

Some ABC's

in education

BY RON INOUE

Editor's note: Thanks for your letters and phone calls regarding this column. We've received responses from Tundra Times readers in Anchorage, Bethel and Copenhagen, Denmark. If you have questions about the column or suggestions for subjects to discuss, let me know by writing to me at the Center for Cross-cultural Studies (CXCS), University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 99701, or call (907) 479-7185.

Miss Lois M. Morey, former teacher and supervisor for rural schools under the Territorial and early State Department of Education is back in Alaska this summer. Sponsored by the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society, with assistance from the Alaska Humanities Forum and the Fairbanks Retired Teachers Association, she is preparing an index of materials relating to early education in Alaska.

Miss Morey taught in Anchorage and Adak before joining the Territorial Department of Education as a supervisor for rural schools. She traveled extensively in Southeast, Southwest, Northwest and the Interior regions of the state. An excellent photographer, she took over 600 high-quality slides of schools during a ten-year period and collected many education-related items which have been placed into the University Archives.

The photographs had many uses. One use was helping to make needed repairs in school buildings. Sometimes the people in Anchorage or larger urban areas who bought the supplies for the schools didn't know what the bush school looked like, so the photographs helped to identify the style of window which needed to be replaced, how tall a ladder was needed to repair the roofing, and other information necessary to keep the schools operating.

Now retired and living in Arizona for reasons of health, Miss Morey travels throughout the West in her unofficial search for people who have been in Alaska and who still have fond memories, diaries, mementos and artifacts from their days spent here. She has very strong feelings about the return of Alaskan materials to the state. Oftentimes the collectors move Outside to places where there is little understanding or appreciation for the items in their collections; Miss Morey has worked hard to convince those collectors to return the items to the state to places where they can be well cared for and appreciated.

Miss Morey regularly attends the "Sourdough" conventions of former residents of Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon who are now living Outside and pursues the topic of early Alaska education. She maintains an active correspondence with many of the retired teachers from the Territorial and early statehood days.

In San Diego, Miss Morey found pictures and items relating to the Moravian efforts in Alaskan education. On her way to Fairbanks for this project, she visited libraries and individuals with significant personal collections in Seattle, Juneau, Sitka and Anchorage. Duplicate excerpts of the relevant materials were made from those sources for deposit into the University Archives.

The Title for the indexing project in "The Development of Education in Alaska: A guide to Relevant Materials, Collections and Data." Anyone who is interested in education during the pre-purchase, Territorial, and early statehood years should make use of the index which will be ready this fall.

There may be a photograph and a reference to the school you attend or your parents might have attended. The "guide" will be available for use in the Archives, Rasmussen Library, University of Alaska-Fairbanks.