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[side one]

Margaret Eskilida [ME]: Last week we talk about ghosts. Somebody ask question about ghosts. We have that ghost; we call it [gives Athabascan name]. And then we call this other one something like [gives Athabascan name]. Like shadow or--you can see ghosts sometimes. That's what we call [gives Athabascan name], the person's still alive. [Gives Athabascan name] means "after death." They come back and you hear them after this. Before this [gives Athabascan name] we call it. You hear noise. Sometimes we hear noise like dishes or somebody walking. And when there's nobody, that means people going to [inaudible]. And then after this somebody get killed with gun or something. Then they come back. You can hear them, too. Then they come in and walk around, make noise. That's what we call ghosts. Other one, too, we call it that way but [gives Athabascan name], in our way we got two words for it.

Eliza Jones [EJ]: So, spirits of living people is like [gives Athabascan word]?

ME: Yeah, uh huh.

EJ: And spirits of dead people is called [gives Athabascan word]?

ME: [Repeats Athabascan word]. That shows people really got a life after death. You not just die. If you hear something like

that--one time [inaudible] dead body was in--what they call the old church that was in church, Chitina? They put the body in there, and this boy was--he died from the electric wire was open. He grabbed it. He was about seventeen years old or something like that. And he died right there. Then they put him in the church. That time no doctor, nobody. They don't take him nowhere. That night I see the church next door got no lights. They used to have them floats, you know what I mean, for the church? They have a light like oil.

EJ: Oh, uh huh. They keep lights there all the time?

ME: Yeah, all the time. It's never shut off, that thing. Got cork or something right in there. It's burning all the time. And that night I look over there. That light was gone. Then we went--that boy [that] take care of that church, he don't want to go over there alone. It's dark. So we went with him. There was no electric lights. And he light it again. It shouldn't be turned over no way, you know, itself. And we went back out there again. In a little while, few minutes, it went out again. And look window, no light again. I told that boy again, "There's no light out there." So we went out there about third time, light it. And it's gone again a few minutes after. Then he say, "No, I'm not going to light it no more." Just leave it. I think why, I think this boy was died from that electric light. You know, maybe just don't want it light in there. So that's what [gives Athabascan name] means, you know. After death. We get our ghost, whatever.

EJ: Do people see spirits more often of [gives Athabascan name] when people die suddenly, like accidents and stuff?

ME: Uh huh, yeah. They don't see much, but they see a noise or

something like that what happened. This is what I see, what I tell you. And I hear that same guy, that night, when he got the electricity [and] dies. We was really quiet at twelve o'clock at night. We hear somebody running. Nobody around. And you can hear it right through that door, like, coming. Everybody--all the other young kids got scared. That shows me that after death is life. That is true.

[Gives Athabascan name], that one is you see, you know, before death, you see that. Sometime you see that just a little while. You know that person. You can see it, but then it's gone. Then you know what you see is [gives Athabascan name].

EJ: Oh, okay. So [gives Athabascan name] is when you see somebody when he's not really in the spot.

ME: No, uh uh. Yeah you see that kind. I saw that one time, too. In this hospital we work, I come back in from--I come out elevator. I go back in there. There's through that door and window I see that white woman work with us. I see she just stand like that against that conduit. I thought she came over already. I know she was still over there where we eat. After I come in, there was nothing. Then she died, three months after. We didn't know she had cancer. We didn't know. Few days before she gone, then they find out. That's [gives Athabascan word] before we knew, before they gone. You people don't have it [inaudible]?

EJ: Um hmm, yeah.

ME: That kind of stuff is what everybody--if you know it from some place else like Nome or somewhere, you know, people start telling that. They going to tell something, too. [inaudible] I don't know where--it must have been from long time, way back. I don't

know where we get it from. Story is maybe from two thousand years ago. We don't know. I think all the stories is coming that way. Now it's getting gone. You know, all the old generation people is just getting gone. Just like they don't even know anymore. Like my age is getting funny. Maybe kids don't listen, don't behave, and don't pay attention. Or I don't know why they don't tell anymore. I'm telling you, my tongue's really going all the time.

EJ: Maybe it's because there's just--see long time ago there was just the family and, you know, you didn't worry about going to movies or TV and stuff like that. Today I think there's too many things going on.

ME: Yeah. That TV's really--that's something that. Oh, you can't tell them this. Then they're going to see another thing, you know. There just going to laugh and laugh. Forget all our [inaudible]. Oh, they listen sometimes. When we have a class. That's why I start this class. Dance, you know. All that kind of stuff. Get away from that TV and all other things. I don't know if we'll ever make it back. Some of them really listen. Like that girl, Barbara's daughter, she's pretty good. She don't pay attention what's going on. She want to learn back like old traditional. You know Barbara James [inaudible]? Yeah, that's her family. She was queen down that--what you call it--Polk? What was that now, what date made queen there? You know, Billie?

Student: She went down Saturday morning and came at the festival, and she [inaudible] queen Saturday afternoon, and she came back Saturday night.

ME: Yeah, she got it. I was in Anchorage then. I was going to go down there, too, but something happened to us, so [inaudible].

Student: They're going to have another one up here, Maggie.

ME: Up here?

Student: Yeah, [inaudible] is coming up for that.

ME: Oh, when was that?

Student: When is that? I think in May.

ME: May month, huh?

Student: Yeah.

ME: Yeah, there's going to be a lot of things go yet, I guess.

Student: Yeah, in May. Or in April [inaudible].

EJ: Anybody have a question about ghosts?

ME: About ghosts, yeah.

EJ: How about things like long ago, like seeing falling stars, and things like that, meant something. Did you have things like that?

ME: No, not falling stars. I don't think so.

EJ: Do you see falling stars down there?

ME: Yeah. We see them. One time there's one, they call it meteor or something, it falls down not too far from us. Chitina. Oh, that thing got big [inaudible]. It just drop and shake the ground.

EJ: But you don't have anything--stories about that?

ME: No, uh uh. That's the only time that happen, I guess. I never heard.

EJ: Um hum. How about things like--around home we say things like the owls and stuff can talk.

ME: Yeah, owls can talk. Yeah.

EJ: Yeah, could you tell us some stories about that?

ME: Yeah, they tell people what's going to happen, too. I don't really quite understand owls, but I don't know what to tell. The old Indians, they know what owls say. Somebody's going to get hurt or die, or something. It tells them. And if some animal is going to be killed, moose or something, it tells them, too.

EJ: Do you know what it say when...

ME: Uh uh. They just tell story about it.

EJ: We used to hear when we used to stay in camp, they say things like--once I heard it say something like [Athabascan spoken], and they said that means that they were going to catch something like, you know, game.

ME: Yeah, it's what they mean, I think, too. Like [Athabascan spoken] or something, maybe that means something. Animal is going to be killed. He talk that way, they say.

EJ: Yeah, it means you're going to eat that [inaudible] [laughs]. [inaudible]. But more often, people don't like to hear it when it talks because a lot of time that means [inaudible]...

ME: Right.

EJ: It's real scary.

ME: What?

Student: They try to destroy them.

ME: Yeah.

Student: I heard stories about that.

ME: Yeah. Too many people nowadays, the younger people, you know, don't believe it. And the kids is start now, too. Somebody say maybe something, now, that's not true. They don't want to let kids know, too. And then they learn different way. But it's true long time ago. I believe that old people, you know, what they say. Nobody questions about [inaudible]?

Student: [inaudible] hearing a fox bark.

ME: What?

Student: A fox, you know. When a fox is barking in the springtime or...

ME: Oh, I don't know that.

EJ: [inaudible]. You know how a fox, they bark excited sometime when they got rabies and stuff. You never hear anything like that?

ME: No, uh uh. No, I don't know. I don't know if they have that long time, too. I never heard about rabies until I grew up. I never heard nothing like that. The dog, nothing.

EJ: When I was a child [inaudible] just have to be careful of it in the winter. They used to warn us about it, because when they get rabies, they get real tame like, so the...

ME: Uh huh, they say fox carry it too, but I don't know that. I never heard nothing like that. Just when I grow up is when I

notice that about rabies. Never heard anything happen [inaudible].

EJ: Do you want to show some of those pictures and tell some things about them?

Student: Do you have any stories about like if you catch animals that are sea animals that don't usually live in the river, do you have any stories about that being bad luck?

ME: In the river?

EJ: Um hum, like if they...

Student: Like if you catch a seal in the river in your net, your fishing net.

ME: Oh.

Student: [inaudible] do you have anything like that?

ME: Uh uh, we don't have seal or--all we got in there, river, is fish. That's about all we got down there. We got beaver, but we never did catch that in a net, either. We don't have a net, you know, like old dipnet is what we have.

EJ: Oh, you fish with dip nets? Oh, what you call a dip net?

ME: [Gives Athabascan name].

EJ: [Repeats Athabascan name].

ME: Yeah, that's a roots dip net, you know. I talk about it last week. That's what we got. We don't have a real net, you know, like put in the water. Just...

Student: Because back home [inaudible] his mom told him that old

people say it was bad luck. But he didn't go to the old people and ask them what to do. And then he died.

EJ: Where are you from?

Student: He was from Unalakleet, but I'm from [inaudible].

EJ: Oh.

Student: And some of the older people said that he just put the seal back in the boat, and then they said that he should have used it all instead of doing that.

ME: This is moose skin here. They draw. And we all do the same thing to it. I don't know where these picture come from but...

EJ: I think it was taken in Canada.

ME: Canada, yeah. We do same thing, that stretching. Make a stick around.

EJ: That's how you dry the skin?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. And sometime what we do, we don't have nothing like that, but sheep skin or caribou, then we pinned it to the ground. Summertime.

EJ: With pegs?

ME: Yeah. Stick. That way it dry faster. Stretch it down there.

EJ: So this is--they're stretching it with the rope around...

ME: Yeah, uh huh. They always have that rawhide, you know. They got that. They make nice rope out of it. Rawhide. I don't really know what they doing on here. This is...

EJ: Yeah. Maybe you could tell us a little about that rabbit parka. How they make the parka.

ME: Yeah. [inaudible].

EJ: Maybe you could tell us about the [gives Athabascan name].

ME: Oh yeah. What you call it? Oh [gives Athabascan name] we call it. Just a baby just hanging like that. We have a baby birch basket. Real good. And then that baby just, you know, rope. Three corners, hanging. We call it [gives Athabascan name]. Another one we call it, like hammock, we call it [gives Athabascan name].

EJ: Is it something like this? [draws on blackboard]

ME: Yeah. Uh huh. That's [gives Athabascan name] we call it. Right. The other one is hammock. They know that. Yeah.

EJ: Yeah, sort of [laughs]. They get the idea.

ME: Yeah, this one is right.

EJ: And what you call this one?

ME: [Gives Athabascan name]. That what we use that baby. We got --put the baby in there and just swing.

EJ: How am I doing Jim?

James Kari [JK]: Oh, it's spelling.

EJ: Spelling.

JK: Yeah, it's double "i". The first "i" is double [inaudible].

EJ: Like that? Oh, they have double "i's" in them?

JK: Yeah, then put the [inaudible] and the "e" after the...

EJ: [Gives Athabascan name].

ME: [Repeats Athabascan name], yeah.

EJ: Uh huh. And then this other one--so you had this one like this, too, where you have double rows.

ME: Yeah, double rows, too. It's thick.

EJ: And then you put blanket...

ME: Blanket, um hmm.

EJ: Wrap blanket around the double rows of--overlapping on the bottom. And then you put stick across right here, like that. And what you call this one?

ME: [Gives Athabascan name]. No, I mean [gives Athabascan name] [laughs].

EJ: And this...

ME: [Gives Athabascan name]. That's just a rabbit skin coat.

EJ: Uh huh, and how did you make--did you have parkas like that?

ME: Yeah, we used to make it. Tan it. Tan that rabbit skin. We do it with our hand. Just rubbed it. We put soap on it and rubbed it and rubbed it. Get it soft. Then we cut it. That strong part back. We sew it together. And make parka like that for kids.

EJ: So you put the pieces together?

ME: Put together. Sew it together. Come like that. Then we line

it up with cloth, flannel cloth, I think. But it was long time-- old days got kids keep warm. Making everything with lining. Rabbit skin mitten, too, we got.

EJ: So there would be a rabbit skin lining inside that moose skin mittens?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. Moose skin mittens.

EJ: And with the fur turned in?

ME: Turned in, yeah.

EJ: So the rabbit skin, after it's twisted together--okay, something like that [draws on blackboard].

ME: Yeah, uh huh. Right.

EJ: Then you put--lay like cloth over it, and then quilt that fabric to it. And that keeps it from--because rabbit skin is so fragile.

ME: Yeah, they tear easy.

EJ: It makes it last longer. And did you used to sometimes use the parka with the fur inside, too?

ME: Uh huh. Yeah, then you got to cover with something outside.

EJ: Uh huh. Again you put the [inaudible] over it?

ME: Yeah, right.

EJ: So the [inaudible] is the cloth parka. Put that over it.

ME: Now here's something. That stick hanging down to that fire.

A long time old timers they don't have a wire. Just one wire

there. Now we do this way. Wire. And this one is stick poked in there.

Student: They have a [inaudible] to tie it.

ME: Um hmm. Yeah, they tie it up with brush also [inaudible]. We used to use that lot, too, when we camping. Now we use wire. Them days they use hook. [Gives Athabascan name] we call it. [Repeats Athabascan name].

EJ: [Repeats Athabascan name].

ME: Yeah, [repeats Athabascan name]. We put bucket on. It's camping stuff that kind. Even home they used to do that, too. Here's one is that sap they use from birch. All down that way we use cotton trees. Big cotton trees. We skin it and then they took it out with spoons or table knife, something, you know. They scrape it. They can fill a bucket after tree--this is birch tree here. This lady got that knife.

Student: What do you use the sap for?

ME: Eat it. They eat it. It's real sweet.

EJ: So that would be cotton tree then, eh?

ME: Uh huh. Cotton tree is what we use.

EJ: What time of year is this?

ME: June 20 'til last of month. That's when we do that.

EJ: So you peel the tree, and you peel the pulp from inside the bark, huh?

ME: No, we scrape the tree.

EJ: Oh, you scrape the tree?

ME: Uh huh. Got lot of sap in there. It's thick in there, under. Use knife and you fill the bucket [inaudible]. Those are good for kids. It's good vitamins. Those days we don't have--we got to use everything like that. It's really good.

EJ: What about willows? You know, those willows in the spring?

ME: Willows good, too. It don't have a sap much like cotton tree. It's good. We use that, too. But it's not very much. In summer time that willow--there's some soft, fresh leaves come out, you know. They eat that one. At the top where it's...

EJ: The shoots where it's the new growth?

ME: Yeah, the top is really soft and crunchy. They used to eat that. It was all good vitamins. That people know, you know, what's good.

These are all Canada. Here's the salmon. They must have get it from the lake. [inaudible] You ask any questions? Anything you want to know?

Student: Do they use birch bark for baby carriers, too?

ME: Birch bark?

Student: Baby carriers. You know, the kind they carry on their back.

ME: We used birch bark. Yeah, the baby in there and they got rope. Make like, you know, where that foot goes through. And they use blanket on that.

Student: I've seen that.

ME: Yeah. Birch is used for everything. Snowshoes, baby carrier, and that basket to use for food. Lots of things. Like I say last time, they used to cook in there, too, you know. In the ground. With rocks. No bucket, no [inaudible]. That was long time ago.

EJ: You know, around home they said they used to have baby carriers called [gives Athabascan word] and I was wondering if you had anything like that? What did the birch...

ME: [Gives Athabascan word] we call it. Baby carrier.

EJ: Baby carrier. Was it [draws on blackboard]--the one I'm trying to think of around home was something like that. And they put stove ashes on the bottom. And then something else and then moss.

ME: Moss, yeah we used that moss. And then fine grass.

EJ: Oh, okay. So where do you put the fine--oh!

ME: Right, on top that moss.

EJ: Okay, so there's--there'd be stove ashes right here, moss right here, and then fine grass.

ME: We just used moss and grass we used.

EJ: Oh, either moss or grass.

ME: Uh huh. No, we don't use ashes on it.

EJ: You don't use ashes. Okay, so you just use grass or moss.

ME: Uh uh, just put moss on it. Um hmm. Then grass on top.

EJ: Oh! Okay. So you use moss in the bottom and then grass over that. And then the baby sits on there. I guess this is what parents had to do when they were traveling and stuff because there was no Pampers [laughs].

ME: Yeah, that grass they throw it away.

EJ: Um hmm. So when they change the baby...

ME: They always got new one. Nice clean.

EJ: This grass they picked, did they pick it from around certain kind of grass?

ME: Yeah, nice soft grass they pick.

EJ: From around spruce trees?

ME: Yeah. No, not from spruce trees, just from the ground.

EJ: Just from the ground?

ME: Yeah. Nice grass we find. We pick it.

EJ: There are some, you know, those real tall grass. Those they didn't use because it's too...

ME: Too hard, yeah.

EJ: ...too hard.

ME: They used the short ones.

EJ: Um hmm. And there's short bladed grass that are very soft. Did you used to use those? We used those for insoles, too, around home.

ME: Yeah, uh huh. Right. Put it the [inaudible].

EJ: Those were good insoles for this time of year because they...

ME: They keep dry, too. You don't get wet quick.

EJ: And they can--you know, if they don't wear out you can dry it real fast. So you think that's about the right shape, right there, for the...

ME: Yeah, that's just about [inaudible]. You used birch there, birch [inaudible]? People want me to make it, but then my hands is getting bad.

EJ: Oh, it's hard for you to work with your...

ME: Yeah, I wish I had that to show, really. But now I have to dig roots, you know, and it's getting hard. The arthritis I got.

EJ: What kind of place do you pick roots from?

ME: Birch.

EJ: Do you pick birch roots?

ME: No.

EJ: Spruce?

ME: Spruce. You've got to have rough bottom ground. If you just start digging in that ground, like any kind of ground, then they go straight down.

EJ: They go straight down?

ME: Yeah. You need a rock bottom ground, then you got...

EJ: Then it's in a circle and spread out?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. You just pull it and pull it out.

EJ: And if the roots are kind of big, do you split it?

ME: Yeah, split it. Sometimes you split it. Just take outside, take inside out. Use it outside, too.

EJ: And that's what you use to sew baskets.

ME: Yeah, sew. They get dry, too. They hang it up.

EJ: Can you soak it?

ME: You soak it, yeah. Warm water. It's really soft again. They can keep long time. Birch, too. You can keep it. Then when you need it, you could put it in the water.

EJ: The birch bark?

ME: Uh huh. You still sew it and make things out of it.

EJ: I used to see my grandma, when she makes the birch bark, too, sometimes she heat it, warm it up a little bit, and it's softer that way.

ME: Uh huh. We used to do that for, too, like, let's say, the corner.

EJ: To bend the corners.

ME: They don't cut it down, you know. They just lay it over, yeah. They warm it up, make it easier. We got the spruce tree, too, that we warm it up and get softer. Now this is what this summer they want me to do, that kind of stuff, too. They want me to put that in the ground, and they want to see that [inaudible]. I got to show that, too. They going to help. They want to help

that.

[side two]

ME: They wanted to know how we used to make fire. We have to get something from that birch. Now we use birch again. Something grow way up there, maybe that big. You know some black--oh, what you call that fungus or something? It's a little bit different from that. But this one is a little bit look like burned already. We're going to cut this...

EJ: It's that black kind?

ME: Yeah, black kind.

EJ: What do you call it in your language?

ME: [laughs] What do you call that? What do you call it [inaudible].

EJ: [laughs] I forgot, too!

ME: Oh, it's really hard sometimes, you know, to remember all them things.

EJ: What is it? [Gives Athabascan name]? Let's see.

JK: [Gives Athabascan name].

ME: [Repeats Athabascan name], yeah, that's the one.

EJ: Okay, so it's the black fungus.

ME: Yeah, that's--yeah. And we get them anytime. Winter time or--bring it, split it, and dry it. Real dry. Yeah, dry it. Then they use some kind of drill they make. I never see that, really,

yet, that drill too. They say they have a rope. Yeah, maybe that back and forth. That make the drill go. That kind they use. But, then, another thing they use is rocks. Some really white rocks. You got to know what kind, too. Two white rocks. And just [inaudible] the thing when it dries. You just lay it down, and you got that rocks. If you just, you know, go like that that spark come out. You have to do it fast. And spark come out and get on. You got to use blanket over. In the dark you got to do it. You got to see a spark go down there and get it started. That's what they want to do this summer.

EJ: Some of the stories we hear about at home with that--sometimes they carry the fire along with them, and they burn this [gives Athabaskan name]. Yeah, and they carry it in--when they move they carry it in some kind of container. And then, when they make camp, they put it wherever they're going to make a fire. Did you have...

ME: Yeah, they don't shut off, them days.

EJ: Did you have any stories like that?

ME: Yeah, they just--not burn fire, but they move just...

EJ: Uh huh, it smolders. Yeah.

ME: Slow, yeah. They just carry it. I don't know how they used to carry it long time ago. Maybe in a birch bark or whatever. Some kind of bark, maybe. But that's long ways to carry fire, you just can't....

EJ: Uh huh, did you use the [gives Athabaskan name], I mean the tree punk for anything else?

ME: No, that's all I...

EJ: You never used it for mosquito...

ME: No, uh uh.

EJ: We used them around home for...

ME: Smokers...

EJ: Yeah, for keep mosquitoes--they're real strong though, if you have to...

ME: Yeah, that's why they don't...

EJ: You have to--we use it on the porch, 'cause if you use it in the house, it'll get too strong.

ME: Yeah, too strong. That's why, I think, they don't use it.

[inaudible] We used to use the leaves. Burn all the leaves. That helps. You burn it. You got to watch out, too. Long time ago, they know what's no good, you know? But that thing you breathes with it too much...

EJ: You get a headache.

ME: Yeah. [inaudible] They know what its like, you know. Now we read everything, you know, what's no good, you know. Those days they know by what's bad. Poison ivy, everything they know. I never heard nobody, you know, just eat something bad and die. 'Cause they tell kids, not to bother nothing. That's where the [Athabaskan word spoken] comes from [inaudible]. All that kind of stuff. Well, anything else you guys want to [inaudible]?

EJ: We can take a short break if you want too. Do you want water?

ME: No.

[class resumes after break]

ME: ...[gives Athabascan word] like last time we talk about?

Student: So is that--after that year, then, they could get married?

ME: Well, maybe few years, that's okay. Whenever they want to get married.

EJ: What about long time ago, did the parents say who the girl is going to marry? Or the boys are going to marry?

ME: Well, they used to get the ones that training. The boys got training, too. Training, you know. Hunting, and everything that's whatever. [inaudible] learning. That's what they did for them. And married them.

EJ: Okay, so the parents say who the girl is going to marry?

ME: Uh huh. Yeah, right. They have to that time. They got to--not like now, you know, just marry anybody. Just got to have a family to raise, got to help. They got to know what to do.

EJ: So who decides--did the parents of the girl and the parents of the boy decide?

ME: Well, the parents decided and then the girl okay. She know that too. The girl's got to know. That's what we've been training, too.

EJ: Okay, so the girl marries whoever the parents tell them that they're going to marry?

ME: Uh huh, yeah. That's why we have a tribe, too, you know. All

the Caribou tribe and the Eagle tribe. I am Eagle tribe. All my grandchildren, they're all Eagle tribe.

EJ: Um hmm. So what you call your...

ME: They got to marry other tribes then, the Eagle. Caribou tribe and Crow tribe. There's a difference...

EJ: Uh huh, so what do you call the Eagles?

ME: Eagle? [Gives Athabascan name].

EJ: Huh?

ME: [Repeats Athabascan name].

EJ: [Repeats Athabascan name]? Okay, that's the Eagles.

ME: The other one is [gives Athabascan name].

EJ: [Repeats Athabascan name]?

ME: Uh huh, Caribou tribe.

EJ: [inaudible]

JK: It's an "s". It's u-z-i-s-y-u.

EJ: B-...

JK: "U", instead of b-e, it's "u". [Repeats Athabascan name].

EJ: [Repeats Athabascan name]?

ME: Yeah.

EJ: Oh! Like that?

ME: [Gives Athabascan name] is caribou.

JK: Yeah, no "e" there. Just a "u".

EJ: Oh, just "u"? [laughs]

JK: E-z-i-s-y-e-n.

ME: [laughs] Lucky we got teacher!

EJ: Okay, so this is the Caribou clan.

ME: Uh huh. [Gives Athabascan name] caribou. There's a story for that, way back there [inaudible].

EJ: Okay, and then what's the other clan?

ME: Other clan, that's the Crow clan. It seems [inaudible].

EJ: Okay, there's...

ME: [Gives Athabascan name] and, yeah. Well, we could be--got different names, too, for other groups. Like this don't mean nothing. [inaudible] This one, too, the other one is almost the same tribe.

EJ: Okay, so your dad is...

ME: [inaudible] Eagle tribe [inaudible]. That kind can marry.

EJ: Okay, so what's your clan?

ME: [Gives Athabascan name], Eagle.

EJ: Okay, and your dad was...

ME: [Gives Athabascan name]. He married that way, then they don't marry their own people.

EJ: They don't marry their own clan.

ME: Do now.

EJ: What about--around home sometimes I guess the boys family used to give presents to the girls family. Did you hear about--did you do anything like that?

ME: When they was small or a long time?

EJ: Before they got married.

ME: Yeah, way before. Like they say some boy looks nice, strong, you know, going to be smart or something, then the parents let some kind of skin, you know, cut out. Take them over to that new baby born, that girl born. Little boys. They going to take it over there and tie it around that way.

EJ: So what does that mean?

ME: When they grow up, they're supposed to get married. That's so just you and not [inaudible].

EJ: Okay, so the parents decide who the baby is going to marry when it grows up.

ME: Yeah, uh huh. Oh, that's bad, huh? [laughs]

EJ: No, that was the way it was, so...

Student: I think it was better.

[inaudible conversation]

EJ: So, what about your own marriage? Did your parents decide for you when you got married?

ME: No, not that time. They never do that, that time. But it's already, that time, was people working and everything, you know. They already been school, too. But I didn't been school, but my husband was in school, already, them days. And working. They know what to do. It's not like old days. This is really old, you know, long time ago. They got to live out in the country. Got to know how to build house and stuff. [inaudible] and food. Got to provide. But after I grew up, it already know what to do. We are different, then. It's almost like now, you know, different.

EJ: Did you get married in church, then? Or there was no church yet.

ME: No church. Council [inaudible].

EJ: Oh, the council.

ME: Yeah, council. They still do that now, too, sometimes, the council.

EJ: How does that--do you go to a [inaudible], or something?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. We still pay for the license.

EJ: You pay for the license?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. It costs about six dollars or something like that.

EJ: Then do people--do they serve food and sing? Or they have this potlatch?

ME: Sometimes they do. Not all the time. Sometimes they do, yeah.

EJ: If they do, do they talk to the couple that's being married?

ME: Um hmm, yeah.

EJ: What kind of things do they tell them?

ME: They talk about, you know, maybe my uncle would talk and then some other people how we going to take care each others for long time. Not to leave each others. [inaudible] Some old sayings, what they say now, I guess.

EJ: Um hmm. But it did come from the elders?

ME: Yeah, older people used to talk.

EJ: And do the men talk to the boys and the women talk to the...

ME: They talk to us same time. Same time. Maybe just other people want to say something, too.

EJ: So they talk about how you should take care of each other?

ME: Yeah, [and] children. If you got kids, how to take care of them.

EJ: What about this story about the Caribou clan, can you think of it right now, or do you have to think about it?

ME: Oh, it's a long story. It's a long, long story.

EJ: Oh, it's a long story? Okay.

ME: That when people come first--you know, come from down Cordova way, like I said before to you or somebody, you know that [inaudible] down in Chitina, between Cordova [inaudible], there was snow first come, and they say we went up to Paxson Lake. From Chitina we went and we keep on follow that river over to Paxson

Lake. Now Paxson Lake is seventy miles. They were down there. Right in the middle of that lake they were. They weren't hunting. I just want to tell a little about that place where they met. They were hunting. Some people hunting. Our tribe people, they seen the hunting and they went up that mountain there. There's a big herd caribou there. And then when they go hunting, they go across and the caribou, all caribou, start went to left. They find this guy in there, right [inaudible]. Sitting there, after caribou went. They come. They talk to him, you know. Don't understand [inaudible]. Then they tell him, you know, they camped down there. They welcome. So this guy went back and got that whole bunch, like us. They met all together there. Down there. That's where they call them [gives Athabascan name]. He was behind that caribou herd, the [gives Athabascan name].

EJ: So that where the...

ME: That's where their name comes from. I don't know what their name was before. I don't know. They come from--I don't know where they come from. Over [inaudible] way, or somewhere. Oh, they tell that they were small people, too. That's why they call them [gives Athabascan name]. And we got name already, us. And that Paxson Lake, what that tribe was divided. In the middle. They say put pole, long pole, they put there. With it [inaudible] up, you know, up this way. That there [inaudible]. We [inaudible] down the other one. For that people don't have kids. Like kids don't grow up. They get each other's way, they go bother each other something place and everything. So we already got law like that.

EJ: So they decided that they divided up the Paxson Lake?

ME: Yeah, they fish in that side and we fish other side.

EJ: Oh, okay. So the other people fish on that side?

ME: Yeah, it's theirs. How they divide that lake. Lot of fish in there.

EJ: So the people from that side don't violate the...

ME: Um hmm. They don't bother each other then. And then they married each other all. They all mixed now. Then we went back all down that river. We been dipnets, you know, [inaudible] other roots, they know they find salmon. They find out about salmon in the river. They left that lake and they go back down to the river. Oh, there's big story. Long story [laughs]. So they just-- big story. Down Terrell, that's where there was lot of people. That's where they went back, all they went back on, left that lake. That's where they went.

EJ: To where?

ME: Terrell, Chitina. Across the river. That Chitina River come down this way and Copper River and down there there's a big village. Lots of people.

EJ: Long time ago, huh?

ME: Yeah. And they find--in our tribe, people went up Kennicott way and they find that copper. That's where they got that knife and arrowhead and everything. That's lot of story with that. I don't think people understand nowadays, you know? It's really hard for kids if they don't understand, you know, it's bad.

EJ: Maybe sometime you could just tell us a little bit of the story in your language and then tell part of it in English, so you could tell what your language sounds like?

ME: Yeah. Yeah, next time maybe we do that. I'm going to do that story.

EJ: What about the old time houses. Do you know how they make them?

ME: What?

EJ: You know, the kind of like underground house. The winter house, they call it.

ME: Oh, that's [inaudible] they put on the house. Steam bath, you know, that kind. Kind of big, anyway, [inaudible].

EJ: How was it made, do you know?

ME: It's made like now. [inaudible] it's got rocks in it. You know, sweat bath rocks with other rocks in there. And they cut out tree, thick tree like that, they cut out like a square. Bit [inaudible]. And that [inaudible] not too far, just a little ways, and they got dump water with basket there. Birch basket, they get water. They dump it in there. They throw that water [inaudible]. They got to make that sweat bath. They put out there fires. They put rocks on it. And they put that in there, that's everybody's bath. Sweat bath...

EJ: So, do you have...

ME: ...steam bath is really going long time, you know, the old days. Every other night, every night they make that...

EJ: How does that work? Did everybody take a steam bath together?

ME: All mens, yeah.

EJ: Did they have two separate houses or...

ME: Yeah, they got separate house. Then the women's...

EJ: One for women and...

ME: Yeah. They got one.

EJ: Was the building square or how was it, do you know?

ME: Yeah, square. It made log, down inside. They split that logs and they put it inside.

EJ: Was the logs like that [draws on the blackboard], or around?

ME: No, it's just right, what you do.

EJ: Oh, okay, so the walls were...

ME: Yeah, straight down and then they put that roofing on.

EJ: And then the roof was...

ME: Uh huh, [inaudible].

EJ: The roof was just straight across, like that?

ME: Yeah, um hmm. They put bark on it. Spruce bark on top. And the grass.

EJ: So they put hole, and then the spruce bark, and then grass, and then...

ME: The grass is all over the place, walls too if they can put it, you know, put it where the dirt don't come in.

EJ: Oh, around this walls.

ME: Um hmm, as best they can, I guess. I don't know.

EJ: And then they pile--did they pile dirt against that?

ME: They put it back, yeah. On top they used to put that bark not [inaudible] or nothing. They fix grass, yeah. They put grass in that bark over, on top of that pole.

EJ: So they laid the bark so that the water would run off of it.

ME: Yeah. They don't make [inaudible].

EJ: And then inside--what did the inside look like, do you know? Did they sit on the floor or...

ME: They got log, yeah. They split that log.

EJ: Oh, okay, so they split logs...

ME: Just like wall. They just split wall there--log.

EJ: Um hmm, these are split logs. So they have that for bench like, on the inside. Was the fireplace in the middle?

ME: That's out, next door. I mean, that front room.

EJ: Oh, okay, so there was another room.

ME: Yeah, just another big room there. That made out of spruce tree. They skinned them and then they used a pole, small pole, they cut and cleaned it up. They put the bark all the way over. And then on top there, a big open place where that fire. And they make fire there; smoke go up there.

EJ: Okay, so the next door was the place where there was fire.

ME: Yeah, that fire there.

EJ: And then, so there was big pole up here for [draws on blackboard]...

ME: Yeah, right. And inside there, on both sides, they got wooden bed, you know. And then down there they got some cut lumber, too. Like half a tree, you know.

EJ: Okay, so they have split logs?

ME: Um hmm, and they got like a--anyway like straight, I think. Like side walls up away from that fire. They can sit down. They can cook. They got place to cook, just like rocks and stuff.

EJ: Oh, okay. So they didn't just use that for only steambaths?

ME: Steambaths, after that it's all dried again, you know. 'Cause it's so hot it dries. Then they go and use it for eating in there, too.

EJ: Oh, so this is in the winter?

ME: Uh huh. It's hard to understand when we don't see it, you know.

EJ: Yeah, but we've heard about stuff like that. That's why we're asking.

Student: [inaudible] [laughter]

ME: In my language--us, we understand our language, you know, then we know what they do, yeah.

EJ: It makes it easier for you, uh huh.

ME: We can tell what they talk about, even we don't see it. But now, [inaudible] doesn't know. It's hard to understand, for them.

They can ask questions if they want. [inaudible] I might forget [laughs]. I'm that way, I can forget easy. Everybody see? Okay. That's how many kids I got to work with. Lots.

Student: Do they come to your house to learn, or do you go to, like, the community center or like...

ME: Sometimes they come to my house, if we don't really need it up there. We got community place in the village. We use that for dance, and maybe they have meeting. Sometimes they use it for little lunch. Eat together. Like New Year's, we had--kids want to eat dry fish and sugar. The Natives used to cook that sugar. Like candy.

EJ: Oh, that in the frying pan?

ME: Yeah.

EJ: How did you do that?

ME: Just water and sugar, and boil it.

EJ: Water and sugar. And then you let it...

ME: Let it just cool down. And then it come like candy. Not really hard, you know. It's easy to chew. And drink tea with it. They want that and sugar [inaudible] and hard tack and crackers, and some candy. We had that kind last New Year's. We had lot of fun.

EJ: So they come to your house for that?

ME: No, down--up there.

EJ: Oh, at the community hall.

ME: We had--some of them had a bad flu, but they had a dance that night, too. Practice. Then we had that dried fish 'cause we going to stay up late. We had whole bunch fire crackers. You know them big rockets go up. We save that summertime. And when we go home, my daughter was sick. Her baby she [had the] flu, the one help me? She was down the house, so we decided to go back down there, so she can see that fire-crackers from the window. We went home. And we got there about a half an hour. It was nice and warm, too. Some kids were sick, but they was all there. Oh, they all hollered and after that we say, "Happy New Year." I wish somebody could hear them, how good time they had. And we went in the house to warm up and they go home. Yeah, there's all different things we do, Chitina. Was not very many people there, just away from downtown, too. White people's downtown alone, and we up the village. Sometimes they come. If they want to, they can come, too. We don't mind.

[inaudible conversation]

ME: Anybody got anything?

[inaudible conversation]

ME: All my kids who I teach, they think it's lot of fun. Just about like what we doing now. Only thing they do, not writing, is just what I wish they do. You know, they should put it down, whatever.

EJ: You mean the things you're telling them?

ME: Yeah, uh huh. I wish they could put it down right now I tell them all how much it's needed. The old traditional learn, back.

EJ: Did they use fish traps, too, or just...

ME: Uh huh. Yeah they used fish traps.

EJ: Was that in the summer?

ME: And in anytime, winter time, too. [inaudible] too late, that's where they put it. Big lake or something. Now they don't do that.

EJ: Did they ever fish for--around home we used to get black fish. We call it [gives Athabascan name].

ME: No, maybe ling cod they call it?

EJ: No, they're real small. Maybe you don't have it down there.

ME: No, maybe we don't have it. We got grayling and trout [inaudible], and white fish. And that ling cod.

EJ: What about fish liver and things. Did you cook the livers, too?

ME: King salmons, we do. King salmon liver.

Student: Is there pike in there [inaudible]?

ME: No, we don't have pike.

EJ: Those other questions was actually typed up, but I [inaudible].

Student: Do you have a favorite Native food, or do you like them all?

ME: Yeah, lots of them. Like [gives Athabascan name] is really--

porcupine. Everybody likes that. When anybody get [gives Athabascan name] long time ago, we call it [gives Athabascan name], and all the people, big village, lot of older people invited to stay and have a eat together. Moose, same way. They don't eat just from each other, you know. Just want something good, just trade food, you know. They all get together and eat. Serve caribou or moose, [gives Athabascan name]. We had lots of [gives Athabascan name]. Just the other day we see two on the road down...

[tape ends]