

Call number: 02-00-133-05_PT.5

Barrow Christmas, 1971

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Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master copies on CD.

Series:

A man is speaking. He says that the Christmas feast started when the church was organized. He says Native people enjoy feasting and enjoy giving their friends food.

The man says that if he was down at Anchorage or Fairbanks or another place than his Native town, if he just walks into his friend's house or his friend just walks in to his house at mealtime, they know they are welcome. The friend is accepted into the family circle. In other places, it seems like you have to have money. It seems like this acceptance may be disappearing.

The man thinks that the Christmas feast is so important because it is a time when people get to share their food with others. In the past people have starved, so feasts are important.

The man says that he is not sure how long the feasting will continue. Bringing gifts to the church was discontinued; maybe because some people complained of not receiving any gifts. But feasting is different; everyone shares and everyone receives a share.

The interviewer asks who distributes the meat.

The man says that the whale is "just like a big turkey for our white brothers." Even if there is no whale, they still feast but it is like feasting without a turkey. Every whaler knows, without being told, to bring whale meat. Other hunters bring food. Fisherman will bring fish. Caribou hunters will bring a big pot of soup. Ordinary people bring canned fruit of coffee of tea.

An interview asks how it is decided who serves the food.

There are usually two elders who are in charge of finding servers. Some young women and men expect to be called. They see it as an honor. The deacons of the church oversee the distribution of the food.

The speaker says a blessing for the food.

Everyone still considers the Christmas program a very important thing. They plan for it every year. They do not like to hold it on Christmas Sunday but, rather, on a weekday.

The tape cuts out.

A new recording starts. Applause. Sounds of a crowd. Shouting. Counting. A game is in progress.

A woman describes a game. The contestants get on their hands and knees and push each other with their shoulders. There is a line that they try to push each other over the line.

The interviewer asks the names of the people currently competing. The woman gives the names. She says married people compete against single people. The woman says that this competition is tough on the collarbone. The woman gives information on who is competing

Recording of competition and occasional commentary continues.

A woman speaks quietly about her experiences.

The interviewer asks if the points for the men and the women go together. The woman says the at the point are separate.

The woman continues conversing quietly with eh interviewer. She tells a story about some people in a little aluminum boat getting a whale.

The crowd laughs and applauds and shouts

The woman talks quietly while shouting, laughing and counting continue.

The interviewer describes how the current game is played. Men balance on their knuckles and kick up with both feet.

Sounds of crowd and competition continue.

Women are having a game. Married women are competing against single women. Both women lie flat on the floor, legs crossed, one arm in back and the using the other arm to arm wrestle. The single women are doing much better than the married women at this game .

The tape cuts out.

A raspy-voiced man, Willie Sielak, is speaking in Inupiat and his son Clyde Sielak, translating for him.

The raspy-voiced man speaks about the games a long time ago when other villages where invited by bigger villages like Barrow and Wainwright.

They would invite other villages to the place where the games were going to be held at.

Two men were sent out to tell the other villages that the games were about to start. They had to run to the other villages.

The two men would return and report what games the people in the smaller villages had said that they wanted to play.

The tape cuts out. (Continued in 02-00-133 PT.8)