

AUGUST, 1967, ESKIMO OLYMPICS ACTIVITIES

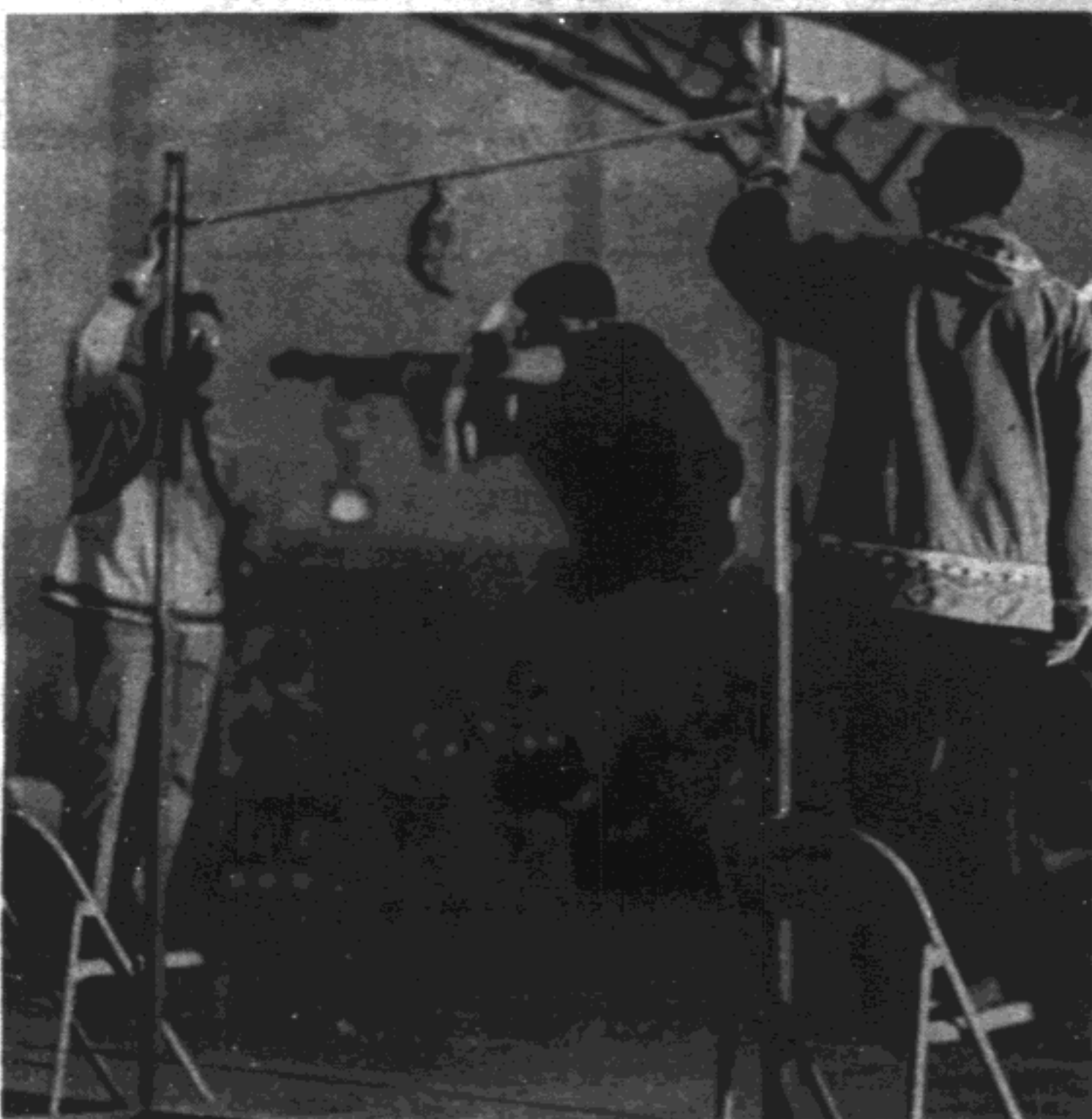


ATHABASCAN DANCER—Athabaskan Indian from Min to happily performs the dance of his people.



ESKIMO OLYMPICS QUEEN—Miss Leora Kenick, Miss Arctic Native Brotherhood, Nome, was crowned Miss Eskimo Olympics Queen of 1967 during August 9-12 performance of the annual native celebration.

Miss Sharon Olin was runner-up and Alice Foster of Kotzebue was second runner-up. Left to right, Alice Foster, Queen Leora, and Sharon Olin.



ESKIMO HI-KICK—An unidentified Eskimo hi-kick performer is trying hard to kick an oograk bladder with both feet simultaneously and land back on the floor on both feet. The difficult contest was won by Harry Kaleak of Barrow who kicked the object at six feet 10 inches.



BELUGA MUKTUK—A native lady is preparing beluga muktuk for the muktuk eating contest at the Olympics. The event was won by Lucy Ahvakana of Anchorage who consumed her share in 40 seconds. Miss Sharon Olin, an Indian queen contestant, took part and remarked, "The muktuk tasted real good. I was surprised."

Leora Unfolds Poignant Story About Her Parka

A poignant story unfolded just after Leora Kenick was crowned Miss Eskimo Olympics of 1967. Leora did not expect to be chosen queen on the evening of August 11. During the interview in front of the audience, she made a few remarks and smiled as did 16 other queen contestants.

When John Teal of the University of Alaska, who was chairman of the queen contest judges, called Miss Kenick's name, the 19-year-old Nome girl wavered perceptively as if she was about to faint. She, however, regained her composure soon after amid tears of happiness.

The editor of this newspaper asked Leora a few questions after she was crowned.

How did she feel about being crowned queen?

"I just can't believe it. I'm very happy."

Your parka looks very nice. Is it yours or did someone loan it to you?

"Yes, it's mine. You see, this was mother's parka. I don't remember my mother. She passed away when I was three years old. Before she died, she told father to keep it for me. I started to wear it when I was around eleven or twelve years old. It's almost too small for me now. It's getting old and it's starting to get worn down."

Here, Leora showed her interviewer the worn parts on her squirrel skin parka. Some of the hair had worn off at the sleeves.

What did you think when you competed for the queen? Did you think of your mother?

Leora hesitated for long moments. She smiled but there was a cast of sadness in her smile.

"Yes—I thought of mother several times."

Partial Listings of Eskimo Olympics

Before Tundra Times could run the results of the 1967 Eskimo Olympics held in Fairbanks on August 9-12, the great flood hit Fairbanks two days after the games were over.

In spite of the heavy, steady downpour of rain that was in the process of building up the flood, the Lathrop High School gymnasium was filled with people nightly for four days.

In the blanket toss contest for women, Laura Bergt, chairman of the Olympics, took first place while Donald Ahsoak of Barrow took the honors for men.

Eskimo hi-kicking contest was won by Harry Kaleak of Barrow at the height of 6 feet

8 inches.

Pete Sovalik's Barrow Eskimo dance team got the nod of the judges. The group's performance was interesting, varied and unique. Their Eskimo costumes also contributed to the win.

MacKenzie Delta Drum Dancers from Inuvik in Canada won second place with their excellent performances. It was the first time in Olympics' history that Canadian Eskimos participated in the performances. Some of the Canadian Eskimos also performed very well in difficult Eskimo games.

Colorfully costumed Northway-Tanacross Athabaskan

dancers won the Indian dance event. Indian stick pull was won by Jim Wilson of Huslia.

Seal skinning contest was won by the perennial winner, Rhoda Nageak of Barrow. Muktuk eating contest was won by Lucy Ahvakana of Anchorage who consumed her beluga muktuk in 40 seconds flat.

Parka contest saw Poldine Carlo of Fairbanks walking away with the win.

Last, but not least, comely Leora Kenick was the 1967 Eskimo Olympics queen contest winner. Sharon Olin of Fairbanks came second and Alice Foster of Kotzebue was third.

— Photos by Steve Gordon —