

## ROGER (KOKITUK) MENADELOOK

Eileen Norbert

Niece of Roger Menadelook, 3545 Lanc-Kirk Rd. NW, Lancaster, OH 43130; einorbert@yahoo.com

Roger (Kokituk) Menadelook of Diomedes was born at Little Diomedes on April 12, 1911, to Menadelook (Charles Menadelook) of Wales and Aghmoya (Etta Soolook Menadelook) of Little Diomedes. Both of his grandfathers were *umaliit* (owners and captains of *umiaks*) and *anak-guts* (shamans). He was named after Charles Menadelook's father Kokituk and was the oldest of the Menadelook's nine children who lived to adulthood (three other children died as babies). Charles Menadelook was one of the first Inupiat school teachers in Alaska, so Roger lived in Diomedes, Wales, Nome, Kotzebue, Noatak, Unalaska, Shishmaref, Shaktoolik, and Sinuk. The family lived on Diomedes when Charles Menadelook taught at Gambell. After Roger's grandmother Oongak died in the 1918 influenza epidemic, his parents took in Roger's aunt, Anna Ahmasuk. Roger taught her how to play the piano and helped her learn to speak English. A young cousin in Shishmaref said Roger used to tease her. The first time he did so she cried, so Roger took her to the store and bought her candy; she did not mind his teasing after that. The Menadelook household was very lively with six boys and three girls. Roger learned to hunt in his early teens. When the family lived at Sinuk, Roger and his brothers helped their father with his reindeer herd. Charles Menadelook was an avid photographer; his passion for photography was not shared by his son, but after Charles Menadelook died Roger took many family photographs.

In 1928, Roger attended the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines in Fairbanks and majored in engineering. He wrote a descriptive article about hunting on Diomedes that was published in the college newspaper. After he returned home he was offered a teaching position in Shaktoolik, but he did not accept it. When his sister

Uloya (Sarah Menadelook Maloney) and her two daughters came to Diomedes to visit Aghmoya, Roger brought them by dog team to meet his girlfriend and visit relatives. His girlfriend gave the girls gifts of candy and gave his mother dishes.

Roger translated parts of the New Testament with Oscar Brown, a fellow Inupiaq. He also translated for the courts in Nome and worked as a bookkeeper for Sinrock Mary. He and his first wife, Flora, had a daughter named Etta. After Flora died, he married Teresa Omiak from Diomedes, and they had two sons, Roger Jr. and Norman.

On August 5, 1948, Roger, along with seventeen other Diomedes people (Igalit), including women, children, and a baby, were making what they thought was a routine visit to East Cape in Siberia, the easternmost part of the U.S.S.R. They did not know that all U.S. Native permits to visit Russia were no longer valid. This vital information was *mailed* rather than sent by telegram: Diomedes in those days was lucky to get mail three times a year. The Igalit were held captive for fifty-one days on Big Diomedes Island by Russian soldiers. They were continuously interrogated and lived in horrific conditions. They lived in makeshift tents during the cold fall weather, when the first snowfalls were starting and the ice pack was coming down from the north. Their food for the most part was a type of sour bread that was raw in the middle; sometimes they were given black Russian bread and a thin soup made from salted salmon. Once, they saw a dog take a bite of half-rotten salmon on the beach. The people ate what remained of the fish because they were near starvation. Roger was treated especially badly because the Russians thought he was a spy, perhaps because he spoke fluent Inupiaq and English and knew a little Russian. But he was also educated. He



*Roger Menadelook (left), Frank Elasanga (center), and Walter Kiminock (right) pose during a winter hunting trip on Little Diomed Island, ca. late 1920s. Photograph by Charles Menadelook, courtesy of Eileen Norbert.*

would sometimes be interrogated from five in the morning until midnight or 1:00 a.m. All the while he was being interrogated he had to sit straight on a small stool.

To pass the time while he was captive, Roger carved small boats out of driftwood for his sons at Diomed. Roger Jr. was five or six years old at the time.

On September 26, 1948, the Russian soldiers finally set the Igalit free. The captives rowed back to their home island. They were very skinny and in poor health. After the nurse on the BIA ship *North Star* examined Roger, she told him he had tuberculosis (TB). His health never recovered. He wrote a vivid and compelling article on the peoples' captivity and sent it to Ernest Gruening, who was then governor of the Alaska territory, a position he held from 1939 to 1953. Roger's memory of the captivity was amazing, recalling the smallest details. Roger asked for Gruening's assistance in finding a publisher for his ar-

ticle. He was too ill to work and hoped his writing would bring in money to help support his family. Roger's article can be found at the Alaska State Archives in Juneau, along with his letter to Governor Gruening.<sup>1</sup>

Roger died in 1949 in Juneau. His daughter Etta later contracted tuberculosis and spent many years in a TB sanitarium in the state of Washington. She never returned home and died in Oregon. Aghmoya raised her grandson Roger Jr. at Diomed. Later, he worked for the State of Alaska for many years and owned a reindeer herd. He died of cancer in 2008. Roger's youngest son, Norman, lives in Teller.

## ENDNOTE

1. Alaska State Library and Museum, Territorial Historical Accession No. 11082, MS 4, Box 13, No. 5, Juneau.

## A GROUP OF ALASKAN ESKIMOS RECEIVE GREETINGS AND SAMPLE THE HOSPITALITY OF SOVIET RUSSIA

Roger (Kokituk) Menadelook  
(1948)

Ever since early man started to venture cautiously upon the sea in rafts and later in boats, it is easy to assume that the Bering Straits have formed a stepping stone for the early venturesome traveler. Very likely the boats used were of the same type now used by the modern Eskimo. Until the land across the Bering Straits came under the rule of the Bolsheviks, the Diomed Islands (Big Diomed in Siberia and Little Diomed in Alaska) were stopping places for Natives from both Asia and Alaska who were going to the other side on trading trips. There was much trading between the peoples of various villages, and not only that, marriages took place, putting the peoples of the Bering Straits in close relationships and friendships.

About ten years ago an agreement between the Russians and our government was reached whereby a limited amount of Native travelers from Alaska were allowed to go to Siberia. The same agreement allowed Siberians to come to Alaska. There was supposed to be no trading and only a few small gifts were allowed to be given. . . .

... The spring walrus hunt was over. Meat had been dried and stored, the skins were dried, and the Little Diomed Islanders turned to thoughts of a vacation. Some determined to go on a trading trip to Nome, but eighteen of us figured that a trip to Siberia first would be just the thing.

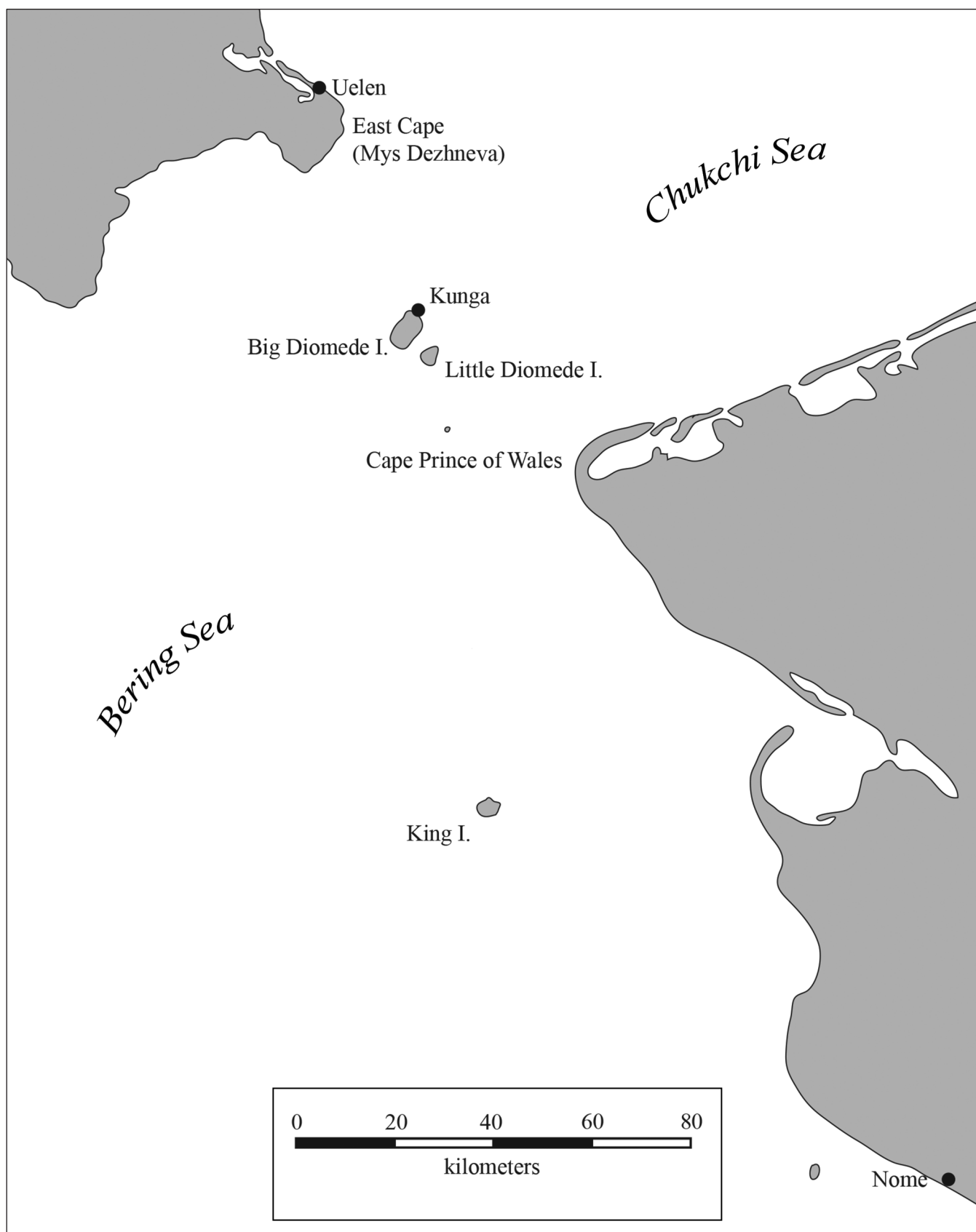
So, on the fifth of August, 1948, we started out on the first step of our journey—the Big Diomed Russian frontier and weather station, where we knew the permits signed by our teacher would be examined and what few gifts of tobacco, gum, pipes, pieces of print cloth, needles, and other knickknacks we took along for our Siberian friends would be pawed over by the Russian gendarmes.

It was a beautiful day, blue skies, no clouds, a whisper of a breeze from the south, and not a wave was breaking on the beach of Little Diomed, usually white

with waves breaking their monotonous rolling on the rocky beach and cliffs of the island. The sea was glass smooth, rippled only by the wakes of the two boats, and the silence broken only by the cries of the sea birds, which could be barely heard above the steady hum of the outboards.

I know not what the others were thinking, but to me the next few days meant a respite from monotonous months of staying cooped up on our little island. For many months the only things seen had been the other island, Big Diomed, which at times seemed only a stone's throw from our beach, and occasionally Cape Prince of Wales and the headland of East Cape seen while out hunting. As usual there would be a big Eskimo dance held at East Cape in honor of the visitors from Ingalik, our island, and gifts would be given and received and all of us would exchange hunting experiences of the winter and the women and old men the gossip. Little did I dream that the group of women in their colorful parkas, the men sitting on the beach, and the children running around and the dogs chasing each others' tails—all against the background of the schoolhouse and the looming tumble of rock that was our home—would be the last I would see of them until fifty-two days had gone by.

Following a custom that had been established the past few years, we beached our skin boats on the beach to the west and below the buildings of Koonga [Kunga], the Russian station. A Russian officer and an enlisted man came immediately, had us pull our boats up a little, checked the number of persons on each permit or passport (issued by an employee of the Interior Department) with the number of arrivals, and when that was done went over each person's stuff—taking care to count carefully the number of pieces of tobacco, chewing gum, the yards and fractions of yards of cloth, needles, not to mention the pipes and number of cans of milk taken along



*Selected places mentioned in text. Map by Dale Slaughter.*





*View of the Bering Strait islands of Little Diomedede (foreground) and Big Diomedede; Associated Press News Features photo 3-24-59u. Courtesy Matt Ganley.*

by Neuvuk for the baby. While we were being searched, an armed guard was stationed close to us. He was armed with a rifle with a long, ugly, three-cornered bayonet at its tip. Up on the rim of the hill in front of the houses were a number of Russians, some in civilian clothes and some more soldiers. All were staring down at us and we could see several looking at us with binoculars. We could see their faces distinctly, but they must have wanted to see what an Amerikanski looked like at close quarters.

By the time inspection was over, dusk was starting in. By signs we signified our wish of continuing on our journey, for we thought we could make East Cape before nightfall and before the storm broke. But to all of this the Russians turned a deaf ear. They broke out into torrents of Russian—of which we could not understand a word—and they finally made us pull our boats further up on the beach out of the water and had us set up a tent that we

had fortunately taken along. This we set up among the boulders. After having some coffee and pilot bread, we set trying to sleep on the rocks. Some of the younger men slept under a tarpaulin stretched over a hole among the larger rocks propped up with oars and paddles. The rest of us tried to sleep in the main tent. Like the rest, I had not bothered to take a blanket along and so had to stretch my rubber boots as a mattress on the rocks, using my raincoat to fill in the worst holes. And so wearing my parka and covering my knees with a jacket, I laid me down in an attempt to sleep.

I dozed off sound asleep, tired after all the excitement of the day—but woke up in about five minutes. A boulder was trying to bore a hole into my ribs, and my fingers were cold. Slipping on a pair of canvas gloves and shifting around, I attempted to go back to sleep. But the attempt was futile. No matter on which side or rib I attempted to

lie, another boulder would try to assert its bumpiness and would succeed. To make a long night a short one, I got up as soon as there was enough light and brewed a pot of coffee. Several other sufferers from the rough bedding sat up and joined me in a cup of three o'clock coffee.

"Well," said we to ourselves, "as soon as this storm is over we shall go to East Cape. I'll bet the Natives there will hold a big Eskimo dance for us as usual. And they'll have some walrus meat, fresh, with willow greens. And, of course, we shall have some rationed sugar, and some Klyeba, the sour bread which we, as usual, will hardly taste."

The storm that had been threatening the night before had broken out and the wind was coming from the south with full force. It was out of the question to go to Siberia now until the storm had spent itself. So we busied ourselves tinkering with the outboard motors, inspecting the boats for possible leaks, and we also took out the larger boulders in the tent, substituting smaller rocks and gravel with which to fill in the holes. We wanted to make ourselves as comfortable as possible for the remaining three days it would take the storm to blow itself out.

Knowing the Russian words for none, "*nyeto*," "*myaca*" for meat, "*klyeba*" for bread, and "*chaiya*" for tea, we made the Russians understand that we had no meat. Soon they brought down several loaves of black Russian bread, some canned fish, rice, some coarse oats, a bucket of dried potatoes, several small cans of ersatz coffee, a little sugar, salt, and two salted salmon. The salmon we cut up and soaked in a stream close by and we (the women) cooked rice with canned meat for that day's two meals. The bread we hardly tasted, for we were not used to its extremely sour taste and its rawness. The rest of the food we saved for the next day's meals. We had lots of food—yes, lots of food which we were to think of often in the days to come.

The second night was much the same as the first. The soldiers got us to pull the skin boats up further, and they had us take the outboard motors off and store them further up the beach. There were fewer spectators this day—they probably were fed up with seeing the old women amble around barely making any headway on the rounded boulders. As a means of passing the time we men made play boats of small pieces of wood and cottonwood bark. These we outfitted with keels of small pieces of rock or wire with a small paper sail. We tried to see who could sail his boat closest into the wind and make it land at the base of the

cliff to the east of us and below the spire of rocks that shut off portions of the sea view from the Russian houses.

Thus ended another day at Koonga. As on the other day, a guard was continuously posted nearby, but by nightfall he was moved to the further bank of the little creek.

The third night was a repetition of the other two nights. As usual, I spent the night tossing from one side to the other, attempting in vain to get some sleep. By this time we were finding out that it paid to take cat naps in the daytime, thus making up for a portion of our lost sleep. All this time we could not converse with the Russians with the exception of a few stray words we had picked up on our trips to Siberia complemented by some very eloquent motioning. We were still under the impression that we would continue our journey to Siberia as soon as the weather was good enough.

The eighth of August dawned on a clear day. The wind had abated but the sea was still rough, making it an impossibility to continue our journey. Early in the morning, about eight o'clock, we heard a steady rumbling roar from the direction of East Cape. It sounded like a Caterpillar tractor on a steady pull. Soon there appeared a ship coming full speed—the white foam at the bows becoming visible as soon as the hull came into sight. It soon came to an anchor. A schooner it was, about the size of a southeastern fishing boat but without the booms and with an auxiliary mast at the stern.

The Russians apparently believed in a dashing manner of handling boats, for it came in with scarcely lessened speed—abruptly, the propeller was stopped but the boat kept on coming towards shore with its momentum—then, the propeller was put on full reverse. You could hear the whine of the motor, see the churning of the water by the propeller, and, after the boat had stopped headway and was going backward at a good speed, the anchor was dropped. The boat was stopped with a jerk by the anchor line and then only was it at a standstill.

A small boat was lowered and several men got into it from the schooner. A rubber boat was also put over the side but was not used. It must have been of American make for I have never heard of a Russian rubber boat. The small boat landed on the other side of the point away from us, so we did not have a chance to see who came ashore.

That forenoon Neuvuk with his wife and little son were called. They went up the steep hillside and entered the building that was the one nearest to the sea-side cliff.

This building we later found out was a storehouse. It was built of hewn logs, had two large, strong doors facing west, and had a sloping flat roof. After about an hour had passed they came back, bringing their bags which they had taken along.

Said Neuvuk, "There is an English-speaking Russian up there but he uses language of such a learned variety that I could hardly understand him. The officer also speaks some English, too, but very little. What English he speaks though is easily understood. They wanted me to interpret for them but because I could understand so little of the interpreter's English I recommended you, Roger."

As one of the older women, Ummanak, was going up, I accompanied her. We entered a small room. The only furniture was a sorry-looking plank table and three chairs. The new arrival, a captain, sat in one chair behind the table facing the door. The interpreter, who had arrived with the captain, was standing, and so was the officer who had conducted the examination the other day.

The captain was small, standing about five feet four or five inches. When he took off his cap, which was the same type worn by all Russian soldiers—green with black visor—a thin blond-like fuzz showed in a semicircle above his ears. The rest of his scalp was bare, showing white like a giant cue ball. Regular features marred only by the sudden downward slant of the tip of his nose. His chin was cleft with well-defined lines at the corner of his mouth and eyes. Eyes of a very penetrating grayish-green, rather bushy eyebrows, a mole on his left cheek, and with predominating V's when practicing what little English he knew. Well but stockily built with square shoulders and no belly, he wore his clothes well. He wore his insignia on his jacket and great coat. The bar he wore on his shoulder had two starts crosswise and two smaller ones lengthwise and in towards his collar. All his brassware had the hammer and sickle showing on it. Age was about 45.

The interpreter stood about five feet nine with shoulders hunched from long periods of poring over books (my opinion), of rather slim build but not skinny, wide shoulders, light complexion, round jutting jaw, brown bushy, wavy hair, regular features, in the habit of smiling like one who would apologize and wants to be liked when addressing a person and this smile apparently ever-ready, and with brown eyes. He stuttered when translating from Russian to English, but very little when speaking Russian. His English was of a variety I would call academic, that is, stilted, showed familiarity with words one would run

across in a textbook in college but rarely used in everyday English, with mispronunciation of certain words like judicial, which showed a lack of practical experience in everyday English. By his dislike of American cigarettes (too many chemicals) and his use of English I guessed, rightly, that he was academically trained in English, but not in American schools. (I later overheard him tell some of the officers that he was educated in Manchuria.) His clothes were of the same type worn by the common soldier—cheaper quality cloth and shoes than the officer. His age was about 25. Later, when I asked him about it, he said that the officers commanding the station were ranked as senior lieutenants, the officer in charge of the investigation was a captain, and he, himself, was a private.

We were asked to pull the stuff out of our bags and they were gone over very methodically. An actual count was made of the pieces of tobacco, pipes, chewing gum, etc. A list of everything was made—pipes, cloth, socks, gloves, needles, thread, all bundled, tagged and set aside. The person who owned them was told that the articles taken from him would be returned when he was about to return to Little Diomed. They told us, very emphatically, that we were not being robbed but that the articles withheld would be kept intact for us.

Our answers to their questions of age, date of birth, birthplace, occupation, marital status, political beliefs and affiliations, economical status (rich or poor), number of houses, dogs, skin boats, small skin boats, sleds, radios, wind-chargers, rifles and shotguns owners were written down.

When it got to be Frank Okpealuk's turn to be inspected, he went up and did not come back. We were correct in guessing that he was being held a prisoner. Their reasons? Frank was a veteran but a harmless kid. That put our apprehensions up another notch—we knew by now that we were not going to Siberia, and here was one of us a prisoner. We were prisoners also with guards around us but he was being kept apart from us. Old man Okpealuk's face became lined with worry—he said more than once that God only knew what he would do now—the boy's mother was blind, the two older sons were away from home, and now Frank was taken away from him. At this time I told the others not to worry too much (worrying did no one any good), that given time our trusted government would come to our aid. Was it not a certainty that our armed forces were the strongest in the world?

And so to our rocky beds we went that night. By that time my left eye was a sorry-looking mess, red and swollen



from lack of sleep, and I could hardly see out of it. The others were starting to show signs of worry and lack of sleep by their haggard faces.

The next day—it's remarkable how dawn will eventually come regardless how slow time passes—we were sitting on the rocks whittling play boats and some of the women were seeking for seaweed on the beach when down the hill came the English-speaking Rooski.

"Mr. Albert," he says, "Please come with me and take your wife and son along. You may take your bedding and all your stuff with you."

And that was the last we saw of Albert (Neuvuk) and his family for a long time. They were prisoners also.

All of this time we had been feeding on some of the stuff the Russians had brought us and were having a great deal of difficulty adjusting ourselves to the different types of food. The small amount of pilot bread we had taken along was gone, and we had to eat *klyeb*—or leave it alone. Some of 'em got smart and peeled the portion that was done, leaving the core. "Look," said one of the boys, and we looked! He was having difficulty pulling his knife out of the portion left after he had peeled off the crust. After cleaning the knife to which was sticking a mass of uncooked dough, he rolled the remainder of the bread into a ball about eight inches in diameter. It was so heavy you could have knocked out a young bull walrus with it, and it was sour—so sour that a person could smell *klyeb* as soon as he opened the flap of the tent to enter. Each of the loaves of *klyeb* looked as though a major eruption had occurred in the baking process and the top middle of the loaf was broken open the whole length with a rough ridge tipped with black.

We were still drinking the American coffee we had taken along. We did try the Russian coffee, but it was like diluting water with dry powdered black mud. The rice looked like some of the cheaper grades of rice and was edible, but the oats were very similar to some we used to see in Billy Rowe's barn in Nome, unhusked and pointed like spears. The salted salmon they gave us were salted whole with just the guts taken out, and it used to take us about three days to get the salt out of them. But—we were getting by on the food, no one was complaining except for the lack of seal oil to go with some of the food. And to each of us, the morrow would be the one in which we would go home to our loved ones.

On one of those fine days I was sitting with the others whittling on a play boat with lines of a "Belvedere." I

turned to Okpealuk and said, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a really foggy dark night and shove off and go home?"

"Yes," said Okpealuk, "a very good idea."

Said Kakeek, "You keep on thinking up such ideas as that, carry them through, and before you know it, you will have all of us shot full of holes."

And we all kept on whittling sailboats.

Well, sir, it was my turn. Simon came down the hill, sweat coming down his usually pale face, spat on the ground a few times, and in an excellent imitation of the interpreter's voice said, "Mr. Roger, you may go up next." In an aside he said, "Pretty good! Six hours, taking time off for meals! Pretty good! All right, all right, all right—"

I did not know what he was muttering "pretty good!" for, but I suppose he meant the length of time he stayed up there in the Russian camp. Up the steep hillside I plodded, blowing like a walrus coming up for air. The sentry motioned me to enter the largest building in camp and in I went. The officer who had examined our stuff was in the little room. He motioned me to a very squeaky stool in front of a table, and there I sat down.

I looked around me: furniture was a table facing away from the window, two single beds on each side of the room, a small table by the window on which was a roll of paper, a few books, etc. Hanging on each side of the room were coats, jackets, and caps belonging to the men occupying the room. There was a closet to the left and behind the brick stove a lot of gear was stored.

Glancing toward the bed to my left, I noticed four very large and fat maggots wriggling around. I motioned the officer in that direction and he brushed them off with his hands, then he stepped on them. The bursting bugs sounded like a walrus hunt—"Boom! Boom! Boom!" Officers' quarters!

The captain and his interpreter came in. The captain sat down in the chair behind the table and the interpreter stood in front of the bed. "Plunk" fell a fat white maggot on his head! I wish you could have seen the faces he made while trying to brush off the aerial invader. He finally got it off and stepped on it to the tune of a big "blopp."

This was my first introduction to the official residence of the officers in charge of the station, which was now also the office of the investigation. Many would be the times I would be summoned with a "*davae kokdom*" or a "*pajom*!" and would enter the presence of the captain with various emotions ranging from relief to apprehension.



The captain told me to sit down in English and I obeyed. His gaze was piercing, so whenever a question was asked, I would look at the interpreter as soon as I could. I thought the captain would know whenever I tried to evade the question or to give less information than I knew. It was fortunate for me that my ignorance of Russian lessened the brunt of his questioning and the penetrating quality of his piercing eye.

Taking the roll of paper from the table beside the window, the captain cut off several sheets about twelve inches long. Then he creased each sheet about an inch from the edge and wrote something while the interpreter and I remarked about the weather, etc. The man thought it very cold and certainly indicated it; he was shivering. To make him feel better, I told him that the next few weeks in October and November would certainly show him typical Bering Sea fall weather. "Well," said he, "I certainly prefer it to the south."

"*Tahk!!*" "According to the Article 95 of the Russian Penal Code, you are hereby warned that any falsehood you may tell in answering the following questions will be punishable by two years' imprisonment and you will hereby sign as stating that you have been so advised."

This was my introduction to this investigation as carried on by Captain Kedorf or Kedorg. This was the preamble to every period of questioning for the so-called "protocol," a signed statement wrung out of us victims by supposedly simple questions and answers—but which actually was the result of hours of questioning, insinuating, and threatening. Thus they would very likely start by asking about a man's occupation and end up asking about the man's cousin's temperamental disposition.

Thus having given me fair warning, the duo started out ladling questions. The captain asked the questions and wrote the answers down in longhand. A tedious job—and the hell of it was that the interpreter could hardly read it for translating at times. It probably got worse when the room got so dark from tobacco smoke that one could hardly see the man across the room. When offered a smoke, I accepted it in order to conserve my small supply of cigarettes. Then all of us would get a light from the same match (matches were just as scarce to them as silver dollars are to me).

I was asked as to the place of my birth, family, marital status, number of children, where they were born, the number and names of my relatives living, mother, sisters, brothers, occupations, ages, whom they were married to,

and the occupations of their husbands and wives. They wanted to know the number of dogs I owned, boats, sleds, and if I owned the house I stayed in, and the number of houses I owned. They wanted to know the names of the village councilmen. They wanted to know what governmental positions I had held in the past, what different occupations I had in years gone by, and if I was a member of the village council. Of course, all of these questions were not bombarded at me all at once, but each session was filled with questioning of the same type.

But most of the first day of questioning was one in which my friend Mr. Heinrich, the Alaska Native Service teacher at Diomedes, held the spotlight. Was Mr. Heinrich my close friend? Was it true that he was my closest friend at Diomedes? What was I told concerning his duties? What were his duties? Was it true that he was not getting along well with his wife? I was in a sweat. I was not Mr. Heinrich's best friend and wanted the Russians to think that Mr. Heinrich was not my closest friend, in fact, that he never confided in me. That the only excuse for our association was because of my ability to speak English and the fact that I was the assistant store manager. But you tell them that and will they believe it? *Nyet!* By now I had found out the hard way that making any statement of any kind whatever about any occasion was making an opening whereby they proceeded to try to pry out information. If you stated that you were at a place—they wanted to know what time, with whom, and with what purpose, and what was said, and who said it—and they kept pounding you with questions concerning anything specific until you gave them an answer. My old friend, Mr. O'Neill, a district attorney for whom I used to do some interpreting, would have learned many a new method about questioning from them!

All this time we were smoking one cigarette after another. The captain was trying to drill the truth out of me with extraordinarily piercing eyes, the interpreter would stutter out the question, and for the good of his soul and mine, I would have him repeat the question (it cost him a lot of effort, but he was forced to do it), then I would start in giving my opinion of what the answer should be.

"We are not interested in your opinion on the question. We want to know what the actual answer is—you better tell us or we will get the answer from someone else who knows!" (fair deal), or, "You, with your education, should be in a position to know who is the govern-

ing body in Alaska. You don't mean to tell us that you don't know? You have forgotten? Please try to remember! We know that Mr. Gruening is governor of Alaska but does he control the Coastal Guard? The Army? And are your village councils directly responsible to him? Does he appoint the school teachers? Is the Alaska Territorial Guards under the Army? Is the mayor of Nome head of the Post Office? What is his appearance, name, and personality?"

Such were some of the questions that were hurled at me in the days to come, but this first time we called it a day at 12:30 PM—a seven-hour stretch. And that rickety stool got rather hard to sit on after several hours, so bad in fact that after the captain had seen me in several unorthodox positions, he had the interpreter tell me to sit up straight—I was offending the Russian government by showing a disrespectful attitude to an officer!

Taking the sheets written by the captain (the so-called protocol) the interpreter translated their contents carefully to me. He read each question and answer very carefully, and any corrections to be made were written on the side. I will say this much to their credit—any answer that was not to my liking as written was struck out or corrected till it met with my approval. Then I signed the sheets at the bottoms and at the sides whenever corrections had been made. The last sheet had a notification at the bottom stating that the questions and answers had been translated to me and that I certified my approval of their correctness by my signature.

My parting question that night: "But, Mr. Interpreter, how am I to know that what you have translated to me as being what I have said is the truth? I do not have any way of checking your translation."

"Well, Mr. Roger," he answered, "I, too, am liable for any errors which may be made in this protocol. Therefore, I stand just as much chance as you do of receiving two years' imprisonment according to the Russian Penal Code." Small comfort!

The next night and day was a repetition of the others. By now, all of us had given up any idea of continuing the excursion to East Cape and Whelan [Uelen]. The big question was—how soon shall we be allowed to go home? The tantalizing fact being that our home was only four miles away!

All of us were starting to worry ourselves blue. Endless questions kept pounding through our minds—How long will the Russians keep us?—What will our folks do?—Are we to be taken to the Siberian mainland for imprison-

ment?—What is going to happen to the ones kept apart from us?—Are they being tortured or mishandled in any way?

"What will happen to us now?" Up jumped Kakeek, hands clenched, face a picture of despair, his eyes roving madly from one of us to the other. "Why did I ever come here? We were perfectly satisfied at our village! What are the Russians going to do to us now? Look at us! Every way we turn—an armed Russian guard. What can we do? Oh! Why did I ever...?"

"Shut up," I told him. "You fool; by your raving you are making things worse for the others. Use your head! Try and talk of things that will ease the situation. Remember, you are not the only one under stress. Please try to take things easy. We'll be going home—God only knows how soon, but remember—we are U.S. citizens and Uncle Sam will get us. But it will take time, remember that!"

Most of us were certainly starting to worry. The older folks sat huddled on their seats, hardly saying a word, their faces a study in worry and despair. Brows were wrinkled with deep thinking, worry was our uppermost thought—we knew we should not worry, despair, or do any aimless thinking, but nevertheless we were doing it—each against his better judgment. Knowing that occupied hands meant less meaningless thinking, some of us were occupied with that ancient art of whittling.

A rather irritating and what would have been under other circumstances an amusing incident occurred one morning. The noncom in charge of the guards had come into the tent that morning at about five o'clock, bringing with him three rhinoceros auklets that he had shot with a small caliber rifle. Addressing himself to the only woman up and around, Kazulana, he set about instructing her in the art of making breakfast. None of us could understand Russian, but he set about with a great ado—his speech seemed to consist of "Woh! Woh! Woh!" uttered with great rapidity interspersed with occasional "*starookha's*," "*Tabk's*," "*Kharrashoa's*," etc. He squatted in front of her making motions of plucking, all the while jabbering. In answer, she would shout at him in Eskimo that she was absolutely capable of dressing auklets—"You busybody!" Being unable to understand each other, they were on an even footing. Finally, it resulted in the Russian making a rice porridge with corned beef, which was consumed by the cold, shivering group who had been so rudely awakened.

That day various members of the group were called up the hill. My turn came about five o'clock. Before we go any further let me tell of a plan we had made a few days before—we had decided that we would not know anything

about the different government branches we knew of and that the Russians did not know much about, and I also told them that they could plead ignorance of any government office or function and that they could refer to me as one who might know something about such things. Little did I dream that endless hours of questioning lay ahead of me because of this plan—but perhaps it was worth it!

The captain pulled out a group of typewritten paper out of his desk and read the document which was somewhat similar to this:

The undersigned, Roger Menadelook, is accused of being guilty of breaking Article 84 of the Russian Penal Code by unlawful entry into Russian territory in Latitude—and Longitude—. Accordingly, he is subject to two years' imprisonment in Russian jails.

A subdivision read:

According to articles so and so of the Sessions Laws of the U.S.S.R., we find him untrustworthy, capable of causing disturbances and escape, and therefore sentenced to solitary confinement until such time as his examination has been completed.

I had to sign this document and its five carbon copies as having been read to me and translated.

This time the captain wanted to know if it was true that firearms and other types of shooting irons were manufactured at Nome. This was just a starter. What did I know about the defenses of Seward Peninsula? What type of artillery was there at Nome? What was the number of troops stationed at Nome? Teller? Were the colored troops as numerous as the whites? Was the Army headquarters in town, or where? What was the insignia on the Army cars? Personnel? Did the M.P.'s police the town? What was it they wore that made them easily distinguished from other soldiers? All this time they had a booklet into which they peered once in a while to see if I was giving the correct answer. At any rate, they said "*neprav*" as many times as I made a wrong answer. You see, I am one of those very absent-minded fellows. Some Native Siberians had come to Nome during the last two years during the summers, and undoubtedly they had kept their eyes open for anything out of the ordinary.

At eight o'clock PM they had a recess for supper. Meals were at 8, 2, and at 8. When asked if I cared for something to eat, I, of course, said "yes." The cook brought in a dish of canned salmon and a cup of tea and a slice of bread. After tasting the salmon, I had to be satisfied with a cup of tea and the slice of black bread. You see, the salmon had

apparently been kept long and had become putrid. Within a few minutes the captain and his interpreter came in wiping their lips.

"Did the Coastal Guard have a unit at Nome? Was there one at Teller, Wales, Shishmaref, Barrow, etc.? Was the officer in charge of the station at Nome wearing a dark uniform on the occasion when I went in there ten years ago? Was he wearing a coat or was he in shirt sleeves? Was the phone on the desk of a military or civilian style? Was the wall back of the desk a low partition or a wall? How many vessels are maintained in Nome harbor and of what type are they? What speed do I estimate the Coastal Guard boats to have, and what insignia is used on them? Was there an armed guard stationed outside of the Coastal Guard office? Did I know of any stations manned by the Coast Guard between Nome and Barrow? What is the name of the tribe of Eskimos living just back from the coast between Nome and Teller? What is the depth of Nome harbor?"

"No, do not give us the story that you have forgotten this and that! Recollect! Strive to remember! What date did you last go to Nome? We are of the opinion that you have deliberately forgotten what was what and where was where when you came here. Now let us call this 'compulsory volunteering' (sneer). Now you had better remember or you shall be given cause to regret it. You had better cooperate—if you don't, it will be the harder for you!" And that kept on till 1:00 AM.

"We shall call it a day now, Mr. Roger. Wait! Do not go yet. We have decided that you shall have the privilege of staying by yourself. Perhaps the bedding facilities will not be like that at the Empire State Building, but no doubt you shall have more comfort than on the beach. Yes, Mr. Kakatook, you shall have the privacy that you so apparently need to improve your roving memory!"

The younger lieutenant lit a match, pointed at a sort of bedding, and left. Feeling my way in the darkness, I went to sleep immediately, lying on something furry. The mental exercises of the last few hours had left me exhausted completely.

On waking I took inventory of my new habitation, a tent, six-sided, with an opening to let in light about four feet above the ground. There was an opening at the lower side through which I had come in last night. The whole affair was kept up by a pole in the center. My sleeping facility was a great rough goat- or sheepskin coat, which I used as a mattress, and a thin cotton blanket. To keep

the mattress from direct contact with the cold wet ground were some planks which at one time must have been part of a large box.

"Ohgg! Ohgg!" A soldier shoved in a bowl of salt fish stew, two slices of bread, and a cup of tea. My breakfast. At about 2:00 PM they gave me a bowl of coarse rice, a bowl of thin fish stew and two slices of bread. Eight PM was supper—a bowl of salt fish stew, two slices of bread, and a cup of tea. The slices of black bread I just set aside on the bread dish for future reference, for I could not eat any of it. "Well," said I to myself, "At least they won't starve me, and I'll no doubt get by on what they feed me, at least enough to keep from starving, enough to keep in fit condition regardless of the fact that the food was none too appetizing." On the third day of staying in the tent, a soldier brought my breakfast. "*Xoosha! Klyeba*, yes?" "Yes," I replied, "but *klyeba starri*." "Give," he said, and I gave the plate of old bread to him.

And starting the next day, I got a cup of tea and a couple of slices of black bread for breakfast. For my noon meal, they gave me a bowl of very thin salt fish stew with two slices of bread. For supper, a cup of tea and two slices of bread. All of a sudden, the bread became a tasty dish to me, and there was none left over that night. Occasionally, about once a week, they would give me a bowl of soup in the morning and sometimes a bowl at night. But I am willing to bet that that was just to fill in the report—"Prisoner well fed. Three square meals of salted fish stew a day. *Pravda!*"

Although I wore a parka continuously, I was cold all the time. I would attempt to warm up by pacing back and forth in front of my tent, but I was getting so little to eat that I would get tired in ten minutes. It was warmer to lie on my goatskin coat and turn my mind into a blank. But in a few minutes, out I would go again to see if I could not warm up again.

At the end of the second week in solitary confinement, my tent was taken down and some civilians, probably employees of the Russian Weather Bureau, took it along with them when they left for Siberia with some Natives from East Cape who had arrived in two whale boats. The two soldiers appointed to set up a new tent for me attempted to join two waterproof sheets five feet square over a length of iron pipe, but the result showed so little promise of weatherability that I showed them the tarpaulin which was still in one of our skinboats. With this we set up a tent about six feet long and just wide enough so I could crawl into it, and high enough so I could not bump into it when I got

up on my knees. The holes I patched up by filling them with grass. I have been miserable before, but never as bad as I was the next two weeks. The weather turned cold, ice came from the north until it was but a few miles from the island. All this time I was shivering from cold and hunger. I was so hungry that I could have eaten anything edible. The pit of my stomach was continually aching. And to make things worse, the Russians guarding me would see me shivering, and make remarks like, "*Dahmyer?*" "*Collidna?*" "*Deplo?*" (Feeling cold? Cold? Frozen stiff?) The Russians also have a sense of humor.

By now the ground was frozen to a depth of several inches. Another tent was pitched while I was being questioned one day. This one was a square brown army tent, about five and a half feet square. Covered with my tarpaulin, this was much more weatherproof than the other one. They also gave me material to make a seal oil lamp—a tin affair. The seal oil lamp provided a great deal of warmth when the wind was not blowing and also provided the means by which I could make a cup of coffee. Luckily, I had a pound of coffee in my duffle bag. While this coffee lasted, I had real American hot coffee each morning, and when that was gone, I had warmed up water which seemed to give me a little warmth, but which did not stop the gnawing feeling in my innards. By the light of the seal oil lamp I made model boats out of pieces of box lumber I saw around, geared with portions of electric light wire and covered with Russian box match covers.

During this whole period of solitary imprisonment, my captors' sole enjoyment seemed to be that of questioning us. There were periods of three or four days when they would question me as soon as they had breakfast and the questioning would finish only around midnight. I suppose when they were questioning some of the others they would perhaps give me a day or two of rest. Neuvuk (Albert Iyahuk) and I were in solitary confinement and our dwellings were close to each other. A guard was on continuous duty, watching our every move, reporting every questionable motion; for instance, one day, the weather being fair, I went outside feeling in an unusually good mood—seeing Simon and Sophie outside of their tent, I waved them "Good Morning"—and, believe it or not, the whole bunch of us was accused of attempting to signal each other! The others told me later on that the one guarding them would at times look at Neuvuk and me through a pair of binoculars. A distance of less than a hundred yards! I could hear the



movements of the guard at night, even when he struck a match or took a deep breath. They certainly made certain that we would not escape. Most of the time I was awake I would think of escape, devising ways and means of escaping, but I would get stuck when I thought of the others; there was never enough time for all of us to make the try. Unconsciously, I believe that I was saving the final attempt until it turned out that return would become an impossibility, then the only thing to do would be to get a favorable time, then try.

As I have stated before, my emotions in being called for questioning ranged from apprehension to relief. Paradoxically, when it became cold, I welcomed the chance to be questioned and therefore to match wits with the captain, for it afforded a change from my cold tent to a semi-warmed-up room. The room in which I was questioned swarmed with cockroaches—a strange thing in an isolated camp. But nevertheless they were there—long, brown things that slithered here and there on the floor, desk, and on the persons of my questioners. One must have been fond of ink, for it would crawl into the captain's inkwell, and he would have to drive it out with his pen. A Flit spray gun would have made the place bearable, but they told me that they had no means of eliminating the pests. Thank God, we don't have them on our island—our women would have fits!

Some additional questions: What was my personal opinion of my fellow villagers' characters? What was the difference between ancient and modern methods of seal hunting? Were such facilities as landing strips, auxiliary landing fields, military installations, oil tanks, machine shops, stores, bars, restaurants, available at Nome? Where were they located, in what quantities, and who were the proprietors of the personally owned public places? They would consult a blue print while they were questioning me about the town, and, whenever my memory betrayed me into giving a wrong answer, they would shout "*neprav*" into my face, and the interpreter would admonish me to polish up my memory. Once they asked me how much I owed in our community store. I stated the first amount which came into my mind. "*Neprav!* We know it is four times the amount and will you admit it upon your memory being refreshed?"

"Well," said I, "what benefit does the Russian government expect to get from this information about my poor lowly personal affairs?"

"Ohgg!" roared the captain. "You will please answer my questions correctly! You—you are the one being ques-

tioned and have no business questioning us. So, put out your cigarette. No more smoking for you—and sit up straight. Brush up your memory—or it will be the worse for you!" The captain had his dander up more than usual! There were times during the questioning when it seemed to me that the men seemed dissatisfied with being in the Russian Army. They would ask about things that had absolutely no bearing on our trip or other things. For instance, one day the captain asked what "Coca-Cola" was. He had heard so much about it!

By the time we were there a month, the captain and his interpreter were out of tailormade *papirosi* and were rolling cigarettes out of the coarse Russian *mahorkha* tobacco. The best paper (or so they told me) in camp was sheets of the official organ of the Soviet Empire—*Pravda*! A feller can go a long way to get a smoke!

Rap, rap, rap, a knock at the door.

"*Da! Da!*" said the captain.

"*Pashalista*, Captain!" And in came a soldier bearing in his arms a bunch of kindling. He was a rough, thick set, uncouth specimen of Russian soldiery—big hands red from raw, rough work and exposure. But he came in slowly in an apologetic manner, acting as though he would be blasted by a blast of lightning from the captain. If manners could talk, his plainly said: "I beg your pardon, O most illustrious son of heaven and foremost disciple of Stalin—Please let me brush some of the dust off of your boots and let me rub my forehead with it. Please do not kill me for coming in!" He mumbled a few words to the captain, who answered, "*Da. Da.*" He built a fire in the red brick fireplace, using the kindling to start the fine coal used for burning. All the soldiers with an exceptional one or two noncoms acted in this lowly, debased, humiliated manner when coming into the presence of the officers. From my observations I would say that the Russian Army practices very strict discipline. The enlisted man dreads and fears his superiors—the majority of them come into the presence of officers like a dog who has been beaten before but nevertheless fawns to his master. This may be true of all relations between officers and men, but the soldiers I have seen were in perfect physical condition, a result of constant exercise, hard labor like hauling wood up from the beach, carrying their winter's supply of granulated coal in sacks up the steep hillside, long hours on patrol duty, and doing a lot of work which in American camps would have been done by machinery.

On the sixteenth of September I was told to join my companions, so taking my blanket and sheepskin coat

mattress, the toy boats I had whittled for my little son, and my bag, I went over to the tent where the others were staying. I made two trips for my stuff, even taking the grass my mattress had lain on.

I entered the tent. Seated in a semicircle, huddling around what little warmth was given off by a small circular iron stove, were the younger folks. It was cold, for the ground was now covered with snow. The side of the stove was red hot but the heat extended only about three feet from it. Outside the circle surrounding the stove were others who had no room, some who had blankets covering themselves with them for warmth, all wearing parkas. It was one of the most pitiful sights I have seen. Everyone's face was startlingly thin; the older men's faces were covered with sparse beards and mustaches, which could not hide the sunken cheeks. The women looked like they had been bedridden. Hardly a smile was given in answer to my greeting—it even seemed to me that smiling came hard to them. They hardly moved, each movement being slow, so slow that even the younger folks seemed to have aged. The interior of the tent was filled with a continuous disturbing silence. The only one making any noise or talk was the baby son of Neuvuk. He was just starting to toddle alone and was filled with a great hunger—always crying for “*nigozaming*,” “*sakkariming*,” “*immooming*,” “*soupozaming*”—meat, sugar, milk, and soup. Whenever the poor child got some soup he would eat so much that there was danger of his bursting—but he still wanted more and more. Of milk, meat, and sugar, there was none, even though efforts had been made to obtain some from the Russians.

About ten o'clock some Russian ersatz coffee was brewed. It was the only thing given to them whenever they asked for it. There was no tea. This so-called coffee was drunk with a few roots which the women had hoarded. No bread. The two small cups of ersatz gave us a feeling of warmth and perhaps enabled us to have patience enough to wait for the meal of the day. This meal was brought to us about four o'clock. A soldier handed in two and a half loaves of bread and another shoved in a small tub of salt fish stew. As soon as the soldiers left, prayers were said, and we fell to. One cup of thick fish stew with pieces of fish in it was ladled out to each person the first time. The second cup consisted of soup. The soup being gone, coffee was now poured into the unwashed cups, two small slices of bread were given to each person. You see, one loaf was saved for the breakfast. This had

been the procedure, so I was told, since they had moved up from the beach a month before. It was no wonder that they were in such a pitiful condition—but they told me that I looked like I was in no condition to enter a beauty contest myself!

About 4:30 the next day came the summons: “Mr. Roger, will you please come along?” So I went with the interpreter to the office of the questioners. After a few seemingly useless questions as to where we hunted in the winter, the captain fished out some typewritten sheets which I recognized as documents. I know my face blanched, my heart jumped up suddenly and was stopped only from going through by my neck being in the way. Here it was! The captain would tell me I was sentenced to serve imprisonment in Siberia. I would not see my wife and family anymore. I was doomed! It was the only time I temporarily gave up confidence in Uncle Sam and thought that my God had forsaken me. But, thank God, it was a release, an official statement that proceedings against us were suspended. I signed the original and its five carbons. Then the captain with a crew of a lieutenant, two interpreters (one Native), and an extra guard went to the tent in which we were quartered. It was pitch dark within and by the light of one of our flashlights I interpreted the document after it had been officially read in Russian. My companions were routed out of the makeshift beds they had been lying on. Then they signed the documents.

When the Russians left, we all said our prayers—but it was a very, very long night.

The next day dawned clear, no surf, dark cloud banks to the northeast, wind north, very few white caps where the current was strongest. The captain and the station commander came and looked at the sea, had us break camp and told us to go to the bath house for inspection. We went, taking all our personal belongings with us. I was first. I removed my parka, they felt in all my pockets, looked into my boots, inspected what stuff I had left, then, after returning the articles they had taken from me when I first arrived, they had me sign some more papers. Another took my place, and then another when the other was done. By now, the Russians were hurrying us through. The men who were done were told to take their stuff down the beach. The women were inspected by the only woman in the camp. She was an employee of the Weather Bureau, and, I think, married to the man in charge of the station. They were now rushing us through with hardly any in-

spection—just as anxious to get rid of us as they had been anxious to keep us.

But the cloud bank to the northeast broke on us to the tune of snow squalls with accompanying wind. In just a few minutes the sea in front of the beach was so bad that we just took back our stuff up the hillside, set up the tent again, and settled down to the old routine—bitter disappointment our lot.

The wind increased until it became a typical fall gale in the next few days. Huge breakers were splashing on the rocks below us, sending up clouds of spray, and to venture outside meant having a strong wind blow salt spray into your face. Our fare was increased to three loaves of bread a day—the extra half loaf must have meant quite a concession to the Russians. I also obtained about two pounds of flour by consistent bumming from the supply soldier. This made a porridge which was a welcome addition to our fare. Twice during that week we asked for permission and were allowed to go down to the beach to gather some pitiful fragments of seaweed. These were not much to look at, much less to taste, nevertheless they gave us a feeling of partial fullness. The seaweed and the porridge really kept us alive that week.

One of the days after I had joined my companions, Frank Okpealuk came in with a sort of excited look. “There is a fish by the path leading to the beacon. The dogs must have brought it there for some of it is chewed.” It did not take much encouragement to get Alois, the youngster, to fetch it. It was a fish the size of a large humpback salmon. Annie, the wife of Neuvuk, cut off the portions that had been chewed on, and what was left was about half a fish which she cleaned and cut up into small portions which we had raw with our coffee about an hour afterwards. Portions of it were salty, some rotted a little, but we were so hungry taste made little difference to us. At home, we would have thrown the whole shebang away.

Very early on the morning of the twenty-sixth of September someone called us from outside the tent. I went out immediately, for I had kept stove watch (kept the stove going since midnight to keep the others from freezing). It was the interpreter. He asked me if we thought we could make it to our village, and as the wind had lessened a great deal and the surf subsided, I said “Yes.” “Well,” he said, “get everybody up and get ready to go. We are afraid the wind will shift again and make it impossible for you to go.” So, I roused everyone, and, as we had nothing to eat,

asked for a loaf of bread. I received a half a loaf and we had to be satisfied with that for our breakfast. Breakfast over, we again broke camp and got ready to go.

We got our boats as close to the surf as we could without spray falling into them. We were fortunate that several Russian soldiers helped us move the boats down from above high water line. Once in position, the captains of our boats, Elasanga and Okpealuk, attached a long stick to the stern of each boat. At a sign from Okpealuk, Elasanga’s boat was shoved out into the surf, the long poles serving as means of giving a good shove. The momentum of the shove aided the paddlers in reaching a stretch beyond the breakers. The women had been put into the boat to get them out of the way and ready. Now it was our turn. Putting Puneatuk and Ummanak, the two old women, into the boat, we got the skin boat into position for shoving off. I was stationed at the bow to fend off in case the boat started to turn, an oar in my hands. Okpealuk, his son Frank, and Simon were ready at the stern and the sides. Five Russians stood ready at the pole to shove us off. Okpealuk gave a sign to shove the boat still closer to the water, but the Russians took the sign as a signal to shove off. Forward we went, gaining momentum each moment, the Russians running ahead with the pole. Paddling for dear life, we gained the safer region outside of the breakers. Only then did I look around—the two dear old women were paddling away, and they were not doing a maybe job about it. The other boat was the first to start its outboard, and we were towed halfway to Little Diomedé before ours started.

Rounding the north end of Big Diomedé, we came into sight of our island home. How familiar it looked! And how homelike! Why, even its steep sides seemed to have a “Welcome Home” look. And strange was the fact that a ship was anchored in front of our village. It was the *North Star*, the government ship that as usual was bringing the annual supplies for the school and the community.

The rocky beach became alive with people as we approached and many willing hands were there to help us. Everyone was filled with joy, for we had been given up as being taken to Siberia for imprisonment—they did not know what had happened to us. Many tears were shed, but they were tears of joy; perhaps our long absence from our families caused them, or maybe it was the weakness of body caused by the long period of semistarvation which caused us to break down.

Very kindly, the nurse on the *North Star*, Miss Gaddie, sent for us to go aboard. X-rays were taken and a physical

check-up given each one of us. The average Eskimo does not have any extra avoirdupois—and we were no exception—but each of us had lost from ten to twenty pounds. Only the younger men helped a little with the unloading, but the rest of us were too weak. Our legs were wobbly, our movements slow; I think most of us were close to being seriously sick.

Food—which had been the main source of our conversation, the subject of our dreams, now became a reality—but also a mockery. It was a month before we could eat a whole meal with impunity, while most of us complained of some minor ailment. The return trip of the *North Star* brought Father Tom Cunningham as a passenger. In the manner for which he is well known, he had laid aside all his duties—he is chaplain of the Army Post at Nome and was to be stationed the coming winter at King Island—and had come as soon as he had heard that we had returned. He was anxious to see how we were after being kept by the Russians. As usual he had brought some gifts for the children. No wonder he is called *Uttatuk* (Father) by all of us seagoing Eskimos. To his numerous friends he is Father Tom, and to be called a friend of his has its meaning. To us Ingalit of Little Diomedé he is one

of us. He talks our dialect, he has built the church on our hillside, he has taken care of us when sick, and he has hunted with us over the hazardous moving arctic pack ice when food was scarce in the village. We know that he is lent to the King Islanders for a short time by whoever is his boss and some day will return home.

From information we gathered, we found out that information had been sent us of Little Diomedé not to make the Siberian trip this summer, that the permits were not in use any more. But instead of wiring the information to us, an employee of the Alaska Native Service had mailed it! He, no doubt, was so ignorant of our part of the country that he did not know we were lucky to get mail three times a year.

On October 19, 1948, after a hunting trip in a skin boat for ducks and seals, I came down with symptoms of what the nurse, Mrs. Morgan, called T.B. Since then I have been in bed, but my spirit has been out there hunting with the other men. And, very kindly, the Alaska Native Service at Juneau has been sending some relief for me, my wife, and two small sons, which has been of great help in our time of need.



## APPENDIX

Roger Menadelook's manuscript was not annotated for the express purpose of retaining its original tone and narrative flow. This appendix is intended to clarify or expand on parts of the text that otherwise would have been annotated.

### LITTLE DIOMEDE CAPTIVES

Fourteen of the eighteen captives are specifically mentioned in the manuscript. Some details of their identities were provided by Eileen Norbert (personal communication with Ken Pratt, March 2013 [via Matt Ganley]).

Neuvuk: Albert Iyahuk

Annie: wife of Albert Iyahuk

The "baby son" of Neuvuk and Annie: Glenn Iyahuk

Ummanuk: an elderly female in 1948

Alois: Alois Akvaluk (nephew of Albert Iyahuk and uncle of Eva Menadelook)

Okpealuk (Old Man Okpealuk): captain of one of the two skin boats in which the Little Diomede people were traveling; also the father of Frank Okpealuk.

Frank Okpealuk: son of Okpealuk

Kakeek: male

Simon: husband of Sophie

Sophie: wife of Simon

Kazulana: female

Mr. Kakatook: Kokituk (the Inupiaq name of Roger Menadelook)

Elasanga: male, captain of the second skin boat of the Little Diomede captives.

Puneatuk: an elderly female in 1948

### OTHER PEOPLE

Captain Kedorf (or Kedorg): the top-ranking Russian officer and chief interrogator of the Little Diomede captives at Koonga.

Mr. Heinrich: Albert Heinrich, an anthropologist who served as an Alaska Native Service/BIA teacher on Little Diomede for around three years, ca. 1945 to 1948 (Peter Schweitzer, personal communication with Ken Pratt, October 2012 and December 2013).

Mr. Gruening: Ernest H. Gruening, governor of the Alaska Territory (1939–1953) and later U.S. senator for Alaska (1959–1969).

Miss Gaddie: Clara Gaddie, RN: *North Star III* ship's nurse (1946–1949); when the ship visited Alaska villages she typically went ashore to inoculate and give physicals to local children and adults (Barbara Shaw, personal communication with Ken Pratt, December 2013).

Father Tom Cunningham: a Jesuit priest in northern Alaska for twenty-five years, he became a fluent Inupiaq speaker, lived on Little Diomede for eight years (beginning in 1936) and built the island's first church, St. Jude (e.g., Llorente 1969:67).

### PLACES AND THINGS

Ingalik (*Inaliq*): Little Diomede Island (and the village Ingalik); the plural *Inalit* refers to the people of Little Diomede (Larry Kaplan, personal communication with Ken Pratt, December 2013). The island was formerly also known as Krusenstern Island.

Big Diomede Island: *Imaqtiq*; the plural *Imaqtit* refers to the people of Big Diomede (Larry Kaplan, personal communication with Ken Pratt, December 2013). The island is also known as Ratmanova Island.

Koonga (Kunga): a Russian border post established ca. 1940 on the north end of Big Diomede Island, at or next to a former Native village of the same name. Kunga village was abandoned between ca. 1895 and 1905, when all of its residents moved to Little Diomede (Igor Krupnik, personal communication with Ken Pratt, September 2013; cf. Krupnik 1994).

East Cape (Cape Dezhnev): located on the Chukchi Peninsula in far eastern Russia.

Whelan (Uelen): a Siberian Native village near East Cape.

*North Star* (*North Star III*): a Bureau of Indian Affairs freight ship built in 1945 and used in the "Alaska

Resupply Operation”—a program that provided groceries and other cargo to Alaska coastal communities.

The ship was decommissioned in 1984.

Flit spray gun: a hand-pumped sprayer used to dispense the insecticide brand Flit.

#### SELECTED TERMS

Assistance with translations of some Russian language terms was provided by Richard Bland (personal communication with Ken Pratt, December 2013).

gendarmes: soldiers, police officers

pravda: “the truth”

neprav: “false, inaccurate”

Pashalista: “you’re welcome”

davae kokdom (Davae kakom): “let it happen” (?)

pajom (paidyom): “let’s go”

starookha: “old woman”

kharrashoa (kharasho): “good, okay”

xoosha (horosho?): “good”

papirosi (papirossi): strong, filterless Russian cigarettes

mahorkka (mahorka): a type of cheap smoking tobacco found in Russia

ersatz: “substituting for”

uttatuk (*ataata*): “father”

avoiidupois: weight

T.B.: tuberculosis

**Note:** included with the 1959 Associated Press photograph of the Diomed Islands was the following statement:

At this point in the Bering Strait, only 3½ miles of frozen water separates the United States and Russia. The island in the foreground is American-owned Little Diomed. Just beyond is Russian territory, Big Diomed Island. Almost lost in the mist is the Siberian mainland. Though they could easily walk across the ice between the islands, the Eskimos living on Little and Big Diomed do not visit. The last time American Eskimos went over to Big Diomed was six years ago. The Russians held them for 45 days. The international dateline runs between the two islands. When it is Thursday on Little Diomed, it is Friday on its Russian brother.

This statement is inaccurate with respect to several key details of the Little Diomed peoples’ captivity by Russians on Big Diomed: i.e., the event took place in 1948 (not 1953) and the people were held captive for fifty-one days (not forty-five).

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