



**ANCIENT THONG LINE**—Ruth and Reuben Towksjshea of Point Hope are fashioning a rawhide thong as did their ancestors centuries ago. Ruth had placed the large oogruk (bearded seal) skin in a container in a moderately warm room in its own oil until the hair peeled off. The skin had been thoroughly fleshed. Reuben is using a special

razor-sharp cutting knife to cut a half inch thong round and round from the skin until an unbroken line of 200 feet or more is sliced. The line is stretched taut between poles and allowed to dry. When thoroughly dried, the thong will be used for bindings or in place of rope because it is very strong.

—Photo by SHEILA TURNER