

Knowledge of Native Elders
Elder in Residence: ISA SOVALIK

November 11, 1986 - Veronica Jones

The first topic discussed in class were star formations which Isa learned from her mother. Examples were the Big Dipper or tuttugruk meaning something resembling a caribou. It was used as a focal point for coming of light. The 3 stars forming Orion's belt are tuvaatchiat meaning hunters. A cluster of stars is called paatchuktuurat or scramble for goods.

Isa told a legend about the aurora or kiuguya. It is said that people in the kiuguya used a person's head as a football. They used to holler and whistle to get the kiuguya to come closer, then run home thinking of the legend. To make the kiuguya retreat, they would throw dog excrements at it. There is a song associated with the calling of the kiuguya which goes:

NORTHERN LIGHTS SONG

Kiugakii kiugakii
aanngiyaanngiyaa
Qalutaqpignna qalutaqpignna

Isa said that they predicted the weather by observing clouds and moon. They knew it was going to be windy when the clouds are sort of straight called anuqqak (sign of storm) and when there are rings around the moon.

One of the spring activities Isa used to do was egg gathering with her older sisters. They enjoyed this because the birds would swoop down on them. When they were younger they used to sneak up on smaller birds and tried to trap them, but didn't bother the eggs. When they went hunting with the men they would cook the birds caught by the men.

The adult games were to show strength, skill and determination. The games they played are qitiq̄iḡmik 'middle finger pulling' and taliḡmik 'arm pulling'. The man who won most of the games was known to be the strongest man in that area.

Long ago there was a building called the "gargi" where the men made things like tools, and where they spend alot of their time. The women would bring food to the men. Isa had not seen this herself but have heard of it. She also mentioned the word gargi was in alot of their legends.

The last topic discussed in class was the kinds of fish they caught and shared and where they were caught.

Sulukpaugaq	grayling	caught in the rivers in the fall
Iqalukpik	salmon	caught on the rivers and around Prudoe Bay
Iqalugaq	tomcat	caught in the ocean in the fall and spring
Kanayuq	sculpin	caught around Barrow
Tittaaliq	burbot	
Nataagnaq	flounder or halibet	