

ANS 401: Knowledge of Native Elders  
 Elders in Residence: Madeline Solomon  
 Notes for October 14, 1986 by Lorita Pingayak  
 NOVEMBER

Madeline Solomon told different stories today and also talkded about different traditional medicines. Other topics discussed were the men and women roies, camping, and good and bad luck.

Madeline mentioned that people long ago believed in birds being human. There are all kinds of stories and songs about birds. She sung one song which has to do with the robin singing day and night Song meaning: " My brother-in-law told me to swallow pike guts." She said that when the robins are singing that is what they are singing. Different villages have different sayings for songs. This one particular song may have different words to it. Another bird, White-Crown sparrow's song is imitated and the song says: "(the bird) misses its home." *Dzo do'o sikits'eteeet'et.*

Madeline sang another song and told the story along with the it. The story is about a young boy who lived with his grandmother. The boy was asked to get wood and cut them. The boy had on fish clothing ( boots and parka ). Instead of getting wood he ate his fish clothing. Returning he repeatedly dropped a stick pretending he had gotten wood as his grandmother had instructed. (He layed lazily while eating his fish clothing)

His grandmother stabbed him in the ear with an awl. This was repeated, for he kept coming back after she had thrown him out. Fimally she cut him up and cooked him. started singing: "The water is boiling my little finger". The grandmother then cut him up and killed him. Madeline said that the boy turned into a bird and sings: " My grandmother stabbed me in the ear with an awl ". The birds name in English is fox sparrow.

Another bird story that has a song to it is about an orphaned girl whose brothers, sisters and relatives ail died. She was sad and alone. She started crying. Song says that she was lonesome for her brothers. You can hear the bird singing during the summer time, *wheat ear.*

This one story, told by Madeline, is a long story and has dif-

ferent parts to it. She will only tell one part. It is about a man who travelled all winter and all summer to different animal and bird communities. The Athabaskan name for <sup>d</sup>the man is: "K'itataalkkaan" He travelled by canoe. Upon seeing the cache he stopped near it. He saw on the other side of the river a Mink probably going to the cache.

The man ~~caught~~ <sup>shot</sup> the mink with his arrow which had a string attached to it. The man use to play tricks on the animals or birds. The arrow head was stuck on the mink's leg. She (mink) started screaming and hollering towards the camp which was just around the bend of the river. She did not know what hit her on the leg but whatever it was hurt her.

When she arrived she told the ~~minks~~ <sup>others</sup> what was wrong. Then the different medicine people examined her and found nothing, and therefore could not help her. The man who shot the arrow kept pulling the string and made her scream. The string <sup>and arrow</sup> was made to be invisible so the minks did not see what was making the lady mink scream and holler.

So, having had unsuccessful attempts to heal her, the ~~minks~~ <sup>different</sup> ~~turned to~~ <sup>bird people started to work on her</sup> the chickadee medicine man <sup>was the first one</sup> to help her. The chickadee sang while making medicine. He tried helping her but nothing happened. The owl tried but with no success. Another small boreal owl tried and he was also unsuccessful. So one person finally said that they cannot help her, <sup>but</sup> and said that <sup>a</sup> the man was coming early in the morning to help.

The lights started shining on K'itataalkkaan. He heard one of the medicine men saying, someone was coming to help. The man came down to their camp <sup>in the morning</sup>. One of them told him that there was a woman that was hurt yesterday and they couldn't help her. He was asked if he could help. He then said if they all tried everything that he may not help her too, but asked them to bring her any way. They brought her to him and when she saw him she said that that was the man who hurt her, and insisting that he was the one. The man than said that the lady (mink) did not know what she was talking about and to ignore her.

He made medicine to heal her and got his arrow back. The lady mink, having been healed, started running and yelled that she got her leg back.

There are at least 22-24 parts to this story and this is one part Madeline told. The Inupiaq's also have a similar story.

The man turned himself into different things in other parts of the story. In this part he was a man.

#### Womens role:

Women trapped and had their own traplines apart from men. They also gathered wood. She cooks and make clothing for whole family. Women and children snared for ptarmigan and put nets in the river and fish hooks and net under the ice in the winter. They made ~~ap~~ part of the snow shoe- filling of snow shoe and cutting of babeesh (sp?) which is gotten from the caribou skin. The women also cut and put eating fish away. There are other things they do also.

#### Mens roles:

Men did all the skinning and stretching. They also made snow shoe frames, and cut fish for the dogs and sometimes eating fish. The snow shoes were discussed and the middle area which is thicker is called the Romain, Roman~~n~~. And the Babeesh (sp.?) is the thinner part. The men also put fish wheel and getting smoke wood. There

#### Camping:

Usually when people went camping they would buy groceries which sometimes cost about \$7-\$800 dollars. and sometimes costed more if families were to stay for a long time. They would pay for whatever they bought through credit from furs that they caught during the time they were at camps. Furs that were left over usually went to buy more groceries.

#### Traditional Medicine:

Pitch was used for cuts, sores, etc. Tree tops of different types of trees were cut and cooked for colds and used to bathe children. Thorn bushes, high bush cranberry bush <sup>tops</sup> were also added to the other tree tops. Madeline said that the cranberries were good for ones health, she has heard that they were good for the kidney's. Different types of leafs were chewed and applied to the bee sting area. King salmon heads were dried and put in oven to extract their oil and were used for sores. Fish oil was saved for cooking also. Fish ~~entrails~~ are cooked to extract the oil and used to fry bisquits and for Indian snow ice-cream.

entrails

Good Luck:

Madeline said that everyone desired the good luck more than the bad. And people try to avoid bad luck as much as possible. People are considered to have good luck through catching game and to avoid bad luck they take care of whatever they catch with extra care. If you did not take care of big game, especially bear or others which are hard to catch, you could have bad luck. Madeline mentioned that bad luck could last sometimes for 20 years. It mostly depends on how you take care of game caught or when making things.

Two stories:

Madeline told two stories: One about a man that didn't have anything to do with women, and the other about a woman who turned into a mouse.

In the first story the man did not have anything to do with women. He never wanted to get married. He kept leaving his snowshoe frames on the porch roof. Some lady made the string on the frames. When the man saw the work done he examined it and saw a knot and he did not like the work, so he cut the strings out. There were several women that did this and he didn't like the work that they did. There was a young orphaned girl living with her grandmother. She asked her if she could put strings on the snowshoes but her grandmother told her that she shouldn't because she is orphaned. On night, <sup>like</sup> young girl stayed up and made the snowshoe <sup>babish</sup> out of mouse <sup>tail</sup> sinew, twisted <sup>ing it</sup> evenly.

The man got up and checked on the snowshoes and examined them. The <sup>e</sup>babish was all neatly twisted and even. He like whoever made the strings and looked for the women.

He finally found her. The grandmother was very surprised at her. She thought she could not make the strings perfectly. He got married to her.

The other story Madeline told is about the woman who picked berries all day and piled the berries in front of the door of her house. She had lots of houses. One day while she was picking berries she got hungry so she went home to one of her many houses. When she

arrived and saw that her house had burned. So she went to another one of her houses and got ready to eat. She noticed that she had forgotten her tooth, so she went to get it where she had left it. It had been in the crack of the house where <sup>it</sup> had burnt down.

While she was on her way to her old house she sang a song.  
English translation meaning: " I'm going down to get my burned teeth."  
She found it at the crack where she left it and put it in her mouth and went home. From there she became a MOUSE.