

## Recreation and Arts

The Eskimo were fond of amusements of various kinds. During the winter when larger groups were assembled, a large snowhouse (*qagli*) was used as a festival centre. Shamanistic performances and feats of skill and strength took place; these included trapeze acts performed on a thong stretched through the dome of the house.

The drum dance was another important event that took place in the *qagli*. The drummer performed in the centre of a circle of bystanders who formed the chorus. At times during the drum dance another Eskimo called from the circle would dance around the drummer in a specified way. In this way partnerships in dancing (*mumiqatigiik*) were established. Dancing partnerships and spouse exchange were important ways in which associations could be established during travels in areas where kinship ties might not have existed.

The ball game and the tug of war were sports that were performed out of doors.

Although there were several traditions of art forms among prehistoric Eskimo, native art had reached a state of decline at the time of first contact with Europeans. Articles intended for household use often bore carved decoration. Toys, dolls, and objects carved for religious significance were also known. The art work of the contact period Eskimo had for its media wood, bone, ivory, or antler.



Plate 12. Singing, dancing, drumming and athletic contests provided chief forms of recreation.