

Call number: 02-00-133-20 PT.1

Eskimo Olympics

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

Date of summary's creation: 03/07/2014

Series: ATS-1 Educational Satellite Project Tapes

Notes: Original in 7-inch tape, master copy on CD. Produced by Roger McPherson. THESE TAPES WERE PRODUCED AS A PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM NOW DEFUNCT AND WERE BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

A man announcer says that two men from Barrow Dancers, [Names] will perform a salute dance to "our nation" [United States]. Then he says that [Unclear] is not present, and [Unclear] will dance the dance by himself.

A man's voice says that even though they won't play the national anthem, it will be appropriate if people stand up and honor the flag with them. [Singing and drumming, followed by applause.]

1:58 A man's voice says that Wally Olson just informed him that they have marked off 30 feet from "that side of the gym to other side." The first contestant will be his good friend, Billy Killbear from Fairbanks. [Applause.] [Break in the recording.]

The announcer's voice says that he went 35 feet and 7 inches. [Applause.]

[Break in the recording.] [...] from Barrow. A speaker says he wouldn't recommend knuckle hop to anybody. Next gentleman to compete in knuckle hop is James Sielak from Fairbanks, originally from Barrow. [Applause.] He is representing Fairbanks tonight.

3:26 The next gentleman to compete is Elmer Frankson from Point Hope. [Break in the recording.] 23 feet. [Reading more names of the contestants and records: Don Ahsoak, Joshua Akpik from Barrow, John Ahvik from Barrow. The man says that he has a trophy with purple knuckles on. [Applause.]

6:20 The man says they have a new second place winner so far [applause]. [More contestants and their records: Jim Wilson from Nondalton. Billy Killbear [won?] with 45 feet and 7 inches. John Ahvik from Barrow is no. 2 with 30 feet [applause], no. 3 is Joshua Akpik from Point Barrow [unclear]. They'll get their trophies sometime later. The speaker thanks "a young man" for saving his knuckles.

8:14 The speaker points out the high kick contest happening on the far left. Judges ask that people wouldn't take any pictures during the contest since it blinds the contestants momentarily and they might miss their target. Again, he asks people not to take pictures with flash. There will be a demonstration where people can take pictures.

They have a Native dance group from Anchorage. [Applause.] They will be performing sometime soon. The speaker's friend from downtown said they should have kissing the wine bottle contest. The speaker tells that he wondered how that contest would work, and the man from downtown said that it would be like high kick, but they would have to kiss the bottle.

9:52 The man says that the competitors have to do it certain way or they are disqualified. [Break in the recording.] They will start [high kicking] from 4 feet, 10 inches. He asks all the high kick competitors to come up on the floor. [Breaks in the recording.] Joshua Akpik, Robert Okpeaha Eugene Edwin from Tanana, and Elmer Frankson from Pont Hope are the contestants. Reggie Joule from Kotzebue.

13:50 Joe Kasak from Point Barrow is trying the 7-foot mark. The speaker says that salmon strips help a lot too and jokes that they are running out of measuring tape. Then there is 8 feet [high kick]. [Break in the recording.]

16:01 Roger is testing the tape. He asks if he can interview someone about the Olympics. Irene Daw [sp?] from Barrow introduces herself and says that they live in Fairbanks now and have lived since 1963, but originally they are from Barrow. Her husband says he can't talk. The speaker doesn't know when the Olympics started, but in 1962 her husband was a champion in finger pulling.

She says she is going seal hunting tonight and Roger asks if she has ever won the seal competition. She says she has. Last year she got the second price. Roger says

he remembers that and that it was close. Irene says that two years ago she was about 2 minutes from the champion. Roger asks what the secret to skinning a seal is. Irene says she doesn't know, but they have to skin them really well. One doesn't have to be fast, but one has to skin them really well – like they used to skin them. Roger confirms that it's mostly judged on quality. He asks if anybody has ever been disqualified because they did a messy job. Irene says she doesn't know.

Roger asks if Irene's husband still does finger pulling, and she says he did, but not today. She's not sure if they have finger pulling that day. Last year they didn't have finger pulling. In finger pulling, people interlock their middle fingers and, sitting on the floor, they start pulling. The one who lets go first, loses. Roger wonders if it hurts, and the lady says she thinks it does. He asks if fingers get all sweaty and Irene's husband says they do a little bit. Irene says that when he got tired, some young guy from Kotzebue won.

20:48 Drumming and singing starts. Another song is sung. Roger says that that was recorded behind the band and in low-frequency. Now they are going to record a high pass one and an LA 2.

A man's voice says that a medicine man would have a dance before hunters went out on the ocean with kayaks. The witch doctor would dance for good weather. [Drumming and singing.] Roger says that that was behind with the women, and that he'll move to the front with men. A man's voice says that the dance expresses the wish that there will be lots of bearded seal and walrus. The dance will be danced by Pete Sovalik's dance group from Barrow. It's a good luck song. [Drumming and singing.] Roger says that that was [recorded with] the microphone on the floor, next to the men.

At 27:33 The announcer tells that the next dance will express the story that after the weather calms down, two men go out hunting with kayaks. That will be danced by Robert Okpeaha and Herbert Ahgvik [sp?]. He apologizes if he didn't pronounce the names correctly. [Another song is sung.] The announcer tells that those are hunting songs that are sung when the men have been successful. One woman and two men start hauling the bearded seal and walrus meat to the shore and this dance will be danced by John Elavgak and his wife Sadie Elavgak and another man, Herbert Ahgvik. The three of them will dance the successful hunt.

29:42 Roger says he's going to put the recorder down on the floor by the women. [Singing and drumming.] The announcer tells that the killing of the animals is only a start and that from thereon it's a lot of work for the women and men. After successful hunt, three women hang up meat to dry to preserve it. The dance will be by three women: Isa Sovalik, Martha Ethan, and Josephine Itta. They dance the song about preserving meat. [Drumming and singing.]

[End of the recording.]