

Village Was Formerly Seevughuk

By GRACE SLWOOKO

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GAMBELL — Our village has a beautiful name, Gambell. It is the name of a brave young couple that came at the beginning of this century 1900, from what is now Lower 48. Ever since when we have to use the name, we use Gambell.

But its name in Eskimo is Seevughug. It is an ancient name of this place, meaning, that it had been wrung. It does look like some great hand just grabbed a handful of earth from the bottom and put it there in the sea.

When we got the maps, we can see the island, its shape, like it had been wrung. The whole island, which is 100 miles in length, with its width varying in many places. The widest part is some 34-40 miles. Its name is same as the village and it is also the name of the whole island, Seevughug.

So the whole island of Seevughug in Eskimo and it also has an English name like its people, us. We also speak two languages, English and Eskimo.

There is another village that started not too long ago, maybe during 1910 and after that is named Seevungaq (Savoonga), and how that village grew. My, it is as big as Gambell now, maybe with more people.

But those are the villages still standing and population getting up to 400, maybe Savoonga with more people.

There had been other villages here on the island but they either moved out or did not continue on anymore.

But Gambell now is the 4th class city with some 400 in population, one ANICA store, two churches, one BIA schoolhouse, some 100 students, one clinic, one Head Start building, three

other little stores, three coffee shops, post office and an armory.

There is also a big AVEC power plant for the whole village. Oh how we like that. We just go crazy over new things but this power has been going on for four years and it lights our homes.

Some people also are building homes back farther away from the sea.

We don't have running water in the homes. We still have to get water from the pumphouse. We get good water from there and it has been going on for 11 years. Some winters, it turns salty, then we miss it so much but then it turns to fresh water again.

And there is a Wien's Radio and rooms. The man that runs them is Vernon Slwooko. He entertains the visitors and tourists pretty good. He shows them around with his skinboat and fix their meals.

June Koonooka, his daughter, is a radio girl. She also makes reservations for the passengers that travel by planes.

Munz planes have been com-

ing everyday of the week except weekends, this summer. But Wien's big planes come on Saturdays. People always travel by planes to the mainland.

At the last week of August, there was a fire here. Another dear building almost gone again. Walunga's house was badly burned in the inner rooms but the outer part of the building was saved by quick work of the people.

How we ran around to save the building. I have a memory of Frank who was so proud of his well-earned house years ago.