever been transported back through time to the past, through the present, and on to the future in a brief hour? Walk the pages of Alaskan history with M.R. "Muktuk" Marston. It's an experience you'll never forget.

At eighty plus, he may seem frail, but the man inside is still as strong as the day he set foot in Alaska and began to organize the Alaska Territorial Scouts, fighting the Army and the world for equal rights for the Natives of Alaska; a battle he has waged for nearly 36 years.

All immediate surroundings fade away when Muktuk's story pours forth, his deep set eyes flashing confirmation of the events that molded the man and helped shape the destiny of all those around him.

The listener becomes a traveler, mushing supplies to the Scouts in weather no one else would venture, half frozen oneself. Other men of Alaska were his companions; they are the listeners companions for a brief time.

Muktuk wrote a book, "Men of the Tundra". Most of his story is in it, and a good book it is, too. But the story is better in the telling. It is the magic of the man that makes it so.

A delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention in 1955, Muktuk described himself, according to a fellow delegate, as "just an interested bystander who wanted to make sure they did it right."

At the Alaska Constitutional Review held recently, when asked about Alaska's progress over the last 20 years he said, "We've



—Photo By JIMMY BEDFORD

come a long way, baby, from the Scouts to the Land Claims (Settlement) Act. And a good thing it is, too. Best deal we ever made—40 million acres and a billion dollars. After all, it was theirs, anyhow.

"I came to the Constitutional Convention to save the Natives. When it looked like we were going to become a state, the Department of the Interior wanted to form reservations here, 100 of them. I stopped them, too."

"When we bought Alaska from Russia, they said, 'make settlement with the Natives'. We're 103 years doing it, but it is a good deal all around. There are Natives in the House and the Senate, and they're going to be all right."

When asked about the econom-

ic development in Alaska, he said "I'm for OMAR! (Organization for the Management of Alaska's Resources).

Muktuk stated that the gas line should be built in Alaska by Alaskans, and that the gas should flow under the American flag all the way to the market.

Parks are nice, according to Muktuk. But they are choking us and taking up thousands of acres of the most beautiful farm land in the world.

"There are thousands of acres on the Yukon, Kuskokwim and the North River; good fertile land being locked up forever. We have to go to the people of America and present our story. We did that in order to get statehood, and it worked. It's a very serious problem."

One of Muktuk's prime con-

cerns is the agricultural future of Alaska. He developed a model farm at Unalakleet that has produced tremendous amounts of root crops. This farm is run by Eskimos, with Muktuk providing seed and fertilizer. He says he recently made a provision in his will to provide funding for the continuation of his agricultural program "after I am gone. At my age, I may not be around much longer," says Muktuk.

That may be the biggest story Muktuk ever told. On October 24, he married the former Mrs. Elsie Howard of Anchorage in a private ceremony in Hawaii, according to the Anchorage Daily Times.

Any listener believes that 100 years from now, M.R. "Muktuk" Marston will be young. The man is timeless.