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Anatole Lakonoff, Alfred Steffaten, and Anna Stolomenoff speak at the Festival of Native Arts in Fairbanks, Alaska in March 1976

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Series: Potlatch series

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Anatole Lakonoff, Alfred Steffaten, and Anna Stolomenoff speak at the Festival of Native Arts. Anatole Lakonoff said at St. George through Indian Education money and Johnson O'Malley money they were able to have a cultural enrichment program. They had limited money in the past year. They were teaching a few classes which include skin sewing, wood carving and bone carving. Language was also taught. Jeff Kennedy asked if adults in St. George speak mainly in Aleut. Lakonoff said they speak most of the time in Aleut. They speak some Aleut to the children.

Jeff Kennedy asked Alfred Steffaten what the culture and language situation was in Unalaska. Steffaten said they have an arts program. The language program hasn't moved ahead that much. A couple of years ago they did have a program and put out a book. He said people older than forty speak Aleut fluently. Jeff Kennedy asked if he was able to speak Aleut with anyone in the chain [of islands]. Steffaten said in the eastern side of the chain yes. He said they can communicate with people in the west, but they have a different dialect. He said they can go up as far as the peninsula and then it turns into Kodiak Aleut. The only western Aleut speaking is at Atka. They can understand each other to a degree.

Jeff Kennedy said also attending Aleut night was Larry Macknay, Marina Wassillie and Jenny Zeater. One of them said they were from Larson Bay. She said three villages bought the cannery at Larson Bay. Jeff Kennedy asked if the young people in her area speak any Aleut. She said none of them speak Aleut in that area. Kennedy asked if they have any programs for the students to learn about the language and culture. She said she is the one that is supposed to be starting that teaching. She talked about Larry Macknay's language program. She said in their area only about six of the adults speak the language. She spoke as a little girl, but was not allowed to speak it at school. She said that is the reason why the younger generation doesn't speak it at all. Kennedy asked her if there are efforts to teach Aleut culture. She said she needs some help with that. She said her husband could also read and write in Aleut at one time.

Chant from the Aleutian Island that accompanies a game. The announcer explains the game.

Liturgical songs

An unidentified person talked about the liturgical songs that are sung in the Orthodox Church.

Liturgical song

An unidentified person said this song is in Slavonic. He translated into English.

Jeff Kennedy said the next traditional Russian Orthodox hymn is sung first in the Kodiak Aleut dialect first and then in English.

Unidentified person speaking in Aleut. He said he used to travel by kayak to Kodiak for supplies. Someone would make a big fire on the beach at Old Harbor. They also did this at other villages. The people would jump over the fire to keep out diseases. He speaks with an unidentified woman in Aleut. She said her mother died when she was a few years old. She was raised by her aunt until she was thirteen.

Jeff Kennedy said next there will be a discussion of the loss of the Aleut language on Kodiak Island. The unidentified person talked about being able to understand Aleut speakers in different places until he got to Sand Point. He talked about the differences in the words. The unidentified person talked about being punished if she spoke Aleut at school. They would be hit on their hands with a ruler. She said when she was a little girl they only spoke Aleut at home. She said now she has to think about using words in her language.