

88-49-33

Laura Lazier with Levi Lott; Smoking fish

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

1975?

“Hunting for muskox” by the Hudson Bay Eskimos of Canada from Folkways Records.

Laura Lazier is an instructor at Kuskokwim Community College. She travels out to surrounding villages and be of assistance to the BIA aides who are enrolled in courses at the college. They are under a program with Title One. The programs prepare the aides in a role that is more helpful and useful to the students and teachers. The philosophy these days is the aides can be more helpful in the classroom. She said she visits with the aides and helps them with any problems and questions about classroom routine. She was a teacher in Arizona. She said the tundra is so much like the desert in so many ways.

Song by Peter LaFarge and Nick Navarro.

Smoking fish information from Mary Alice Griffiths from the Cooperative Extension in Nome. Information about splitting, brining and smoking. A recipe for brine is given. Adding green wood gives the right amount of smoke. Smoking techniques are given.

Tom Rush song

Laura Lazier’s interview continues. She said there are varying problems depending on where the villages are located. Some of the villages that are on the coast have Yupik speakers. The function of the aide in those villages is different. Places like Eek and Tuksuk Bay have aides who are interpreters for primary school children. On the Yukon this isn’t the case. Levi asked about cultural difference between the Navajos and the Eskimos. Laura said she was teaching in Flagstaff which is a big center for the reservation. She said the main difference she sees is in Arizona the Navajo and Hopi are the minority and the gussack is the majority. It makes a big difference in the way the kids react to education. In Arizona the Navajo people live in separate hogans scattered throughout the desert. In the tundra people live in villages together. In Arizona children are pulled out of their homes and put in dormitories for schooling. It is bad for the parents and the children. There are a lot of negative things because of that. In Alaska it is nice to see the Native children are kept with their parents. The whole village is a unit and it is very good. She hopes that the village spirit will survive with development in the state. She enjoys being up in Alaska. Once she gets into a village and meets people she is never a stranger. She said Navajo people are suspicious of white men generally. You don’t approach a Hogan on a reservation and expect to be greeted warmly. In Alaska when she meets Eskimos they are always smiling and warm. Navajo people will stand off to the side and observe you for a while. She doesn’t speak Yupik or Navajo but she recognizes sounds in the languages. One thing that is interesting is that the Hopi people are short. She said the Eskimo has truly unique features, but they look most like Hopi because of their stature. She said

she always felt like a giant around the Hopi. She felt the same way when she came to Alaska. She described living in Flagstaff and concern about living in Alaska when she first arrived. She talked about dealing with the wind and the cold. She said Native mukluks are the right thing to wear for the weather.

Song by Gordon Lightfoot.

Laura Lazier talks about bilingual education. She said there is an instructor working with bilingual education, Tom Lattan. He offers several courses at the college. They are trying to get the college student up to a proficiency in English. Tom Lattan is trying to listen to individual problems that English as a second language students have and developing separate programs for them. He is developing many individual learning units. There are some problems in that area with sounds. Yupik speakers may have a hard time pronouncing some English sounds just as English speakers have problems with some Yupik sounds.