

9/30/86

Main Camp - Mouth of Kateel

She says that summer time they used boats to go from the mouth of the ^oKyukuk River up to the mouth of the Kateel River. Here was their main camp. The trip was ninety miles. Their sleds were kept at their fall camp, the winter camp. Their boats had inboard motors and a scout^u. The scout^u was used for carrying all their winter supplies. Their boat, also, had a tent with a stove in it to cook their meals. This way they did not have to stop anywhere to eat. She says they never lose time traveling.

Madeline says that when they start coming back from winter camp, they gather all their traps, but not all in one day. At each camp, on way back home, they stop for one day in order to gather all their traps. About 25 miles from Kateel they arrive where they have another main cabin with a cache. It is here where they come for their summer. So, after winter camp they go to main camp. But around Easter time they sometimes go to Nulato to spend Easter Sunday there, as that is where the priest is. Afterwards, they go back to ^oKyukuk for more dancing and singing and just to having a real good time.

Spring Camp

In the spring they move^d from ^{winter} fall camp to their spring camp. ~~First, they have to shovel all snow away from their flooring and around it,~~ then they can move all the things they need at spring camp. They need such things as, groceries, dog feed, and at last the boat, which they move when it is really frozen. They will need the boat later to go through a little slough to ^oKyukuk from where they camped.

They then look for more muskrat houses and set their traps. They never lose any time. Everyday they have to be out. And when they go out in canoe they travel at night, all night, until it gets a little dark. Then they make fire and coffee. But as soon as it gets a little light, they go out and shoot muskrat, as many as they want to. There is no limit on how many muskrat they can take. Then, around 6 o'clock in the morning they come home and sleep 4 or 5 hours. Afterwards, they skin and hang all their muskrats. They have a special

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Later the people from ^{the villages} up the Yukon River would come to Koyukuk. They would ~~be~~ also be greeted in the same way. They'd tie all their boats together just before they come out from behind the island across Koyukuk. Then they start shooting. The people in Koyukuk would back in greeting.

Then as the group is crossing the river toward Koyukuk. They start singing and dancing.

(b) After they land they'd still be singing and dancing as they come up the bank.

place for hanging them to keep the dogs from getting at them. Muskrat is real good eating, really fat. The early spring ones are the best for eating, especially if they are still in their houses. The late spring ones are not so good eating, as they have already started swimming. Some that are not so good they give to the dogs. The rest they keep for food.

Later on in spring they move to another spring camp on the Kyukuk River. There they hunt around a little and get ready to go down the Yukon. They put out their fish nets. They catch fish, cut them and dry them for food for themselves and for their dogs. They need lots before going to summer fish camp. Then they start for the Yukon.

The Yukon

On the way to the Yukon they come near the big hill which they call Mineelghaadza'. Here the men start shooting at the hill or just sometimes into the river. The people in Kyukuk hear the shots and answer them also with shooting. They keep shooting until party lands. Everybody happy to see each other. There is great excitement and a real cause for celebration.

The shooting was symbolic of breaking the padlock on winter. There is a white spot on the hill that looks like a padlock. It is this that the men shoot at and sometimes, they just shoot in the river. Everybody ^{are} happy to see each other for they have not seen each other for so long.

As the party comes down Kyukuk River other people join them. Many wait at Kateal for the party to come so they can then begin their journey together to Kyukuk. When the whole party comes near the hill they all stop their motors and begin shooting. All their boats are tied together. They are greeted back with more shooting. ^(a) Some people, from up Yukon, would also come down to ^{Kyukuk} greet them. ^{and they would be greeted the same way}

~~When they arrive,~~ they would see many people lined up on the banks, waiting to receive them. The women are dancing. Their leader, ^(b) Charlie, would be singing and dancing up ahead of the people, leading them to the river bank. There will be days and days and days of having potlatch.

dancing and

Fish Camp

The^a men gather all the logs ^{to make} for ~~the making of~~ the fish wheel. For making a new fish wheel all poles must be new. At the fish camp, they put in their fish nets. They catch ~~more~~ fish for the dogs and for themselves. Always got to feed the dogs. They^b also pitch big tents, that they make themselves out of canvas. Sometimes, they have two big tents in a row. One they use only for sleeping, the other is for cooking and eating.

^{set} After the men finish making the fish wheel, they ~~put~~ ~~it~~ into the river, Next day, the fish wheel is full. The people begin cutting fish right away. They ~~dry it, too.~~ They keep fish wheel running all the time to get as much fish as they can. ^{to} They wash the fish well ^{before cutting them} to keep the flies away. The men cut the fish for the dogs. Only the women ~~can~~ cut the fish that is used for ~~their~~ eating. ^{good} Sometimes, they have night crews that work all night long. Next day, they do it all over again. Getting fish is lots of work. Madeline says that they had a good fish camp. But after she lost her old ^{husband} man, she moved to a different camp, to a camp she now has.

Bishop Mountain

This other camp is at Bishop Mountain. She says it is a nice camp, too. There she catches mostly silver and king salmon. She says she really has to spend her time taking good care of her fish so she can have real good eating fish. She checks ~~around~~ ^{the} smoke house for flies or anything that might bother the fish.

She said that she and her old ~~man~~ use to have a commercial fishing license but she no longer has hers. She turned it over to ^{her} daughter Jennie, and one of her older boys has ~~got~~ one now, too. They have to follow the law real close; keeping the fish ^{the} nets in 3 or 4 days only. But the nets have to be out of the water by 6 pm ^{on the eve of closed days.} The game wardens are always around, so they must be careful. ^(d) They must hang the fish ^{on a drying rack} for a few days before hanging ^(e) them in the smoke house. Every few days, the doors to the fish cache are opened to let in fresh air, so that the fish does not spoil.

Madeline says that after she moved ^{back} to Galena, her boys bring her fish, lots of it. Some of them moved to Kyukuk, and take some fish home with them, too. She says that they ^{also} put up ^{some} salmon bellies ^{salted} and ~~salt the bellies~~. They ^{also} jar ^{half-dried} the king or silver salmons and ~~the~~ strips. They jar as many as they can, cases of them. All her children and all her grandchildren do their own canning. Madeline has been canning for over forty years. Her children can fish for her now as she no longer cans herself.

Smoke House

For smoking fish, they have a smoke house ~~with pipes coming from the stove outside~~. If they have no pipes, then, they make fire inside smoke house. Only a small fire, so as to not make the fish too smokey. The little smoke keep the flies away. The wood they use is dry cottonwood, as it does not flame or burn fast. It gives slow heat to the fish.

Traditionally When they go back to fall camp, they fish on Kyukuk River just like they would ~~on the Yukon during the summer camp~~. ~~On the Kyukuk River, they catch~~ white fish and pikes, which ^{are} are ^{good} good for Indian ice cream. ~~Also,~~ some fish are used for the dogs. Fish ~~tails,~~ heads and eggs are also used for food.

MINOR TOPICS of DISCUSSION

Clothes

Today's clothes are not like clothes in old days. In the old days the clothing was made in the home and were comfortable to the people. They were made to be very warm. Different materials are used today. Animal skins were used in the old days. Back then, the men had traveling boots. These boots were extra big for extra socks and extra clothing. Then they had a pair of boots to wear around camp area and a third pair to wear inside the tent, like slippers. The clothing in the old days was not real heavy. Such as their wolf leggings, which were long boots, were very light. Even the Moose skin leggings were light. Back then the clothes were made to be functional. Everyday clothes

were plain, no fancy designs. Clothes for going to celebration or to go to town were decorated.

How to Treat Others

Madeline states ~~that the advise given from the Elders~~ ^{to young people to} ~~was that one was always~~ ^{advice} to be kind to others. One is not to act as if better than the others. She says that parents talk to them all the time about this. That if, someone needs help, then you must help them if you can. One must respect the Elders, be with them. Always give help if you can, at anytime. She says ~~that's~~ ^{that} what their elders use to tell them. To be kind, especially to others. Always to be friendly and never to argue, with anybody. But nowadays, the kids has other influences in their lives. Drugs. Alcohol. The children mostly don't listen anymore. But she still tries talking to her boys.

Other advise given, was that if ~~someone finds food~~ ⁱⁿ while hunting, they ^{to} can share it with the Elders, as the Elders are not able to ^{hunt} ~~do it~~ for themselves. They are ^{hunters and} always to take good care of the older people. ~~and they~~ ^{trappers} must take good care of the ^{game} ~~food~~ they catch, like wolf and the wolverine- whom they call Doyon, the Big Chief.

Doyon - the Big Chief

When someone catches Doyon ^(wolverine) - the Big Chief, ~~everyone~~ ^{the men and} ~~is~~ called together. Canvas is laid out on the floor. Here on top of the canvas ^{sits} ~~is laid~~ Doyon with a red hankerchief around his neck, ^{propped against the wall} ~~Only men there now around the wolverine.~~ Young boys are ^{asked} ~~sent~~ to join them so that they will have luck later in their lives. ^{women don't participate in} ~~No women there. No women go.~~ ^{this} ~~But~~ all those who ~~do~~ come bring some food to eat. Then the men and young boys eat ~~everything up.~~ Afterwards they ~~skin~~ the wolverine, ^{is skinned,}

A Powerful Spirit

If someone kills wolverine for someone else then he must be ~~repaid~~ for it. The wolverine has a powerful spirit. The People call this ^{with a} biyee koolaaah. So, if ^{someone} ~~someone's~~ trap ~~has~~ wolverine caught in it and it still ~~lives~~ ^{is} ~~alive~~ ^{lives a life}

and it looks like it might run away with the trap, then, ~~if someone comes along and sees this~~, he may kill the wolverine. ~~But~~ ^{He} must then go and tell the owner of the trap that he did this. Now the owner of the trap ~~pay~~ pays the man for his deed for the Spirit of the wolverine is very powerful.

Madeline talks of a story she has heard long ago about a man in Kaltag who used to go over to Unakleet all the time. This man liked a certain girl but the girl's father would not give up his daughter to any man. Nobody could have this man's daughter. Then one day the man from Kaltag was going to Unakleet and on the way ^{he} saw a wolverine in a trap dragging it. So he followed the wolverine, then he killed it and hung it up. Then he went ^{on} his way to Unakleet and ^{reported} ~~told~~ of what he did. The trap happen to belong to the man with the daughter. This man then said to the Kaltag man, "What do you want so that I can ~~pay~~ pay you for what you have done?" The Kaltag man answered, ~~saying~~, "I want nothing else, but only your daughter." So the Unakleet man had to give his daughter to this man.

^{vul} ~~The~~ wolverine pelts are very valuable. They ^{are} ~~can be~~ used for ^{trimming} ~~trimming~~ on parkas especially for women's parkas. It is the same ^{with} for the wolf skins. In the olden days, whatever the people would catch they bring it home and keep it in the house for one day. They ~~may~~ sometimes skin it ^{the} same day ^{they} but they ~~take~~ ^{are brought home,} ~~meat~~ ^{must keep} of animal and hang it in the house for one day or over night. But ~~now~~ ^{this is not practiced nowadays} ~~adays~~, no more. Now they just skin the animal and hang ~~its~~ ^{meat} outdoors. Not the same anymore. Here Madeline talks of how hard it is to get bear meat and beaver meat, ^{especially} for ^{when people} they long ago did not know how to set traps. For the bear meat it was hard to hunt.

Respect for the Animals

The men really try hard to look for bears when hunting. Only the men hunt for bear. When they catch and kill a bear the men are the only ones to handle its meat. Women are not allowed to touch its meat. Young girls especially are not to ^{handle} ~~touch~~ it. That is the way it was long ago. When they have bear ^{meat at a} for potlatch then they have to really take care in its

preparation for the potlatch. The blood of the bear must never be allowed to spill upon the floor. Otherwise, they will never catch the bear again. So great care had to be taken when cutting up bear so no blood drips to the floor.

The People also had taken special pre caution for the wolf and wolverine. Long ago, they use to burn up ~~the~~ ^{the carcass} ~~meat~~ of the wolf and wolverine. ^a The people never ate the meat of these two animals. They ~~would burn the meat way~~ out where nobody goes. This is how they treated the wolf and wolverine. These animals have very spe cial power and so must be treated in certain ways so that their spirit be respected. If such care not given, the People believed that they can get arthr^{itis} as a result of such acts, ~~as to the eating of the meat of the wolf or wolverine.~~

The People are governed by their thoughts about such things. They have certain beliefs about their tools, even. Such as they believe that their snares have a certain power about them. So no one takes food from another mans' trap or snare. One can ask another for food. But one can not just take food from another mans' snare without bringing harm or bad luck to himself. This is the way the People are. They believed that you can get sickness from taking from anothers' snare. They call this biyeega kooloonh. They do not know why certain things have certain power about them. They only know that those things do have power and they respect this.

When the men are out hunting the beaver it is especially then that the women must not go with another man because the beaver will find a way to tell on her. That is what they believed.

Today's session is ended with a brief discussion on the chores of tanning caribou and moose hides. They talk ^{ed} a little about ~~the sink of~~ the brains that are used in the process and the smell of smoke. It was a very lengthy but educational session today. We thank you Madeline Solomon.

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out in the
woods
where people
don't go.