

# What others say...

## *No desire to be white*

To the editor:

*"The major issue is land rights...the issue has pitted the state not so much against the natives as it has against the federal government."*

*It is the policy of...government...to return traditional Aboriginal lands to the people. To prevent that from happening..." "We are looking at ways and means right now of legally stopping the frightening prospect of aggregation of Aboriginal land..."*

*"What the federal government wants to do is give control of the whole northern coastline...to Aboriginals. How do we defend our country, or keep exotic diseases out, if white people are denied access to our northern coastlines?"*

*"It is not that the...government is insensitive to the needs of the Aboriginal people. But rather than helping them make their own way in society, the policy is one of paternalism."*

All of this is a direct quote from the *National Geographic* (Vol. 169, No. 1, January, 1986), with a few things deleted (the...). I can imagine that as you were reading it, you simply considered it as just more about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Actually, it is all about Australia. That's right, the Natives there are having to go through the same things as we are. If you read the original article in the *National Geographic*, you will see that I only omitted Australian place names, proper nouns and such.

Does every inch of ground, every blade of grass, everything the white man stands upon, even for a moment,

automatically belong to him? Is there some divine right that the white men have over all the world? There must be, or so they think because for a time (and still in some parts) they ruled Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, China, and every place they have ever been. And judging from how they have treated us for so long, I suspect that they have been given thought to register us as personal property.

Well, white man, you have taken enough. Now it ends, no more, finished. What is left of our land you cannot have. Your greed has exceeded your ability to hold. We finally see you for what you are, you cannot use smooth words on us anymore. White men are not all bad, as individuals, but as a group they are all very bad. History clearly demonstrates this. Everywhere and always bad.

I no longer listen to their lies of friendship, nor trust their "help". I only want to see the day when I can stand "here" on our land, and they can stand "there" on their land. I no longer want their "equal rights" nor to become "white" like them. I only want to be myself; Native, separate, apart, different, and all those things the white man say's isn't good for me, like; our own law, our own customs, our own government, our own schools, our own way of life, our own land and no white man inventing "laws" to take it all away again.

Do you understand me *gussuk*? Read my lips: I DO NO WANT TO BE LIKE YOU!

Joseph James

## *News from Gambell*

Here on the island we still use our Eskimo language, but is speaking lots of English, too.

Men hunt for seals and other sea animals, for food and garments. Women do a lot on fixing them.

What make me to try writing something is the wonders and beauty of things like snow and ice. That pure white wonder which becomes the color of our land in wintertime should be the song of some poets. So since I'm not a poet, I want to put it someplace, as it disappears to nothing in the summertime.

*Mounds of pure whiteness here and there and along the shores piles of ice forming rugged mounds that disappear to nothing in summertime, is really some wonder and beauty, which I like.*

Thank you *Tundra Times* I can at least put this here.

When I was a child back in 1920s and later on, my grandfather Igmaluga used to work and prepare things for hunting seals and whales. The icicles forming on his whiskers are ones he had as I think of him.

My father used to take us his family to the other end of the island for fox trapping. In those years men were buying lumber from some companies to make houses. The ship used to come and bring the lumber and later on some cut buildings some men ordered. We have one with windows, bedrooms and

all and where it is standing now there are more homes like that.

There are lots of wood drift in at the shore, although we don't have trees, we build houses of wood, they drift in from some place. Some places there are just piles of wood drift in.

But as a family in my childhood days, we use to travel during the middle part of July to the other end of the island by wooden boat top open and walrus hide boat, too. Those open top wooden boats were used here a lot during that time, they even used them for whaling. They send for them from some place, the ship would bring them over.

On a nice July day we would carry whole lot of our things to the north beach and load them on our boats and start traveling. All our dogs be on the smaller boat with a few men, 2 or 3 men on. Whole day we then travel, stopping at Camp Collier where *Tatugis* lived then. *Tatugi* was one of five brothers, my father's uncles. There we would just talk with them a while on the shore where they ran to meet us a while and go on to *Savoonga*. There are beautiful things on that cliff where there are millions of birds and fowl with their young. *Elqila* is one name of the cliffs, there about a mile long. After we pass those and points we would stop at *Savoonga*.

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another village for overnight. Lots of people would run down to the shore to meet us and help us unload. There we would be with our friends, having so much fun being together and showing us many things they did.

Then the next day, when the weather is nice, we would go on to our destination at the other end of the island. There also is another place where we like to stop and be with families there at *Tapghapagaq*. *Agaa* there my grandfather *Iqmaluga*'s sister always want us to stop a while. Oh how we enjoy those places. *Tapghapagaq* is at the other end of the cliff side of Savoonga mountains

Then we would travel on to *Sivaaghet*. First it was at *Tamniq* where my father built a house of drift wood. There are piles of drift wood at the shores around the island.

When we arrive there at *Sivaaghet* there we unload and run around seeing many things we left the winter before. Then my father would take the men that helped us over to *Punguk Island*, another some 35 miles where there are walrus to catch some for them and young birds for them, too.

There at *Sivaaghet* we would stay. First our parents would pick *nunivak*. The *nunivak* are green plants that grow. There would be lots of them growing close to our house, so we just pick them before dogs and people walk on them. Our parents would fill barrels of this, put water in with them and rocks to weigh them down, as girls

would help with picking. My grandmother *Aghnaghghaghpak* like to do that. After those get good and sour like vinegar or when they get tart taste they would put them in a seal skin container. We eat those with seal meats and as dessert when frozen in the winter, too. Then during September we pick salmon berries, a whole lot of them grow close by. They fill seal skins of them, too. Those berries are very good to eat.

Then during winter my father and other men would trap foxes. The store here would buy them for some company. The men like my father trap foxes and bought lumber houses with them.

Grace Slwooko

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## What others say...

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To the editor:

As an Alaskan Native, I am strongly against the oil drilling that is about to take place in the Northeast coast of Alaska.

Why do they want to put it in? That's where the caribou roam and calve through the area for thousands of years.

Caribou is ours and every Northern/Interior Natives' main source of food. We cherish them greatly. Living off them is a heritage carried down by our ancestors, and we want to

carry it on.

If the oil rig is put in, it may ruin the land, pollute the water, and maybe extinguish the animals.

Please consider this, we want to keep the land natural. Let the nature be, it's bad enough the Lower 48 is polluted.

The way the land is now is a paradise and I pray that the future generations live through it, without the land being tampered with.

Sincerely,  
Mildred Peter