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Side one:

Alfred Stepetin [AS]: Today I'm going to speak on women and their influence on the Aleut culture and society. Aleut women seem to have had a very strong influence on their men. As archaeologists and--have gathered material from the diggings of the villages and sites that the Aleuts lived at, they found many articles pertaining to the articles that are used by women. And they were no dummies. They had very fine needlecrafts. They did very fine weaving. And they did the best sewing, waterproof sewing, that I know of. There was one little question somebody asked on one of those slips that I'd like to answer. They asked, "Did Aleuts tattoo?" Yes, the Aleuts tattooed, but it was the women who were tattooed. It was not the men. The women were tattooed. Why, I don't know. Maybe it was for beauty's sake; for identification. One doesn't know. But they did have predominant tattoos on their faces and their hands. Why they were tattooed or who did the tattoo, I don't know. But they did have tattooing and it was for a purpose. Most likely for beauty and then for possession. For someone to know who the woman belonged to.

Eliza Jones [EJ]: Do you know--have any idea what the designs looked like?

AS: They--I meant to bring Lydia's article, but most of the women seemed to be tattooed in the lower chin. So the markings were more

visible in the lower chin area and the cheek area. Where it's most visible to anybody, I suppose, which is why they did this.

EJ: Did you hear a lot of this--did you ever hear about this when you were a child?

AS: No. I knew it in later times. Much later times. When Orthodoxy--there was a--introduced. Even today it is against Orthodoxy for men to be tattooed. So, I'm sure Russian influence said no more tattooing so it died out. And even today you will not find--you will find a Marine or a guy who's been in the Navy or something, or in the Army, tattooed. But they are not tattooed just to be tattooed. It's one of the Aleut taboos.

And the clothing in the art book will show that women's clothing were elaborate. They were not simple clothes. They were--but this again is, were these women influential people in the community or in the tribe? Were they like queens? Were they somebody of very high influence that had these elaborate sewn garments? But some of the garments that the women wore were more outstanding; it outclassed the men's wear by many fold. And there were intricate sewings where they used different colored material to make different designs on their clothing. Most Aleuts did not wear pants. Men did wear pants when they were out hunting. But most men and women only wore parkas. Convenience sake, I think. And also it was easier to warm--put a lamp under your parka than it is up your pant's leg [laughs].

And this influence of women sewing and artwork shows up throughout all the Aleut culture of arts and sewing and basket weaving. Even to this day, a very delicate little basket will be woven. And the artwork is so fine that you could--I've seen a woman weave a basket with a forty-eight states colored in different

colors on a map on a little basket. So you can see how delicate a work they will do to keep up their trade.

As I said much earlier, in my other talks, that the Aleut women were very trained in food preparation. And it was mostly always up to the woman to prepare the winter's food. It was--the men hunted but the women prepared it for the winter. And when the men were, much later, let's say in the early '30's and late '30's, when the men were going to the Pribilof Islands to catch their seals for the federal government, the women stayed home and caught the fish and prepared the fish. It was up to the women to provide for the winter's food. Other than what the husband would bring home and buy. And he would buy the staples like sugar, butter, and such. But the main foods of fish and seafoods and such were prepared by the women.

This present day women have more influence on the Aleut people than you would think. First of all, the Aleut people--I mean, like I said before, once the religion came into their lives, they dominated--it became part of their life, and they became part of it. To this day, you can go to a village and they will say, "Hey, the priest is coming. We need this to be done." Who do you think runs ahead and does it? It's not the men. It's the women that go there and prepare the house for the priest, prepare the meals for the priest. The women--we always say our church is run by the sisterhood. It's never the brotherhood. But you can see that in the church that if it wasn't for the women, there'd be lots of hungry priests traveling around. But the women take part in everyday life of the Aleut today.

To get down to present day land claims corporations, some of our finest Aleut corporations are headed by a board of women, more so than men. The Aleut women--there are more Aleut women on our

village boards than there are Aleut men. And then, of course, the Aleut women who have gone out and gone to college or school and come back to work for the people, the Aleut woman has done this more than the Aleut man. She goes out and takes her training in bookkeeping, typing, clerical work. And then she comes back and runs the corporation. Where the man pretty much stays home and runs the corporation. But even today I see that in our corporations--my own Unalaska Corporation, our board members, the staff on our corporation is mostly women. Very few men in our corporation. And they do a darned good job.

Student: This idea of [inaudible] mandated village corporations?

AS: Yes. So the women, they wouldn't be there if the men didn't vote for them. It takes a man to do it, because for sure there's always a lot more men in any corporation. But it's the men who put them there, because the men know they'll do the job. Could do the job and will do it. So the influence of the women on their people can, from way back--and it's still carry on today, that they are willing to sacrifice a little at home and to work for their own people.

For a while now, I'll take questions.

Student: Do the men still hunt, though? And provide those kinds of things to the family, correct?

AS: Yeah. I don't mean the men are just sitting home.

Student: Yeah, they're not.

AS: They're doing their thing, but they're influenced more by the woman to do what they're doing. They're not sitting idle.

Student: I know in some of the churches, I think maybe like, I'm

not sure, maybe the Lutheran church or some churches, like, women can be priests now, stuff like that. Is there any kind possibility for that with the Russian Orthodox and/or, like, a movement so women can do that stuff?

AS: In the Orthodox church, the--we have, at Kodiak, we have the Saint Herman's Theological Seminary, which trains men and women in Orthodox customs and Orthodox traditions and order of services and stuff. Women are entering and attending these schools, but they are not able to be ordained into a position. The highest position they can hold is a layman's reader position, which is equal to what I am. But they can't do what I did. I'm tonsured and they can't be tonsured. But they are able to do this. They can go to the seminary, learn everything about priesthood and become to that level, where you're a lay reader and can hold services and everything. And the church allows the women to do this. They can hold services, but they cannot distribute communion or such.

Student: What was the word you used to say that you were and they weren't?

AS: Oh, I'm ordained...

Student: Is that what you said? Or...

AS: ...or tonsured!

Student: Yeah, that's it. What is that word?

AS: Okay, tonsured? That means that--[laughs] it's a very--its a rite, let's say. It's--when the bishop tonsures me he takes a cut of my hair and cuts a bit of my hair off, and this little bit of hair is my gift to God. As His servant, I am giving him a gift.

And I'm going to work for that--the gift I gave Him, I have to, I promise to, you know, work for Christ and such. And this is what tonsuring means. It's--ordination is a whole deal, but tonsuring is the cutting of the hair. And you only get tonsured once.

Student: T-o-n-t-u...

AS: T-o-n-t-u-r-e-d?

Student: I'm a little concerned about people running around in parkas without pants [laughs]. How long are the parkas, and were the mukluks knee length?

AS: They wore sandals and they had knee high parkas! No, no [laughs]. The boots were quite high and the parkas, women's parkas, were ankle length.

Student: And were the men's also ankle length or would they be more...

AS: Depending on--I'd say, the men had pants. They could wear pants. They were--it's more, I think, more convenient for a bidarki person to get into a bidarki with pants on than it is for him to go in there with shoving his parka inside. So for hunting reasons, I'm sure they had pants. The men did. Where the women didn't have to have pants to get into the--and the only way the women rode was to get inside the bidarki so she could travel with him. Where she crawled into the bidarki and stayed in there while he was driving [inaudible].

Student: Was there room for women to be out of the ordinary, or were those kinds of people struck down pretty quickly by peer pressure?

AS: What do you mean, out of the ordinary?

Student: Well, if a woman wanted to become a hunter and that wasn't the tradition, is that something that was still an option to her? Did the culture or her peers, friends, allow that to happen? Or were women pretty confined to traditional roles?

AS: I don't know too much about the traditional, you know, setting. But in our legends, in our stories, women had very high, you know, they were considered very high in the society. They were very influential people. This is in stories, legends and stories, that the Aleuts have. And then, throughout a lot of the stories, you will find where women were powerful, you know, over their men. They had power over their men, you know. But this is again, is tradition. I mean it's folklore, you know. It doesn't mean that it happened that way. But if they had it in that time, they must have got the story from somewhere, you know? To influence that kind of story. Probably did happen. But [in] many of the stories there's always a predominant woman, you know, that's controlling the story.

EJ: Can you tell us one of those stories?

AS: I will tell you a short one. Too bad he's not here. He's the one that really wanted it. He's not here. But I'll tell it anyway.

EJ: He'll hear it on the tape.

AS: [laughs] Well, let me take a break before I do this okay?

'Cause...

[pause for break]

AS: This story is the story of a man, his wife, his daughter, and the woman on the mountain. There was this young man who was married to a very beautiful girl, and they had a daughter, and the husband forever was going out hunting. He would go hunting in the morning, and he wouldn't come back until late at night. The wife and daughter would stay home. One time the husband left, and he took his hunting gear and walked up the hill. His wife saw him leave and figured he was going to go hunting somewhere so she left him. And a little bird came landing. Landed near the house. He chirped and he chirped and he chirped and he chirped. Little bird said, "He's not doing what you think!" And he flew away. Oh, the daughter heard this. The daughter heard this for the first time. So next day the father began. Took his gear and left for the mountain. And again the daughter was outside playing, and the little bird came and said, "Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, he's not doing what you think!" And he'd fly away. The third day it happened, before the bird spoke, the daughter ran inside and said, "Mother, come out and listen to what this bird has to say." The little bird stayed there and landed and he stayed there. "Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, he's not doing what he says. He ain't doing what it looks like." The wife starts wondering, "What now. What would he be doing?"

And when the husband came home, he never had anything he'd hunted for. The wife and the daughter was getting hungry. They didn't have any more food. So she asked her husband to go hunting tomorrow. He says, "You know, I'm going to die. I'm going to die now." He says, "What I want you to do is to, don't embalm me like you do. Put my whole body in the kayak. Put all my hunting implements with me, inside. And carry me up that hill up there." So they did. Next morning he died. The wife did what he asked to

do. They put him in his bidarki, and they were carrying him up the hill. The daughter looked in and, "Mom! Mother, he's smiling!" She says, "No he's not. He just looks like that." Further up they carried him and, "Mom, he is smiling!" "No, he's not smiling, he's dead." They kept going. Finally, she got tired. The wife got tired. She said--Oh, the little bird came. The little bird came on the bidarki, landing. "Cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, he's not dead. He's just smiling, but he's not dead. He's not dead!"

And the wife started getting suspicious. So she left the husband and daughter and went up to the top of the hill. And she saw this smoke coming out of a hole in the ground. And she looked inside the hole. And there was this ugly woman down there with a pot, boiling something in her big pot. And she yelled at her, says, "What are you doing?" When she looked up, the woman had just one big eye on the forehead. And she knew that this ugly woman had taken her husband away from her. So she continued--she went back. By then she didn't care what her husband did. So she took him and put him up there. And then she went home. And this little bird was coming. "Cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep! He's coming around the bend with a bidarki. He's coming around the point with a bidarki!" You see there's a point into the bay, there. She looks, "No, no that's just a pile of kelp. Can't be him, he's dead." So she kept going, and the bird kept coming back and telling, "He's coming down the road now! He's coming down the road now!" And she said, "No, he's dead."

Then one day she got tired of him. "I'm starving. My husband goes out and gets food for that old woman. I'm going to get that food from him." So she went down to the beach and met him this time on the beach. And he, the husband, being caught, apologized very much and gave all the food he had caught that day to his wife.

And she said, "There's one more little piece down there. Will you get it for me?" So he reached into his bidarki, and when he reached in there, she took the bidarki, rolled it upside down, and drowned him. And he finally died. And she lived happily ever after [laughs].

I got to tell--it loses itself when you're taking it from Aleut and putting it into English. 'Cause all those little, "Cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep, [inaudible]." All those little sounds aren't in there that belong in there.

EJ: Maybe could you just say where that bird was talking, in Aleut, just so we hear what it sounds like?

AS: [speaks Aleut] [laughs]. That little bird goes, [speaks Aleut]. You know, it loses itself. And then you, you know--I can't do it [like] the guy that told it, the one I heard it from. Even when he opens that hole, you can hear the--he makes the sound of that boiling pot and I don't know how he did it, but he did the really good job. You could hear the boiling pot when he opens the grass. And then he [inaudible]. He was a good storyteller.

EJ: He changes his voice [inaudible]?

AS: Yeah, he changes his voice.

EJ: Well, I think you did a really nice job [inaudible].

AS: Well, we don't have one in here, do we? We don't have any in here [inaudible]. Is there any Africans? It's bad, but I'm going to--the first time I told this story, he, my mentor, John [inaudible] was telling the story in Aleut, and I was telling it in English. And we were halfway through, and he said a word I did not know. For the life of me, I could not recognize that word. So in

Aleut, I asked him, "What'd you say?" He'd say it in Aleut again. But I wouldn't translate--in my mind it wasn't about to translate. It was Aleut and it was going to stay Aleut. So I said, "What is that?" And we were at the Wood Center, upstairs in that big hall up in the Wood Center, and that place was packed with people. And we had a [inaudible] about yea high off the floor. And I can always remember there was a group of colored people right up in front. And he finally--I said, "What is it?" So I leaned over and he told me in my ear what it was. I said, "No, no! I'm not going to say that!" I said, "No way am I going to say it." "You got to," he said, "You got to!" I said, "No, no, no." He says, "Ah!" He says, "It was a nigger-head," he said. And, oh man, I couldn't--But those colored guys--I wasn't about to say "nigger" when those people were there, and he just say, "Ah, just say nigger-head!" [laughs].

EJ: What do you call nigger-heads in...

AS: I don't know, I forgot what the word was. That's why I didn't know what it was, 'cause I didn't know how to say it!

Student: Because in our area, you know, [inaudible] and they call those grass [inaudible].

AS: That's what [it] was 'cause this is where she moved the grass--those things away to see inside, and that's where that word came up, and I wasn't about to say it when he told me it was a nigger-head. And I couldn't for the live of me translate right away into another word like a clump of grass, you know! Then I had--he said that word and I said, "Oh my God, they're sitting right in front here!" But those colored people, they were really applauding and everything. But I sweated through that one [laughs]. I'm not

prejudiced at all. I just--my best friends are colored people. But I wasn't about to say that, that night.

Student: So, did you hear this story as a child, also?

AS: No, no. This is the first one that I heard it. I heard many, many stories in childhood. My uncle was a storyteller. And he would come to the village twice a year, maybe, and spend a couple of nights at the house, and he would tell us stories. Most of the stories are family stories, so we don't tell them. Huh?

EJ: Well, I was just going to say that the story you just told, we have that same story in Athabascan culture also. I mean, [inaudible] about this. You know, the man came, "Oh, I'm so sick. I'm going to die!" And he instructed his wife, you know, on how he wanted to be buried. Normally, people--it's traditionally when people died, to burn their personal things so they could take it with them. And he instructed them and said, "[inaudible] put everything in my canoe and put it up away from here." So he went, you know, he takes the long ways, "You put my stuff in there and don't go visit it!" [laughs]. He doesn't want them visiting around there, you know. But there was a bird involved and he kept saying, you know, that, "he's not dead! He's not dead!"

AS: This story is on the Aleut Night tape that I wanted to show. This is one of the stories that we told.

EJ: We could make an appointment to...

AS: ...get that tape?

EJ: Yeah.

AS: For next Thursday. Next Tuesday we'll try to set up a

T.V. and show parts of it, anyway.

EJ: Yeah. But before that, let's take a look at those tapes to see if [inaudible]. Do you know which year that was?

AS: That would have been the first year. Which year did you say was the first year? '78? It says on that program. Where is the program now?

EJ: It shouldn't be hard to find. Yeah, we just looked for the first year...

Student: The program?

EJ: Yeah, the...

AS: It says on there. What year was the first year?

Student: Umm...

AS: '78, I think.

Student: '74.

AS: '74? Let's see [inaudible]. It's been that many years? [inaudible].

Student: Did you have storytellers? Like, you say your uncle was a storyteller? Did they try to pass another storyteller on in the family, and, like, do an apprenticeship with them, or whatever, to bring another storyteller into the family?

AS: I don't think--otherwise, I'm sure, my uncles would have made me a storyteller, you know? I don't think they influenced anybody to be a storyteller. But then, by the time my uncle and them were, before they died, Aleut culture was pretty dead. It wasn't being

passed on.

Student: When you say that they would have made you a storyteller, was a storyteller sort of like something that, you know--I mean, did people say, like, "Okay Alfred, you're going to be a storyteller," and then you went...

AS: No, I don't mean that they were trained to be storytellers, they just expected you to be. But I was saying, by the time my uncle and them were telling stories, and the last I heard of them telling stories, there wasn't anymore interest in passing it on.

Student: Oh, oh, I see.

AS: You know, the culture was dying already, and they weren't thinking of keeping it going. And what stories, few stories, we have are by the elders are living today. And by word of mouth, "I heard..." So, it's nothing that--it's not--my stories are family stories, you know. I don't have tribal stories. I have just family stories. Which [inaudible] family tells. Huh?

Student: About your family, you mean?

AS: You know, they're family stories. Not about my family, but stories that were told within the family.

Student: Oh, oh. Okay.

AS: It wasn't a tribal story thing, it was--each family had their own stories.

Student: Oh, okay.

AS: But they could tell it to other people. But the ones I'm thinking of are the ones that my uncle used to tell; were the ones

that were told in our family.

Student: At what age did the was the time to get married?

[inaudible] when you were a child or...

AS: You know, I have it from sources that a woman, a girl, she had to be at least eighteen or nineteen to get married. But, if she was marrying an older man, let's say a man that was in his forties, she could borrow so many years from him. And make up to become nineteen. Like she could marry when she was sixteen and borrow three of his years. Making him thirty-seven and she became nineteen.

Student: Is that right?

AS: So they borrowed from each other to become eligible to marry.

Student: That's a pretty good thing, yeah.

AS: So there were very, many, many, young, young brides.

Young brides and mothers. Young were mothers, too.

Student: Was that the more common combination, with a man twenty or thirty years older than a girl? Or was it more common that they were five to ten years older or the same age?

AS: I don't think it was tradition to marry somebody older. It was just that that older person needed a wife, you know. And a sixteen year old was eligible. You know. So they'd marry young. Like I say, it wasn't a courtship of any kind, it was an arranged marriage. You could only arrange it adding years to your life. You know what I mean? You can't [inaudible]. But I've known--in my time I've known people still borrowing. And it's very confusing when it comes to--especially now, these women who are borrowing way

back, in let's say, fifty years ago, are really having a bad time trying to get the old age pension, because they don't know their true age. Because they had borrowed so many years, and they didn't know how many years they borrowed. So they say, the church records show them as one age and they say they're another age. "I got married when I was nineteen and this was in 1928," you know. After while the date confusion is really bad. But it was still being done. The ones that are now in their--65, 67, 68, 66, and that, are almost the last of the borrowers, so I've known a person to be ten years younger than she actually was. She thought she was. I mean if you married a man seventy years old, you could borrow twenty years from him [laughs]!

Student: Were there other advantages to borrowing age besides getting married sooner? I mean, did that give them any other rights?

AS: I think that did, yeah. I think it gave them the right to bear children, to get married, and to--you know. I'm sure age had a lot of ways to--there were a lot of things you could do at a certain age that you couldn't at another, you know. And especially, even in white man's influence times, and some of these that are now reaching 65, was already white man was influencing, they were marrying to leave the village to go to another village, you know. And in those days already they had United States Commissioners which would not allow this. You know, you couldn't take a fifteen year old girl out of her village, you know. But by doing this through the church or something, borrowing, they became of age and could leave. So, it was for convenience, a more convenient thing for tradition. Huh?

Student: What you were saying sort of reminds me of a question I

had about marriage. We saw this tape the other day, I think of [inaudible], and it was a pretty small village, by my terms. There were, like, eighty-five people, and it seemed to be fairly isolated. And I was thinking, in a village that small, when someone gets to the age where they want to get married, did they usually marry someone in that village, or was there some sort of tradition where you went to another village to get married? Or...

AS: You know, Atka, [inaudible] you know, after a while Atka's going to be a two family village, you know. They intermarried and married and married. They're going to end up a two family village. So you'd have to go outside your village to marry, you know. To bring somebody back. The fortunate part of Atka was we had moved Attu there, so there was Attu people there that were eligible to marry.

Student: Oh yeah. Oh, okay.

AS: So there was a chance of not marrying into the family or into the village. You were marrying outside the village, but they were there because of the relocation. But a lot of the villages, the young people in Atka today go to Unalaska to marry Unalaska girls, you know, that are eligible. Or any other village. This is--the same thing is happening on the Pribilofs, too. They intermarried, so they're almost all related some way or another, if not through marriage, through blood, you know? So they had to look elsewhere for health reasons. And this is happening more so in the younger people. They're marrying into the Eskimo people and they're marrying into, you know, different cultures.

EJ: A girl from our village is married and living in Saint George, I think. [inaudible]

AS: Yeah, we have many, many Aleut men that have married into the Athabascan race and into the Eskimo, you know, into white [inaudible]. And there's many husbands who have married Eskimo women, you know. So it's a--it's not a--you don't keep everything at home anymore. You go shopping [laughs]. But it's not that I'm saying there's a shop or something.

EJ: Whenever you want to take a break...

AS: I'll talk ten more minutes then I'll quit [inaudible]. So, and when I say that women--to this day, the women are very strong in church work. When there's work to be done--let's say they have to scrape and paint the outside of the church. You're not going to see women standing on scaffolding to scrape and--but they're the ones that are down below cooking the lunches for the men that's going to be up there, and they're the ones that are, you know, they're the support people. And without them the men wouldn't do it. You know. The men won't go up there and scrape for no time by themselves. You got to make sure the woman is down there preparing his lunch for him. And this has been, even in a well educated, up-to-the-minute city of Anchorage, the Saint Innocent church, if it wasn't for the sisterhood, we wouldn't have a building funded much. It's the women that [inaudible] have bake sales, and have parties, and stuff to raise money for building fund. I'm not saying the men don't do anything, but once they see the women start doing things, they say, "Okay, let's help them." But I don't think the brotherhood, as such, would start or initiate a bake sale. And this has been like this throughout all the years. I can always remember I could hear my mother screaming to my step-dad, "Get up that church and paint! I'll cook lunch for you." And [if] he

wasn't going to listen, he wasn't going to get the lunch.

Student: Is "sisterhood" a church term or is that a term of your own?

AS: Sisterhood is a church term. We have what we call the brotherhood, which is the brothers that get together and help with the church. And then the sisterhood is the one that--it's like a volunteer society, you know.

[side two]

So, next Tuesday I think we'll talk on--well, we'll try to get that tape, Aleut Night tape. And from there I'll take excerpts of the story telling, my Aleut dancing, Aleut games, and the music, Aleut music. I won't say the whole hour and a half will be on that, but parts of it will be on that. And then give you a chance to question on that portion.

EJ: When you're talking about stories, you say there are family stories--I don't know what my question is, but was there certain kind of language for certain group of people?

AS: Uh, yeah, I think, like myself, my uncle told stories, and they were called [Aleut word] stories. [Aleut word] stories you don't tell just anybody. That's kind of private family stories. And they're X-rated, and, you know, you don't tell them to public. And this is actually--they're X-rated stories that stay within the family. You can tell other friends, but you don't sit out in a public place and tell them. And these are the funnier ones, the ones I like, the X-rated ones [laughs].

Student: Did you hear that same story, over and over again? From time to time?

AS: Yeah, there's hardly any that are new, you know. And within my family stories, I would say there was maybe fifteen stories that, every time it was told, was different, you know. They'd add a little more to it or they'd take away little bits.

EJ: Maybe depending on who is listening?

AS: Yeah, on who was listening and who was telling, you know. If a good story teller told it, they came out really good. Nice stories. But if he was a lazy story teller, it just came out blah. Like mine, you know. So it depended on who was telling the story. Now, you'll notice on this--if we get that tape Tuesday, that Bill Cherpan [sp.?] is a story teller. He is a story teller. He is a-- you can, even if you don't understand him telling in Aleut, you'll listen because the way he talks. He changes his voice, the sound of his voice. You know what he's talking--I mean, I know what he's talking, and it becomes part of the story because of the sound of his voice. He isn't talking everyday Aleut, he's talking story Aleut, you know? And there's a little chant in there that just-- you don't talk like that everyday. And it's--he's talented, he's really a good one. He's still alive, but he's old and he's not doing it, able to get around anymore.

EJ: Where does he live?

AS: Akutan.

EJ: Oh. And what about speeches? When people make speeches, did they have a hierarchy of people, and there's different kind of words they use when they talk? Or were their speeches like when chiefs, they have chiefs [inaudible] didn't they?

AS: I'm sure the chiefs spoke by rank. Like I was saying, there was a chief and then--there were chiefs. But, you know, seven chiefs. And then one of them was the chief of chiefs. I'm sure the chief of chiefs ran the meetings, you know. And gave a chance for every chief to tell his story or his--get involved in the meetings or have--and bring up his problems from his village. And this was mostly why these meetings were held, anyway, was that they wanted to know, "What do you do in your village when this problem comes up?" You know? So one chief would say, "What do you do when your young girls become pregnant without being married?" And another chief from another village said, "Well, this is how we handle it." You know. And then another one says, "Well, over in our village we do like this." So that they're exchanging ideas, so that by the end of a day [they] decide, "All right, from here on, this is how we're going to handle the problem." And the chief of chiefs says, "Okay, this is now law. This is what we're going to do." So by the end of the chiefs meetings there--you had a set of rules to go by. And I'm sure each chief had their say in putting into that idea they had.

Student: Were chiefs [inaudible].

AS: Yes.

Student: And how were they chosen?

AS: It was always chosen by the village people. The village people chose who they wanted. Like I was saying in the beginning, it used to be hand-me-down family, you know. But later on it became whoever was older and wiser in the village became the chief. It wasn't a family dealie anymore. It became a village dealie. But, in the beginning, it used to be family kept it. And then you

were chief until you died. Later on it became you were chief
until, you know--be elected for [inaudible]. In other words
[inaudible].

[end of tape]