

Will Rogers' Last Report From Esquimo Land, Where There Has Been No Depression

BY WILL ROGERS.

WELL all I know is just what I run onto awhile back when I was messing around up in Alaska. Thats a most interesting country.

I was mentioning to you one time about being in the fine museum in Juneau, the Capitol of Alaska. There is a little Russian man in there, he was born in Alaska, before it was sold to us, "Father * * * * *" (some Russian name) Well he has made a great study of Alaskan customs, relics, languages, its history and everything, and if ever a fellow fit in a museum its him in this one.

It has some marvelous works of art by the Indians and Esquimos. Those Esquimos are really a mighty high class bunch of folks, and plum proud. They wont mess at all with the Indians, and not much with the whites. They think they are superior to the whites, and it dont take much to tell that they have kinder got it on us.

WHAT they can do with the skin of some old wile animal! The women folks kinder work it down some with their teeth. Some of the older womens teeth are all wore down just gnawing on various skins to get em sowed.

A doctor up there told me that the Esquimos sow anything or stitch it up just like the doctors do a wound. Lots of their Winter stuff have the fur inside. They can spread fish nets under the ice, Now how could you spread a fish net under the ice.

They got wooden boxes that are absolutely solid, that is they take one piece and when they get to the corner of the box they cut it, but not entirely in too, but so it will make a square bend, then sow the corners to keep it solid. And they have a water tight box, not a nail, and its absolutely one piece of board and not cut in two at all. Marvelous things cut from rocks, like hatchets and fish line sinkers and in fact anything you need.

Fish seems to be their Specialty, in fact its got to be, for thats about all they got to eat, and thats what they feed the dogs on too. They have to catch a lot of fish for a team of dogs, which is five, or seven. Course seal meat, and white whales, which is something bigger than a porpoise but white.

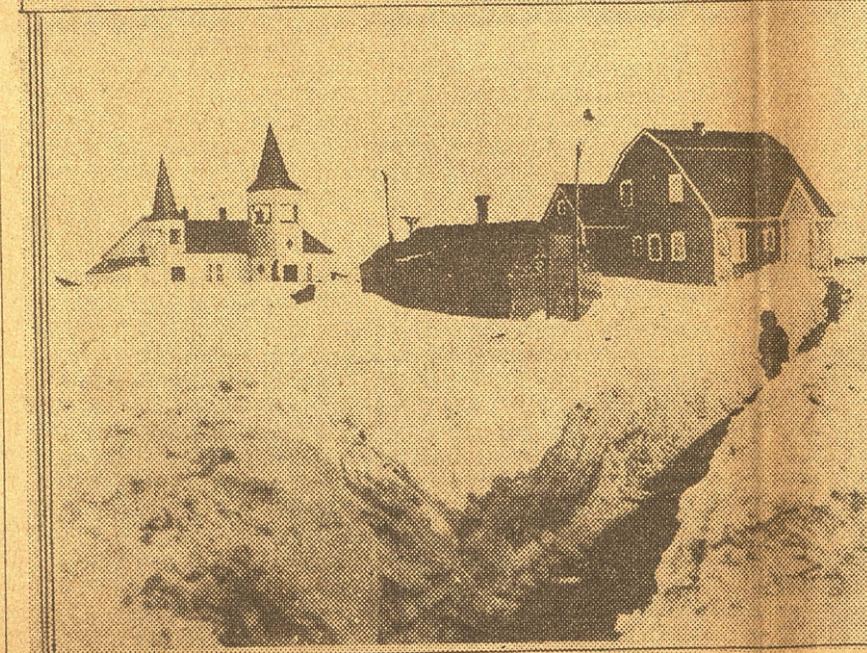
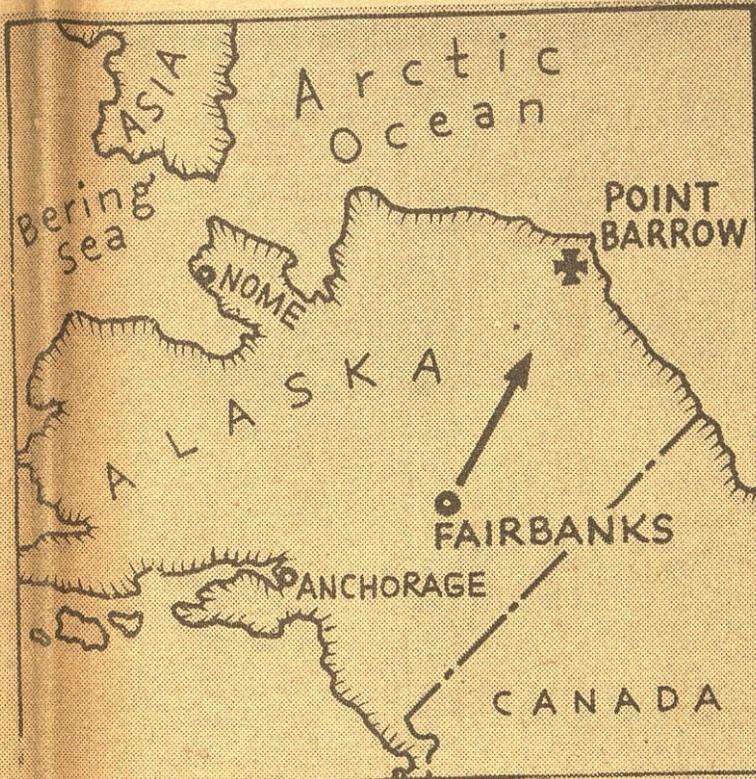
You know I found out up there that these Esquimos have one of the most regulated lives there is. That is, almost to a day of the various months or seasons, they will go from the hunting or trapping of one animal to the other.

WHITE FOX takes up just so many days, perhaps a couple of months, but there is almost a certain time that they will stop and move to another place to take up another game. Muskrat, then white seals, then their seal and fishing for their supply of dog food.

They all come in and hold a celebration on Xmas, then by New Years they are out again, and hold one at one of the native places.

Then the polo bear season occupiees so much of their time. He is pretty hard to get, He is worth real money to em.

Oh yes, then they got the caribou to hunt, There is literally thousands of caribou all over Alaska and the Yukon, and Northwest territories. They say they pass



Some of the Alaskan country described by Will Rogers in what is probably his last written work is shown here. Will was his usual jovial self when this picture of him was taken backing into Wiley Post's plane at Fairbanks (top left). The map shows the approximate spot where Post and Rogers crashed south of Point Barrow. They were flying from Fairbanks to Point Barrow. A typical Summer scene of Point Barrow, where the bodies of Post and Rogers were taken after the crash, is shown top right. The lower left photo shows a street scene in Barrow during Winter. The Post plane is shown on the lower right as Post took off with Rogers from Seattle for Alaska.

in great herds like the old timers say the buffalo used to do. I kinder thought they was always kinder stringing us about those buffalo, but these folks say the caribou do that right now.

I want to tell you the great story some time of the big drive of 3 thousand reindeer from away over in the very northwest tip of our country of Alaska, clear along the very banks of the Arctic Ocean for 2 thousand miles to the place where I stayed a couple of days at Aklavit, the very mouth of the McKensie River. They was five years getting them there, its the greatest story in animal driving I ever heard. The Canadian government had bought them from the Loman Brothers the big reindeer men of Alaska.

ITS A great country, is Alaska and the Canadian Northwest, where you have to live off the country, hunt, trap, kill and live. Four mails a year into that place, two and a half months when its not frozen in.

Its just a hundred and fifty miles from Hershel Island out in the Artic, (where we went too) and its the place where all the old whalers of the old days used to come in and freeze in and stay for the Winter.

A whale used to net em about 18 or 20 thousand dollars, when whalebone was selling, but the minute the women started reducing, and trying to get some sort of shape with a rubber corset, the old whalers were pretty near put out of business. The blubber and oil had to make up for the old whalebone corset stays.

Polo bear hides are not worth anything now they say. Furs have been pretty cheap but there is no depression up here and never was. Ground only thaws out one foot in the Summer and from that on down its froze plum on down.

An Esquimo dog from the time he is just a half sized pup is never untied. He is always tied with a chain, and he dont bark at all, he howls. They call all Esquimos "Huskys." I always thought it was the dogs that were called "Huskys" but its the Esquimos themselves.

Thats enough northern knowledge for one lesson, especially when some of it maby aint so.

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