

Musher, Charles Ned, Drowns Goes Thru Ice With Dog Team

(Editor's Note: We got acquainted with Charles Ned during the time he worked as a dog handler for Jerry Riley when the latter made a swing of dog racing across the United States and parts of Canada. The two young men made reams of newspaper copy wherever they went and all of it was good and it made Alaska more known to the people outside. Charlie, a smiling, shy young man, seemed quiet but one soon found out that he had a wonderful sense of humor. This gift came out to the enjoyment of many during the young men's dog mushing trip. The life of this pleasant young man came to an untimely end not long ago at Aliakaket and the following article by Oscar Nictune, Sr. is a moving account of the tragedy.)

By OSCAR NICTUNE, SR.
Aliakaket, Alaska

Here is an article for your paper.

Last week, last of the Hog-atza employees came home from summer's work for F. E. Company dredge at Hog River October 28, 1965. One of them was Charles Ned, age 21 years.

Caribou happen to pass Aliakaket at that time going south. And the river was open yet at places.

He took six dogs with a racer sled—four inches of snow. He took Alatna Trail which goes north from here. He made first Portage. About three miles from here he went down the river bank at a

steep place leaving the trail. We could see that the caribou was across the river.

Breaks through Ice

As I said, the river was open in places. He drove up about a quarter of a mile and shot one caribou across the river. Then his dogteam dragged him over thin ice and broke through.

From what we could find, he held the sled brake and the handle of it broke and he must of tried his anchor brake but it could not bit into the ice and could not hold.

He must of slipped and got caught with the prongs of the anchor brake on one of his short boots. That's how Charles Ned got drowned.

The Search

We all went up to look for him. Some men spotted the dogs and the sled on the bottom of the river. So more people were needed. We came back to the village for more help. Lots of them walked up then.

In a short while after, Arthur Williams spotted the body not far down from where his team dragged the sled and him toward the caribou on the other side of the river.

So we cut the ice and pulled him out and put him on the sled and took him home to the village — sent a radiogram to Colville Delta.

And so the villagers worked together and made a coffin with lumber and put the casket in the church — Episcopal's.

Simon Ned, Charlie's father, came back from Colville where he worked for Bud Helmericks' fishing.

The Burial

On the 30th of October, the people worked in the cemetery above the village. We buried Charles Ned. Father Donald Hart from Huslia did the last rites.

On the 31st after Sunday services, we all went up to pull the sled and the dogs from the river. We burned the dogs.

Many Visitors

Our visitors are still here. Seven from Huslia and two plane loads from Hughes. Yesterday, more from Bettles Field.

So we had lots of help from our neighbors. Thanks for the goodwill towards men.