



ALASKA:

'Happy Jack' And the Past

MY NAME IS Jim Oksoktaruk, or just "Happy Jack," as my friends call me. I live in Nome, Alaska, where I am treasurer of the Covenant church. I am also song leader and every once in awhile will sing solos.

I make my living by serving as a guard and senior officer at the Nome federal jail. There I have the opportunity to witness of Christ who can change men's lives.

Jennie, who is my wife, and I have

ten children whom we are encouraging in the ways of the Lord.

My present life, of course, is quite different from my sinful past. Eight years ago I realized my need for the Lord and accepted him as Savior. Much credit for this decision goes to the missionaries who have served so faithfully for many years.

It is always good to recall the past and try to visualize what great faith the first missionaries had in the living God and what love they had for

the souls who are dying without the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ.

How did these men know that they would make the primitive people understand the gospel which was never heard of? How did they know that they would survive the long cold winter with only limited supplies? They spent long hours traveling by dog teams, preaching the gospel as

they went from village to village, for many were willing to hear what the preacher had in store for them.

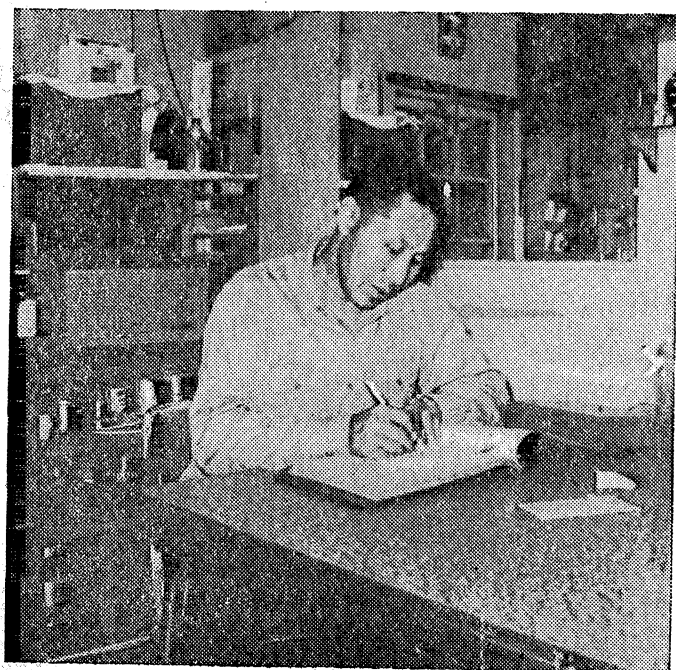
Since the first Covenant missionary was sent to Alaska in 1887, many more have given up their homes, friends, and relatives to carry on the work. Some of these brave men and women have remained in the soil of Alaska. Even though their bodies may be buried, the gospel which they brought is still reaching farther into the outlying villages.

After some seemingly fruitless years, the seed that was sown is beginning to sprout. Out of the scores who have accepted Christ as Savior a small handful have felt the call to be pastors.

And we laymen too are taking places of leadership in our churches. Today our Alaska Covenanters help to support missions in Wales, Elim, Koyuk, Nunivak Island, Mountain Village, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

The present missionaries to Alaska I mention last but these men are not the least.

Most of our white missionaries have abilities which would enable them to make more money in any field of work they might have chosen. But these men chose to serve the living God rather than to enjoy the luxuries of life for a short while in order that lost souls, such as myself, might find everlasting life.



Jim Oksoktaruk of Nome, Alaska, carries out his duties as treasurer of his church.

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