

88-49-40

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Peters, Kathleen Peters

Moses Wassillie, interviewer

Series: Potlatch series

Moses Wassillie talked about the different types of games to be held at the 15th annual World Eskimo-Indian Olympics. He mentioned the other activities held during the games.

Moe Wassillie said each year people meet in Tanana to celebrate Nuchalawoyya where the waters meet.

Hardy Peters talked about the history of Nuchalawoyya. It was started in 1956-57. Jay Howard started the celebration. He was a supervisor at the hospital. Several people were talking about the old day Nuchalawoyya from their grandfather's time. The celebration might have been something to do with the fur trading. People would come in canoes and boats. People would use their own power to get there. At the old mission they had potlatches that lasted a week or two weeks. Everyone would meet once a year in Tanana. There were gifts made for the celebration. Most of the people forgot about the celebration. In 1957 Jay Howard and he started talking about organizing a celebration. One year they sat down and figured out what they were going to do and raising money for the celebration. They offered prizes for some of the contests and talent shows. They started in the early part of April. They had a turkey shoot to raise money. They wrote letters to people in other villages to get interested. They came down to Tanana with dance groups. Every year someone else takes over. The last several years Glen Buckner has been raising money for the celebration.

Johnny Cash song.

Helen Peters talked about the Nuchalawoyya celebration. She said they haven't been organized for a large potlatch in the last few years. In 1937 they had a large potlatch that lasted for a week. They hunted meat in the winter and stored it for the spring celebration. She remembers seeing her father's cache before the event took place and it was full of food. At that time people didn't think about how much work it was they thought about how they can share with others. She would like to have a large potlatch like that one day. She talked about preparing for the Nuchalawoyya queen contest. She talked about making soup. She said the more meat you cook in the pot the better the stock is. She talked about making Indian ice cream made with fish, dried meat, fat and fish eggs. They have berries. She said it seems like the kids like to have the celebration but they aren't involved in the preparations. Some of the kids are learning the dances. They sing some of the newer Nuchalawoyya songs. She said a committee decides what kind of games they will have. She said nobody is interested, just the same people preparing. The past two years she said it was the best organized. Each person took care of one thing.

Moses Wassillie talked about the World Eskimo Olympics.

Helen Peters talked about the villages that take part of Nuchalawoyya: Minto, Nenana, Fort Yukon, Ruby, Galena, Koyukuk, and Stevens Village. They are talking about having Nuchalawoyya every other year. They were hope it would be recognized all over. She said it was good in the past for a lot of people getting together. They danced and played all night. Every person was active in the celebration. She said she used to see Russian dancing. It is something that is lost now. Helen talked about her family. She said her husband, Hardy Peters, is from the Ruby area – Kokrine. She said their fathers were once some of the greatest dancers. Her father was Litch (?) Joseph. He made a lot of potlatches. Hardy's father was Dave Corny. Hardy was adopted by the Peters. Edgar Joseph is her uncle and is also a great dancer. A lot of people remember him. Her brothers also dance. There were nine children in her family. Hardy has always worked for the hospital. She is a cook and works for the school. Her oldest daughter, Kathleen, is the Nuchalawoyya queen this year and was also the World Eskimo Olympics queen.

Song by John Denver

The moderator said Potlatch is produced in the KUAC studios in College in cooperation with KTOO Juneau, KOTC Kotzebue and KYUK Bethel under Title One of the Higher Education Act.