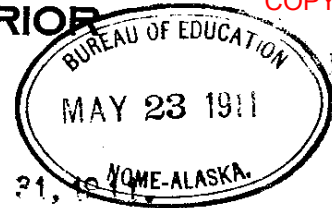


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
ALASKA SCHOOL SERVICE



Nome Alaska May 31, 1911
Report for February.

The U.S. Commissioner of Education
Washington D.C.

Sir-

The first day of the month found me on the way from Point Hope to the new village at Cape Lisburne. Dr. Driggs, who was for many years the Episcopal missionary at Pt. Hope, having finished his work with the Mission Society, but desiring to stay in Alaska, induced some fifty of his best friends to leave the old village and make a new one at Cape Lisburne. He advanced many of their goods in order to get them to move, but when I got along there the people seemed very much dissatisfied, for he would not either trade sugar to them or sell for money. Some came to me to see what I could do for them. The Doctor did not claim to be running a store and he was under no obligations to sell goods to others than those whom he liked. If people would promise to whale for him then they might have goods. It wasn't because he was short of sugar that he would not sell but because he could not get the men to promise to work for him in his whale boats.

Dr. Driggs has school for the children, sometimes. He is very much opposed to routine work. None of that for him. 'Catch the children when you can and fill their heads, then', that's the way to have them learn. I do not see much evidence of his success as a teacher.

Some of the people at Lisburne have made frame houses for themselves, but even though there is a small vein of anthracite coal within a mile of the village, still their houses have ice frozen ~~upon~~ solid on the ends and sides. Even Dr. Driggs' house is cold. Dr. Benson who staid there one week, while on a bear hunt at that place, had to move out into a native cabin, because it was too cold with Dr. Driggs. Besides being cold it was awfully dirty. Before we say much about the dirt of the Eskimos we had to call to mind the kind of white teachers they have had in years gone by.

Cape Lisburne has the reputation of being the stormiest place on the coast. We came in one. We went in one. But the deer were travelling well. We had them double and from the time we started until we stopped at night they went up their six mile an hour gait.

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The Cape Lisburne coal mine, which is one days run north east of Dr. Driggs' village is not being worked at all this winter. Mr. Charles McIntosh stays on the grounds and hopes to get the proper papers drawn up so that the mine can be worked on a large scale.

From the Coal Mine to Icy Cape ~~one~~ gets the hardest part of the winter trip. Mr. Evans has made it easier by having a cabin built the first day out from the Coal Mine. We, however had to stop before reaching that cabin, for my sled struck a cake of ice, that was just sticking up high enough to let my sled pass over it, but to catch the cross pieces on the sled floor. It broke all of them. This left me without any way of travelling. But we found a piece of spruce wood and patched it up so that it lasted until we got where there was better wood and something strong to fasten it with.

Coming to the Village of Pt. Lay one enters, as it seems, another world. Now the interests instead of coming South to Etah we go North to Barrow. We were there on a Wednesday night and when the people gathered for their mid week meeting they used the Pt. Barrow Eskimo translated songs and Bible passages. At no other place this winter have I found this done. Letters were at Pt. Lay for me. Some of my friends, knowing that I was coming back, wrote to Pt. Lay words of welcome. I was glad to get them. It seemed as though I were coming home.

It is one days run from Pt. Lay to the Icy Cape reindeer herd. This we made in another bad storm. I do not want to take time in these reports to mention all of the terrible storms we have had this winter. It would use up too much space. Old timers say it is the worst winter they have seen for many years. I know it has been bad, but then perhaps the last is always the worst.

We thought on this ~~last~~ days run that it would be the last time we would drive the Noatak deer, for we planned to get fresh deer from Icy Cape to make the return trip, so we drove them full speed on that day (which was the twenty third they had been away from their home herd.) I never felt more proud of a fine team of horses than I did that day, of my span of reindeer. They travelled just as fast and seemed as fresh as they did the first day out. One reason for this was that we kept stopping for the deer to eat moss. The

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At the Peindeer herd I learned that things were not going any smoother this year than they had in the past. In the first place the entire camp was divided up into school sections. One part of camp would come to the village and attend school for two months. During those two months they were not supposed to hunt or for any other reason be away from school. One man, Ahneevuk, Ahlook's apprentice, who has a wife and three children wanted to go bear hunting. A whale carcass had drifted in below Icy Cape in the fall and many foxes and some bear came in to eat from it. Everyone knows that the Icy Cape people have little enough meat during the winter and Ahlook's people do not have much food, ^{for} ~~now~~ ^{now} that they get nothing out of ~~Mr. Loop's~~ ^{the} ~~former~~ mail contracts. There was, therefore, a strong inducement for Ahneevuk to skip school and go hunting bears. He went, and with others killed a bear. But "he willfully disobeyed the Superintendent" as Mr. Geary afterward told me and he wanted him punished. He told Ahneevuk that he would loose one of his deer because he had disobeyed him. The camp was much worked up over this matter when I got there, but Mrs. Geary told them that she thought he would not loose the deer.

The Icy Cape people as well as practically all of the Eskimos in this section are very religious. They want to go to Heaven when they die. At the camp they told me that "if a man died with lice on his body Jesus would not let him come into Heaven." Also they must not dance any more for "the Bible forbids dancing" They had also been told that they must not use any more tobacco for "the Bible said, you must not use tobacco" These were the questions the Icy Cape reindeer boys had up when I got there. They had been divided up into school squads and had done no trapping for themselves and they did not have one good sled deer in the herd.

The four sled deer that Mr. Evans had left there for whoever made the winter trip; the whole camp had worked until they were worn out. Shoudla wanted to go to Barrow with me, so I told him to take the best leader in the herd, but it was no good. As we drove from the herd to the village, Jimmie and I had to take the four worn out Icy Cape deer because there was nothing else, but Shoudla had a

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hard time getting his beer along at all.

Esquimaux. At the School House I met on Feb. 10, Mr. and Mrs. Geary and the girl whom they have taken as their own, Hannah. It was the first time I had met them, though for three years I had heard of their work at Kotzebue and on the Kobuk.

Of all genial hosts in Northern Alaska Mr. Geary easily takes first place. There isn't enough he can do for his guest. He even insists upon giving up his own bed. He is a capital story teller and has no limit to his ^{stories} number. His Irish brogue is so real that one thing he is listening to a hod carrier who has just arrived.

With all of Mr. Geary's humor he lacks tact. He has gone ahead there and made serious blunders. In the matter of taking a deer from Alneevuk, Mrs. Geary said he must not do it. Then Geary said "Well if you are superintendent you do the business, I won't have anything more to do with the ^{it} business." At Icy Cape Mrs. Geary is Superintendent. Geary told me that he had sent to Barrow to buy a whale gun and wanted to "kill a whale so that the natives ^{could} have dog feed". The reindeer boys had two bundles of rope that he had transferred to himself and had bought a canoe. He was going whaling. The two teachers who preceded him at Icy Cape had done so and as far as they saw it, while at Icy Cape, had done a good thing. Geary saw the same. He had brought a small supply of trade goods along with him and was sorry he had not brought more "in order that he might help the natives".

I know it is hard for teachers at Wainwright and Icy Cape to avoid selling things to the natives, for the natives must have some of the things associated with white man's diet and since there is no store at either place, they come to the teacher. Mr. Geary has been trying hard to bring the price of skins up at Icy Cape. He got Ablook to take the money he received from the sale of female deer and pay seven dollars each for ~~fox~~ skins. This would have been all right at the prices fox skins brought last year, but at Kotzebue and Nome this winter No. 1 skins are bringing six dollars.

I had to make clear to Mr. Geary the present policy of the Bureau of Education, i. e. teachers in the Alaska School Service are paid for their work in the country and are supposed to use all their

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efforts to bring returns to the natives and not to their own pockets. It is common all along this coast to hear the criticism that teachers are just like store men. There is too much truth in the criticism. Let's get rid of it and have men here who work for the Eskimo and not for The Almighty Dollar.

Since the Reindeer men had done no trapping this winter and had made no sled deer or sleds I thought we would change the program. It is hardly worth while to take a full grown man, with wife and three children, who has never been to school at all, and shut him up in the school room. He doesn't belong there. He has no business there. We ought not to think that we can make English speaking apprentices out of mature men. Let them go. It's the boys and girls we want. If an adult has already acquired a few words and has his mind open to English thought already, then he should attend school, perhaps even to slighting, if necessary, his trapping, for he can teach the people. Then too since they had no sled deer I wanted them to make some before I came back from Barrow. I told them and Mr. Geary ~~too~~ well, to have the boys make four of the fawns accustomed to the sled and harness while I was at Barrow and to let me see what they had learned when I ~~came~~ returned.

The school room was too close for Mr. Geary, when the house was built Mr. Fellows left a ventilator through the ceiling and through the roof. This Mr. Geary closed up and cut a window right in the side of the building. Just high enough to let the full amount of ^{the} winter wind on to the heads of those sitting in the seats at the wall row.

This Mr. Geary pointed out to me as his successful scheme of ventilation. The window is about 12 x 24 and has door butts for hinges. The school house here is, as Mr. Geary says, very poorly built. No weight can be put on the second floor. Just to walk across it, over the school room, bends the floor joists.

The natives are very fond of Mrs. Geary. She has lots of school spirit; enjoys being in the school room and uses a fine method for impressing her ideas. The only thing I did not like about her teaching was her prize system. At the weekly trials whoever succeeds in getting first place in spelling or reading wins a prize of about fifteen pieces of pilot bread. This was practiced ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ the school room.

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the winter. Mrs Geary had her few children go through their Christmas program for me. It was great. Those little fellows got in to action with their Christmas pieces in a way that I had seen only at Barrow.

The files have been poorly kept at this school. No Superintendent's diary has been kept since Mr. Fellows left and his was only an attempt. Jimmie, my travelling companion, made a file for all school records and we got the reindeer and school papers into shape for permanent records.

There are only seven igloos in use at Icy Cape this year. I visited all of them. They are the average. Some clean, so not so.

The reindeer men are dissatisfied with Icy Cape as their headquarters Ahlook wants to move down the coast to where the long lagoons begin, the moss is plentiful there and foxes are numerous and usually it is good seal hunting. I would like to have a herd at that place for it be far eased for whoever travels along the coast. Shoudla wants to move north. There is a big lagoon south of Takuk's place, where there used to be an old Eskimo village and on this lagoon Shoudla wants to move his deer, if some of the Barrow herders will come down with him.

From Icy Cape to Wainwright it is only one good days run. With our worst out deer it took two. Some years the reindeer mail men used to take three.

Mr. Shaver had a full school. Many of the older boys and girls in the village attend school and all are very much interested in their work. Mr. Shaver is as eager to put new ideas into practice as any teacher I have seen this year. More. It has been my habit to talk over the School City Bank Idea with teachers who seemed to want to do better work, so I talked it over with Mr. Shaver as I went to Barrow. On my return I found it working. The most successful plan for teaching business and money values and caring for school property that we have yet introduced. I will tell you all about it in my Annual Report.

I reached Wainwright just after one of the yearly trade dances had come to its end. Though I had favored the dance during my three years at Barrow this year I had cause to change my view point.

Wainwright is not a large village. The people do not have an

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abundance of food. It was February when we reached Wainwright. The best fox hunting time of the year was then on. During the winter the ice had not been so that the people could shoot seals and nothing had been done with the coal mine, so even though they might have had enough food for the dancing feast, when I got along there was only one family where they had any substantial food either of native or white men. I went to all of the houses in the village, as my practice has been, and in two I found the people cooking walrus skin as their sole food. NO flour; NO coffee; no rice; not a thing had these people eaten but walrus skin for two days. No other thing that walrus skin has the food properties that whale skin has. It's something like leather. Tom cods were also very scarce with them. One old woman had been fishing all day and had only caught one. This she is cooking when my boy Jimmie visits her. It is all she has but she breaks about an inch from the tail and passes it to her guest, a boy from another village.

The school house was loaded with supplies for mining the coal. Not a bit had been used during the winter. Why?

Mr. Kilbuck, when he had charge of the Wainwright field paid something like twenty dollars a ton, at Alaska prices for mining the coal. Mr. Sinclair, who followed him prided himself upon being able to get his coal mined for something like eight dollars a ton. Mr. Shaver followed Mr. Sinclair's way. The idea was not to get the work done by as many as possible, and thus to save the need for destitute funds, but to have three or four men do all the work. There was a general kick on the price paid for mining. One man came and said he mined one sack of coal and got four spools of O. N. T. thread for it.

It was not enough, he thought. The fact was the school house was full of goods, so much that Mr. Shaver thinks it will not be necessary to send more fuel supplies this year. The Eskimos have nothing and no work was being done at the coal mine.

When villages go in to the trade dance they spend a good part of the winter practicing for it. They learn new songs, and new dances and new forms of welcome. To watch the forms they go through in receiving the visitors, makes one feel that these people, in their own way originate some drills that compare favorable with the best gymnastic

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Exhibitions. It takes a long time to prepare for the great event. It takes so long that the people have to sacrifice the time for hunting in order to have as good dances as their neighbors had the year before.

We need to discourage these yearly gatherings purely for economic reasons. We got the coal situation straightened out and natives were right to work.

Mr. Shaver has made several pieces of furniture for the living rooms. Whatever he makes he makes well, that is excepting the schooner that is being built there. He is not altogether at fault, however, for Mr. Sinclair had started it. He had cut the ribs and shaped the bottom and had it all ready for planking up before he left the country two years ago. All Mr. Shaver could do was to go on with the work as begun. He went on. He is ashamed of the job, but what could he do. The lumber had been cut. There was no more. He had to do it. If the boat will sail it will be a great boost to the Wainwright natives as not only can they handle all of the summer coal with it out also go on walrus hunts as well.

While the Barrow dancers were at Wainwright one of them at the church service asked that all those who had committed sin during the past year to stand up. The sin to which he referred was adultery. Some six of them stood up. Others had sinned and during the week they brought it about for a second chance on the following Sunday. A bunch of some ten then confessed in public. This showed two things, the honesty of the native and his weakness.

Before this time one of the reindeer boys, who is now in his fourth year, Peter Audlaksauk by name, was proven to have had sexual relations with a twelve year old girl. When asked why he did it, he replied "because she wanted me." He is a man. She is small for twelve. This man has caused trouble there before with a married woman. He is lazy and is not liked at the camp. I took him away and put him on probation for the rest of the year. His family need the deer. It is his father who will have to have his leg cut off when the Revenue Cutter reaches Wainwright. I would not like to have him loose his deer, but such actions must stop.

~~The people of Wainwright have a fine herd, with the coal mine and walrus and whales that they can get.~~

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"Tartan" the Collie dog I had brought from Neatak could not travel any more. Her pups were getting heavy, so I had to go on to Barrow without her. She will supply the herd here and then the other dog which I brought along to Barrow and be put with her and the way pair will supply the north before next winter when Tartan can go back to some here south.

Harry Keginek, the Icy Cape apprentice who died has a father and sister living at Wainwright. The sister is about seven teen years old and is going to be married right away. They wanted me to marry them, but the boy had been a little unfaithful during the past year so I wanted them to wait until summer when we will decide as to the division of the deer.

On the 21st of the month we reached Barrow and that very day I got to work on the school Requisition and Inventory. Mr. Gram had assumed that the new requisition blanks to be used when authorizations have been made were the ones to use and these he had made out, but no inventory. He was sure that he was right. But we made out two copies on the regular forms "just to have the same kind from all of the schools".

The Barrow house looks far better, now that it has been improved. The school room especially with the partition across the room rather than lengthwise, as the old one was is a decided improvement.

I cannot speak too highly of the work Mrs. Gram is doing. Every seat in her room was filled when I was there. She does not sit down during the day. Not a sound do the children make as they study, and the children like it. When they want to leave their seats they ask permission. All the conversation in the school room is supposed to be in English, both before school begins and after it is under way.

Last summer some of us had serious doubts as to the success the Grams would have at Barrow. When I saw their work my doubts vanished. I fully believe they have the best school in Alaska. I will visit the High School here in a few days and see if, for instance, they can sing as the Barrow children. Mr. Gram has had lots of practice as a song leader. He says he studied with Alexander in Chicago at Woodrow school. He is an excellent leader. The singing seems to be his part of the school work. I did not see him doing anything else. Mrs.

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Cram not only teaches every period of the day but cooks as well and also takes care of the sick. They come to her for medicine just as they did to Mrs. Hawkesworth. Mrs. Cram is the worker. Mr. Cram the talker. Of words he has no limit.

The assistant teacher Alice Ahlook is in her right place. Annie Goodalook was good Alice is better. She had thirty two the day I visited her room. Every child had his parky removed. Think of it thirty two little Eskimo boys sitting in one room dressed in blouses and regular girls dresses trying to acquire an English education. It is really too bad that the Barrow school is so far away that practically nothing is known of it. The Eskimo assistant is a success at Barrow. The two room idea is the only scheme.

Barrow is the dirtiest village I have seen this winter. The people there have tried to build white man's houses with one thickness of boards. It is almost impossible to keep them warm and those which are warm are packed with people. The natives from the interior are coming to Barrow more and more each year and new houses can not be built at once so they all crowd in together. One house 12 x 16 had fourteen people living in it. And in this house my reindeer boy saw a woman put her hand on her drawer leg and when she looked at her hand he saw her kill six lice. This is only one house. Lots of them are just as bad. Some to be sure are as clean as the Mayor's house in Nome. Why are the people of Barrow so dirty?

Cleanliness has not been preached by the missionary who has served more years there than any one else and whose wife was the first white woman to come to Barrow. Their house has never been any better than Dr. Driggs of Pt. Hope. Is it any wonder the natives of both villages are careless?

No thing has been done to promote sanitation among the Eskimos of that place. You must remember that it is the Missionary at Barrow who has had the chance to talk to the old people in a body. He uses their language and has the chance three times a week. The teacher has the children. Only the children.

If a change comes this year at Barrow I think we can get the village cleaned up. There is little more unity between the two families this year than there was last.

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Barrow is bound to be the important village of the coast. We have a chance there to work out any advanced idea along industrial lines. But the trouble is, our teacher at Barrow is not a workman. And besides being unable to make things he is very careless about tools. It is just money thrown away to send a fine set of tools to a school where the teacher has no interest in them. Think of a smoothing plane, with the blade ready for work laying flat on a file as I found his. I am aware that he now has no shop in which to keep the tools, but those which he has are thrown around any old way. His interest in keeping things up amounts to nothing. That's the pity. Excellent work in the school room but tools and things not cared for.

I have noticed this year that the men who made the strongest demands for shops and tools were those who knew least about work. Those who could work always found some way to get along with what they had.

What things a man can make with a jack knife! We do need another building at Barrow. One for Alice to work with the girls and women in. The type used at Wales is good, but in a country where we have so many winds and drifts it is better, as far as we are able to have the whole working plant under one roof. It would be that way at Barrow.

Dr. Marsh seems to be giving better satisfaction to the natives this year than before. He tells them that he is going out to Seattle this summer and he will act as their commission agent in that place. He has had a new church built for them, or rather they built it themselves.

The Barrow Reindeer herd, instead of being on the coast as in former years, so that one ^{last} ~~last~~ no time in visiting it, was a days journey east of Barrow. I spent three days in going and visiting them. Their choice of a location was not the best. The house they built last fall, with lumber which the department forwarded, will have to be taken down and moved to one of the rivers where they can get fish.

I finished up my work at Barrow and was ready to start for Kotzebue and Nome the last day of the month. If Mr. Cram can be ~~found~~ brought to take more care of school property, we may well feel satisfied with our teachers at Barrow.

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