

Jimmy Morgan, 14, of Aniak

Saves Mother's Life, Others

"I'm going to let go! Momma, I'm going to let go!"

Fourteen year old Jimmy Morgan screamed as he held onto the rope of their boat while huge peices of ice and torrents of flood water pounded against it.

The Morgan family—mother Nancy and seven of her children, had been forced from their home when break-up at Aniak caused the river to flow over the bank.

They had sought safety at neighbor Frank Cutter's home. When the water became high there, another neighbor, Phillip Simeon, came and took the Morgans and the Cutters to his home, thinking that it was safer there.

The villagers had tied the boats to the house and gone inside for refuge, when huge icebergs, some twenty and thirty feet across and four or five feet thick came rolling up over the bank and smashed into the Simeon home.

Again, the terrified families were forced to take to the boats, and when Mrs. Morgan and her two smallest children and part of the



SAVED LIVES—Jimmy Morgan, left, and Phillip Simeon of the village of Aniak, probably saved the lives of some of their fellow villagers when the Kuskokwim River spilled its banks at Aniak with huge cakes of ice that battered some homes in the community recently.

Cutter family were in the boat, the rush of ice and water broke the rope that secured the boat.

Jimmy grabbed the rope and held on for all he was worth. Mrs. Simeon ran to help him. Still the current

forced him along the side of the banking around the house.

He was about to give up when Phillip Simeon jumped in the raging water and, wrapping the rope around one hand, grabbed the window

(Continued on page 6)

Jimmy Morgan . . .

(Continued from page 1)

sill with his other arm and helped Jimmy and Mrs. Simeon hold it until they could get to a "safer" place.

Had Jimmy let go, or Phillip Simeon not helped when he did, the boat and its occupants would have been smashed among the huge ice bergs.

Simeon's hands were swollen and bruised. His home was literally torn apart.

The Morgan, Simeon, and Cutter families were airlifted from their boats by helicopter several hours after their horrowing experience.

The incident occurred during the breakup flood at Aniak on Thursday May 16.

It began flooding at approximately 10:00 p.m. Thursday. Many other homes and properties were severely damaged when the Kuskokwim River broke over the dike and spilled tons of ice and water into the village of Aniak.

Some homes were swept away while others tumbled or were filled with mud and water. Basements and wells were filled with water, and

in many homes the water line was three and four feet high.

Electricity was off for approximately 36 hours. The airstrip (which will accommodate an F-27 prop jet) was totally flooded.

In fact, it was a boat-way for men who were taking people to the school, F.A.A., or R.C.A. for refuge. In some places, the dike was completely destroyed.

Here are some comments made by villagers:

"Big pieces of ice were hitting the house and just shaking it, and we had thirteen kids in there." "It happened so fast. Fifteen minutes after the water started to raise, our basement was full and icebergs were rolling across our yard."

"We thought our house was gone until the men picked us up and we saw it stuck over against a tree."

"The dogs were howling something terrible—we saw one balancing on a drum."

"Our boat almost sunk half-way across the airstrip."

"Worst flood I've been through." "I was terrified."