

*A
DAY
IN
A DAY SCHOOL*

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
BRANCH OF EDUCATION

A DAY IN A DAY SCHOOL

by

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A DAY IN A DAY SCHOOL

SHISHMAREF, on a small, sandy island off the north-central coast of Seward Peninsula, is a typical Alaskan Eskimo village. To the hundred and eighty Eskimos who call it home, it is "Kee-yik'-tuk"—"the island with our houses on it."

There is a Native Store here. A Lutheran church. A Government school. And—like a hundred others in native villages from Wrangell north to barren Barter Island—the SCHOOL is heart and core of the community.

The SCHOOL sits back from a sandy beach with the village clustered around it and faces north on the cold Arctic Ocean.

It is more than a plain, honest building of wood and nails and tin. To the villagers it is a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night to guide them out of darkness. It is civilization's Covenant – Promise of a better Tomorrow for a people of many Yesterdays.



And the CHILDREN come to claim
that Promise.

Forty-odd children led by faith in edu-
cation's magic . . . forty-odd children with faces
turned to Tomorrow . . . come to remind us of our
Covenant.



With knowledge, comes Understanding;
And with Understanding ;:-

-: REVERENCE :-



and :-PATRIOTISM:-

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9

and -SERVICE:-



They WORK

At strange hieroglyphics

12



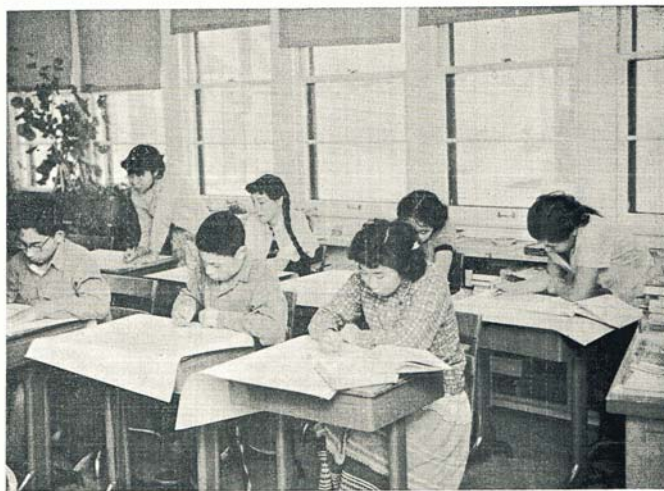
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at figures in a book.



on a geography-history assignment;

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for this business of education comes hard



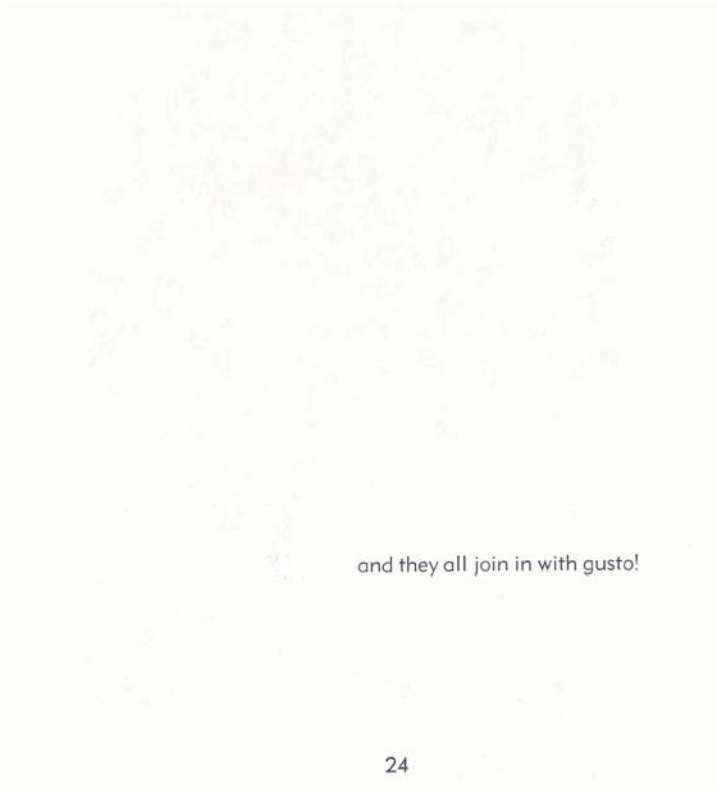
They EAT

the food prepared by comely village matrons,



served the younger by the older;





and they all join in with gusto!



And they PLAY . . .

outside, when the weather is good,

26



27

at cards, inside, when it is not;



and every Friday there is a movie.

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Suddenly, the short day is over.
The chairs sit in ranked, unnatural pose;
the silence is hardly broken –
by the swish of Jack's broom –
by the splatt of his mop –



Outside it is dark.
You sit alone;
and you wonder;
What paths have been made straight?
What mind sharpened?
Heart lightened?
What is the meaning of that blot on Mary's paper?
Will there actually be a Tomorrow?

