



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to *Tip top of the Earth: Arctic Alaskan
Eskimo Educational Series, 1912-1918*

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Human Studies Film Archives
Museum Support Center
4210 Silver Hill Road
Suitland 20746
hsfa@si.edu
<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	<i>Tip top of the Earth: Arctic Alaskan Eskimo Educational Series</i>
Date:	1912-1918
Identifier:	HSFA.1986.05
Creator:	Van Valin, William B., 1878-
Extent:	10 Film reels (black-and-white silent; 6,950 feet; 35mm)
Language:	No linguistic content; Not applicable .
Digital Content:	Video: Tip top of the Earth: Arctic Alaskan Eskimo Educational Series, 1916-1918, 1986.05.005, clip 1 Video: Tip top of the Earth: Arctic Alaskan Eskimo Educational Series, 1916-1918, 1986.05.006, clip 1

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Jewelry Van Valin in 1986.

Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

Preferred Citation

Tip top of the Earth: Arctic Alaskan Eskimo Educational Series, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

Edited film shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. The film, that later toured in a film-lecture series by Van Valin, is known under the main title TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: Alaskan Eskimo Educational Series. Series includes the titles: SCENES AT NOME, ALASKA; ESKIMO SPORTS; SCENES AT POINT BARROW, ALASKA; ESKIMO REINDEER INDUSTRY; ESKIMO SEAL HUNTING; ESKIMO WHALING [Parts I and II]; and MIDNIGHT SUN SCENES. Sequences include: the steamship Victoria landing passengers at Nome, Alaska; hydraulic mining along the Bering Sea beach near Nome; a umiak with Eskimos aboard being towed; old

Eskimo man cleaning salmon and preparing his pipe; salmon drying on elevated racks; summer camp activities among the Eskimos; natives dancing, drumming, racing *umiaks*, and participating in foot races as part of Fourth of July festivities in Nome; Eskimo barber demonstrating technique of hair cutting with stone knife; scenes of winter life including igloos covered with blocks of snow; Eskimos with dog teams and sleds; Eskimo games and forms of recreation including a form of whaling sport known as *nela-ka-tuk*, tossing a person on a stretched walrus hide. Also depicted are various activities relating to the Eskimo food quest: activities associated with whaling which include sledding umiaks overland through snow, hauling a whale through hole cut in polar ice, and butchering whales; activities relating to Eskimo reindeer herding, culling out males and butchering animals; and scenes relating to seal hunting, butchering seals, and the use of their hides. Included are shots of archaeological excavations conducted at early Arctic habitations showing exposed skeletal and cranial remains. (Also as part of this collection is miscellaneous footage of a rabbit drive, a mule team pulling wagons and unidentified locations). Collection also contains a book.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Ships steamships Nome Alaska ; Mining hydraulic Nome Alaska ; Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Fishing salmon Alaska ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ; Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Cooking utensils ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Ecology seasonal movements ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Drumming dancing ceremony ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Animal husbandry reindeer Alaska ; Herding reindeer Alaska ; Hides seals preparation of ; Boats umiaks used as shelter Alaska ; Archaeology excavations Alaska ; Recreation community Nelakatuk ; Whaling butchering Alaska

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Alaskan Eskimo

Cultures:

Alaskan Eskimo

Types of Materials:

silent films

Places:

Alaska
Arctic regions
Barrow, Point (Alaska)
Nome (Alaska)
North America

Container Listing

William Van Valin's Alaskan scenes, 1912-1918

1 Videocassettes (Betacam) (black-and-white silent)

Notes: Footage shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Pt. Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Footage known under the main title TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: ARCTIC ALASKAN ESKIMO EDUCATIONAL SERIES; includes subtitles and intertitles to explain shots. Materials depicted include: activities pertaining to reindeer herding (roping, counting, marking, and butchering animals); seal hunting including the solitary trek of a hunter over rough ice; the difficulties of returning over ice with prey in tow; using a dog team to pull bearded seal from the water; women butchering seal with ulu; sewing hides for umiak covers; dried seal skins being prepared as trade goods; scenes associated with whaling; butchering whale at water's edge; removing whale jaw to extract baleen; cutting out and cleaning baleen; community recreation of "nela-ka-tuk"--tossing individuals on stretched walrus hide. Views of archaeological excavations at Pt. Barrow showing skeletal and cranial remains; scenes of Pt. Barrow during the midnight sun. community recreation--walrus hide toss. View of archaeological excavations and scenes of the midnight sun.

Legacy Keywords: Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Fishing salmon Alaska ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ; Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Cooking utensils ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Ecology seasonal movements ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Drumming dancing ceremony ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Animal husbandry reindeer Alaska ; Herding reindeer Alaska ; Hides seals preparation of ; Boats umiaks used as shelter Alaska ; Archaeology excavations Alaska ; Recreation community Nelakatuk ; Whaling butchering Alaska ; Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Houses igloos construction of ; Blood as food Alaska ; Language and culture

HSFA 1986.5.1 - 2

William Van Valin's Films of Pt. Barrow, Alaska, 1912-1918

1 Videocassettes (Betacam) (black-and-white silent)

Notes: Footage shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Pt. Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Footage known under the name TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: ARCTIC ALASKAN ESKIMO EDUCATIONAL SERIES. Includes subtitles and intertitles; shots include scenes of Eskimos butchering a whale at water's edge; Eskimos in communal dance; dog team pulling a umiak on sled across snow and rough ice; Eskimos taking shelter under umiaks in rough weather; "nela-ka-tuk"--recreational/

whaling sport activity of tossing an individual in air on a stretched walrus hide; views of pack ice moving rapidly toward lead ice; various shots of Pt. Barrow and vicinity. Miscellaneous footage of a rabbit drive and a mule train pulling wagons, locations unidentified.

Legacy Keywords: Dogs as means of transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Work groups butchering whales ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ; Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Cooking utensils ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Whaling butchering Alaska ; Garb ceremonial women Alaska ; Work groups corrals butchering whales Alaska ; Recreation whaling sport nela-ka-tuk ; Language and culture
HSFA 1986.5.1 - 3

William Van Valin's Films of Pt. Barrow, Alaska, 1912-1918

1 Videocassettes (Betacam) (black-and-white silent)

Notes: HSFA 1986.5.1 - 2

Footage shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Pt. Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Footage known under the title TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: ARCTIC ALASKAN ESKIMO EDUCATIONAL SERIES. Includes subtitles and intertitles explaining shots. Cassette includes sections of films entitled "Eskimo Reindeer Industry", "Eskimo Seal Hunting", "Eskimo Whaling, part II", and "Scenes of the Midnight Sun". Depicted are activities associated with reindeer herding such as building an "ice pen" (corral) in which to rope, count, and tag animals; butchering reindeer; scenes pertaining to seal hunting by solitary hunters; seal retrieved with a line after being shot with rifle; difficulties of returning over ice ridges with prey; dog team pulling bearded seal being shot with rifle; difficulties of returning over ice ridges with prey; dog team pulling bearded seal from water's edge; women skinning seal with ulu; removing blood and intestines from seal; sledding whale meat to ice cellars; drying measevere weather; scenes around a whaling encampment; butchering a whale at water's edge; removing the jaw of whale to extract baleen; removing and cleaning baleen strips to be used as trade goods; whaling spot--nela-ka-tuk--tossing people on stretched walrus hide. Views of archeological excavations at Pt. Barrow showing skeletal and cranial remains. which illustrate differences in communal life; Eskimo with dog team and sleds; the Pt. Barrow community gathered around their church; dances performed by men to dramatize everyday events; man paddling a kayak and demonstrating technique of the "eskimo roll"; children's games and walrus hide toss; Various activities associated with whaling.

Legacy Keywords: Dogs as means of transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Guns used in seal hunting Alaska ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ;

Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Dancing drumming ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Animal husbandry reindeer Alaska ; Herding reindeer Alaska ; Whaling butchering Alaska ; Hides preparation of use of Alaska ; Sewing of hides Alaska ; Corrals reindeer herding ; Division of labor by sex ; Work groups butchering of whales ; Games children ; Language and culture

William Van Valin's Films of Pt. Barrow, Alaska, 1912-1918

Notes: Footage shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Pt. Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Footage known under the main title TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: ARCTIC ALASKAN ESKIMO EDUCATIONAL SERIES; includes subtitles and intertitles to explain shots. Materials depicted include: activities pertaining to reindeer herding (roping, counting, marking, and butchering animals); seal hunting including the solitary trek of a hunter over rough ice; the difficulties of returning over ice with prey in tow; using a dog team to pull bearded seal from the water; women butchering seal with ulu; sewing hides for umiak covers; dried seal skins being prepared as trade goods; scenes associated with whaling; butchering whale at water's edge; removing whale jaw to extract baleen; cutting out and cleaning baleen; community recreation of "nela-ka-tuk"--tossing individuals on stretched walrus hide. Views of archaeological excavations at Pt. Barrow showing skeletal and cranial remains; scenes of Pt. Barrow during the midnight sun. community recreation--walrus hide toss. View of archaeological excavations and scenes of the midnight sun.

Legacy Keywords: Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Fishing salmon Alaska ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ; Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Cooking utensils ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Ecology seasonal movements ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Animal husbandry reindeer Alaska ; Herding reindeer Alaska ; Hides seals preparation of ; Boats umiaks used as shelter Alaska ; Archaeology excavations Alaska ; Recreation community Nelakatuk ; Whaling butchering Alaska ; Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Houses igloos construction of ; Blood as food Alaska

HSFA 1986.5.1 - 2

William Van Valin's Films of Pt. Barrow, Alaska, 1912-1918

Notes: Footage shot by William Van Valin as leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Pt. Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Footage known under the main title TIP TOP OF THE EARTH: ARCTIC ALASKAN ESKIMO EDUCATIONAL SERIES; includes subtitles and intertitles to explain shots. Materials depicted include: activities pertaining

to reindeer herding (roping, counting, marking, and butchering animals); seal hunting including the solitary trek of a hunter over rough ice; the difficulties of returning over ice with prey in tow; using a dog team to pull bearded seal from the water; women butchering seal with ulu; sewing hides for umiak covers; dried seal skins being prepared as trade goods; scenes associated with whaling; butchering whale at water's edge; removing whale jaw to extract baleen; cutting out and cleaning baleen; community recreation of "nela-ka-tuk"--tossing individuals on stretched walrus hide. Views of archaeological excavations at Pt. Barrow showing skeletal and cranial remains; scenes of Pt. Barrow during the midnight sun. community recreation--walrus hide toss. View of archaeological excavations and scenes of the midnight sun.

Legacy Keywords: Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Sleds as transportation Alaska ; Fishing salmon Alaska ; Boats use in hunting Alaska ; Hunting guns Alaska ; Food quest hunting fishing whaling Alaska ; Food preparation butchering drying Alaska ; Food preservation techniques of Alaska ; Cooking utensils ; Ecology seasonal movements Alaska ; Ecology seasonal movements ; Dancing drums Alaska ; Food communal distribution Alaska ; Animal husbandry reindeer Alaska ; Herding reindeer Alaska ; Hides seals preparation of ; Boats umiaks used as shelter Alaska ; Archaeology excavations Alaska ; Recreation community Nelakatuk ; Whaling butchering Alaska ; Dogs as transportation Alaska ; Houses igloos construction of ; Blood as food Alaska

HSFA 1986.5.1 - 2

William Van Valin's Alaskan Scenes, 1912-1918

1 Film reel (black-and-white silent; 972 feet; 35mm)

Notes: Footage shot by William Van Valin, leader of the John Wanamaker Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska for the University of Pennsylvania Museum, in association with the film "Tip Top of the Earth." Footage includes a rabbit drive, a mule team pulling wagons and unidentified locations.

HSFA 1986.5.1