

Part Four and Conclusion of: Senator Gruening, Assistant Enjoy Savoonga Walrus Carnival

BLIND FOR 17 YEARS—Daniel Alowa, 42, asked "Who is that?" when we went visiting in one of the houses. He has been blind for 17 years with heavy cataracts on both eyes. Sight failed first in the right eye; then a similar cataract formed on the left eye.

Senator Gruening, who is a doctor, examined the cataracts briefly and said he thought they were operable, so that possibly Daniel's sight could be restored, though there would be a question about that after so many years. The blind man said no doctor had ever looked at him. The senator is going to arrange that it will be done.

FACE TATTOOING—Some of the older women at Savoonga and many more at Gambell have tattoo lines on their faces. The custom of tattooing women's faces to make them even more beautiful was common previously, but has not been practiced for the past 30 years. A mixture of soot and seal oil was inserted under the skin with needles.

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH—Many residents of St. Lawrence Island look remarkably young for their years. The example is cited of Nelson Alowa, whose younger brother, Thomas, moved from the island some years ago to

live at Noorvik on the mainland. Islanders say anyone would mistake Nelson for the younger of the brothers.

In another family, a much younger brother left Savoonga to live in Siberia. He returned on a visit, looking like a very old man compared with his youthful appearing elder brother who had remained on the island.

CARRYING CHILDREN—In most Eskimo villages on the mainland young children are carried by their mothers in piggy-back fashion, usually tucked inside the mother's parka. In both Gambell and Savoonga children are lifted all the way up on top of the shoulders of the mother, father or older brother or sister, where they ride quite easily.

BIBLE TRANSLATORS—Mr. and Mrs. David Shinen, who work for the Wycliffe Bible Translators of Santa Ana, Calif., make up one of eight teams in Alaska which are working to develop a written form of the various Eskimo dialects so that the New Testament can be translated into those dialects. The Shinens have been on St. Lawrence Island since 1959.

Although the people of Gambell and Savoonga try to listen to the programs broadcast by radio station KICY of Nome in the two main dialects, the Inupiat of the

people north of Unalakleet and the Upik of those southward from that mainland village their own language is quite different.

COLD STORAGE—Mrs. Gladys Musgrove is a cheerful widow who works out of Nome for the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Alaska. She flew to Savoonga on the same plane with us and returned when we did. She instructs residents in canning and food preparation.

Although meat on the island is fairly hard to come by, it is estimated that half of that which is taken is wasted through spoilage before it can be consumed. Mrs. Musgrove held a meeting with the village council to describe a new type of cold storage which has been developed at the university. Salt water brine about four feet deep is used at the bottom of an underground silo to draw the cold into the chamber and maintain a temperature of 20 degrees. This does not compare with the zero temperature which is considered ideal for meat preservation but a cold storage of the new type can be run economically without fuel or machinery.

POLITICS?—Found in the little house, known as the nurse's quarters, where Senator Gruening and I stayed

for two days at Savoonga was a "Workers for Wally" button. On the wall of the home of the village president is a House of Representatives calendar on which there is a rubber stamped legend: "With compliments of Howard W. Pollock, the Congressman from Alaska."

MANNERS—In the hallway of the little schoolhouse at Savoonga is a sign lettered by the students as follows: "Good Manners at a Movie: 1) Sit in your seat; 2) Don't clap your hands; 3) Don't go in and out; 4) Don't fight; 5) Don't make too much noise; 6) Don't throw papers; 7) Courtesy; 8) Don't slam the door; 9) Don't chew your gum too loud."

There was much of interest to see at Gambell also, but our stay there was shorter. We were met by ten of the older residents in colorful oldtime costumes, made mostly of thin white intestine, decorated with red cloth and hanging animal tails. Head-dresses were of polar bear hair.

The flat Eskimo drums are struck differently at Gambell than at Savoonga at the dances. At Savoonga they are struck on the skin side with little curved wooden whips. At Gambell only the wood frame of the under side is struck, and by a heavy staff.

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Savoonga Walrus Carnival...

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Leaving Gambell with us was the Marquesa de Portago, who was returning to New York after a successful walrus hunt. The slim, attractive huntress has now taken all the major Alaska trophies—brown bear, polar bear, grizzly, moose, caribou, Dall sheep and walrus—on a series of big game forays to Alaska.

While Senator Gruening was awaiting transportation from St. Lawrence Island, a message was received from Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), the majority leader, summoning him to Washington to participate in a series of important Senate votes.

Because of adverse weather, the senator was not able to reach Nome until Monday night and not able to get out of Nome for Anchorage until Tuesday night. An Air Force jet flew him from Elmendorf Air Force Base to Washington.

While in Alaska, the senator spoke at the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in Anchorage and participated in conferences there. He met briefly in Nome with constituents and spoke to the student bodies at the Nome

High School and the new William E. Beltz School.

An engagement the senator had to speak at the annual recognition banquet of the Midnight Sun Council of the Boy Scouts of America on Wednesday in Fairbanks had to be filled by George Sundborg.

One of those with whom Senator Gruening met at Nome was Tommy Johnson, who proposes to build a slaughtering facility to handle reindeer, of which there are 40,000 head under 11 herders in Northwestern Alaska. A slaughter of about 10,000 deer, which would render 1 million pounds of meat, is thought possible and desirable annually.

Senator Gruening is going to obtain a federally approved slaughterhouse and meat inspection by the Department of Agriculture, so the reindeer can be marketed commercially.

The senator returned from Washington on Friday to Fairbanks for a series of meetings and to make the principal address at Saturday's dinner meeting of the Alaska Society of Professional Engineers.