

88-49-133

Sadie Brower Neakok

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Barrow, Alaska

Series: Potlatch series

1977

The third of three programs with Sadie Neakok.

Song by Janis Joplin

Jeff Kennedy said Sadie Neakok served as magistrate for Alaska's North Slope from Spring of 1960 until her retirement this past summer. She recalls an incident from this past year. The Department of Fish and Game told her in September they might declare an open season for caribou that December. That month the area around Barrow was flooded with a gigantic herd of caribou. Sadie Neakok called the Department of Fish and Game and told them to investigate the situation but she was told all the appropriate Fish and Game officials would be on vacation until the middle of January. She decided not to have to decide Fish and Game violations of her friends and neighbors. She decided instead to disqualify herself and asked that violators be brought to trial before another judge in another area.

Song by Linda Ronstadt

Sadie Neakok said she would become so frustrated they [Fish and Game?] would come up to their community and try to stop them from hunting the things they needed. Her main concern was when she was trying to get a response from the Game Commission about the caribou. She was most concerned about having 275 permits for all of Barrow which meant only one caribou for each household regardless of the size of the household. She said buying store bought meat for a large family gets very expensive. Meat is four to six dollars a pound. Everything they get up here has to be bought if their subsistence line is cut. She doesn't know what will happen to her people if the hunting and fishing is cut off. There were so many caribou in Barrow in the past year that they were trampling traplines. When the permits for hunting were distributed there were some families left out. When she called the Game Commission she did not get a definite answer. She wanted to know when they were going to come out and inform the public about when and how people could take caribou. She said the state didn't follow up with the promise that was made to her people. She was so pressured that she disqualified herself from ruling on any violations among her own people. In March the Game Commission said they were coming up to talk to her people. The Game Commission said they would not have an open season until June of 1978. She said in her own family they are able to work because there is a lot of construction going on in Barrow, but that doesn't supply them with their meat.

Song by Don Prairie

Sadie Neakok talked about the spring hunting season. She said they had a good whale hunting season. They caught 19 whales. Two of the whales were bloated, but the muktuk was still good. They didn't get any large whales this year. The average whale was 24-33 feet. It was a good supply for the community. If a man in a home is serving in a crew then they have a share of the meat. Each season is different. Her main concern is informing the authorities about their problems.

Song by Michael Murphy