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Charles Keim

Steve Sherman, host

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Steve Sherman said a biography of a well-known Alaska archeologist has been published by the University of Alaska Press. It describes the work of Otto Geist (Aghvook, white Eskimo) of Otto Geist and was written by Charles J. Keim. Keim was a friend of Geist and a student of his work. He worked with him for five years compiling interviews and traveling in the Arctic with him.

Sherman asked Charles Keim about Otto Geist. Keim said Geist was raised in Europe. He inherited interests from his father. When Geist came to America he served in the Mexican border campaign under Blackjack Pershing. He later served in the American Expeditionary Force in France in WWI. He wanted to make a genuine contribution with his life. His brother was in Ketchikan and told him about Alaska and its great need and opportunity for development. Geist came up to Alaska and saw that a lot of material was disappearing and studies of the Natives had to be done. His first expeditions he financed himself. Later modest amounts of money came in for his studies. Sherman asked Keim to describe Geist's contributions. Keim said his book about Geist is an action narrative account of Geist's life. The full scientific contribution has not been made. He thinks the full scope of Geist's contribution will not be made until many years from now. Keim said the library has done an excellent job in compiling the tremendous amount of material. It is available to scholars. Several associations have elected Geist a fellow in their ranks. In 1924 Geist met Olaus Murie and they became lifelong friends. Murie wrote the forward to the book.