

Alaska State Library
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

Moses, James Kivetoruk

Kivetoruk Moses drawings, ca. 1969

MS 4-38-4

1 Folder
2 Letters
5 Drawings

Processed By: Gayle Goedde
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ACQUISITION: Unknown

ACCESS: The collection is unrestricted.

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PROCESSING: This collection has been described at the item level. All items have been placed into a pH-neutral folder.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Kivetoruk Moses was born in 1900 near Cape Espenberg at the southern entrance to Kotzebue Sound. Moses spent his youth and middle years hunting seal, reindeer, and polar bear; trading furs and sled dogs in Siberia and his native Cape Espenberg on the Seward Peninsula. In 1954, when injuries from an airplane crash ended his hunting days, Moses taught himself to paint. Moses used several recurring themes in his drawings, including shamans, the advent of white men in northern Alaska, and Eskimo legends.

Besides three drawings by Moses at the California Academy of Sciences, large bodies of his work are in the collections of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks, and the Alaska State Museum in Juneau. The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City also has a number of his works. He is widely represented in private collections throughout the United States.

After suffering a stroke in 1974, followed by heart and knee surgery a few years later, Moses continued to draw as much as he could, but his output had slowed tremendously. In 1976, his eldest child, James, Jr., disappeared near Nome and was never found. Their other four children had previously died, leaving Moses and his wife all alone. By 1978, he was no longer drawing at all, and he died in 1982.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The five pen and pencil drawings show views from the back, front, side, and interior of the house Kivetoruk Moses has sketched for the Alaska State Housing Authority. The drawings are annotated with descriptive details and signed, Eskimo Artist, Kivetoruk Moses, Nome, Alaska, P. O. Box 814.

INVENTORY

Folder 1 of 1

- 1 Black and white image of Kivetoruk and Bessie Moses, photographed at their home in Nome, 1965.
- 2 Letter from the Alaska State Housing Authority to Kivetoruk Moses, December 17, 1969; and on reverse side, a response from Moses to the housing authority, December 26, 1969.
- 3 Pen and pencil drawing of outside of house, side view.
- 4 Pen and pencil drawing of front and back of house, showing doors and windows.
- 5 Pen drawing of one-room kitchen and living room, bedrooms, and other details of first floor.
- 6 Pen and pencil drawing of the outside wall, the roof line, and interior floor plan.
- 7 Pen and pencil drawing of front porch storm shed and back meat store.