

ANS 401

Jonathen and Rose David

March 8, 1988

summary by Peggy Linton

The way to build an emergency shelter was the first topic of this class session. Make a little house or lean-to out of spruce trees. Build a fire in front. "Don't use a lighter, it'll be up against you," Jonathen said. He said to always use matches because they will work the best when you're up against it. The best place to keep the matches dry is to always carry them in your hat.

If you are going to stay overnight in this type of shelter; it's better to build it lower to the ground. Bank it with snow and line it with spruce boughs. It's better to burn cottonwood for the fire because it burns longer, and doesn't throw sparks.

Emergency shelters can also be made by digging out the snow from a snow bank. Cut it out with snowshoes and make it big enough for a sleeping compartment.

Skis were traditionally made of birch. Some were made using the sides from kegs or barrels. They were about four feet long, fairly wide, and bent in the front. This feature enables the skier to ski without sinking too much.

If you are going to melt snow for drinking it is best to use the hard part under the soft surface. The top part is loaded with dirt, needles, and other like substances.

Jonathen went on to tell a story about three brothers who fell asleep in a bear den. They slept till spring. Everyone was searching for the boys but they were not found. The mother of the three brothers made a mourning song for them. Rose said that this was how the Potlatch started according to the elders of Minto.

Jonathen answered a question about trapping by telling us the basics of traditional trapping. The method used for trapping marten and lynx is by using two poles about six feet long and tied apart. Tie this to a leaning tree so it doesn't flop. Tie a piece of sinew to the top (it will stay dryer). The bait is placed at the end of the sinew and left dangling in front of the two poles. The spring for this set is triggered when the animal starts jerking on the bait. It only works on animals that can pull.

Another method of setting traps traditionally used by Jonathen is using rawhide snares. It can be set next to the creek but not too close because overflow will freeze the snare. This set is good for fox, lynx, rabbit, wolverine, and even wolf. It does not require bait. For the bigger

animals, it is best if you set the snare continue walking a little ways, make a U-turn and follow your tracks back to the set. This is done so the animal will follow your trail and get caught in the trap in either direction. The way to make the rawhide for the snares is to weight it down with a rock while it is stretched out and dry it in that fashion. It will be very tough and would not break. The worst animals to trap in the old days were the wolf and the wolverine. Long ago there weren't many wolves, and moose. Otters were not trapped or snared. Instead they were taken by using bow and arrow.

Rose also made snares with a spring to catch rabbits. Jonathan said he was to mischief to make this type of a set. tetggok is the word for snare with a spring. It can also be used to catch marten and mink as well as rabbit. Another method is to use a tripod with a pole attached. It takes skill and patience to set these type of sets.

The first gun to come into Rose and Jonathan's country was a muzzle loader that used gunpowder and a marble. People bought these off of traders. Because they didn't have money they traded furs, blankets, boots, or whatever is agreeable for both parties. The skins are usually measured by stacking a pile next to the gun. The guns were traded through Rampart, Ruby, or Livengood. There were stores also at Nenana and Fairbanks. Back then you could buy fifty pounds of flour for \$2.50. They didn't have crackers or butter instead they used biscuits and moose tallow.

Pikes can be caught in a variety of ways: on top of the ice, fish traps, dipnets. They are found in lakes, streams, and rivers. There are different times for the different runs of fish in the rivers. Suckers are the leaders in the spring.

Fish hooks were made of bone. Bear bone is the best because it doesn't break. Jonathan went fishing the other day but he used fishhooks bought from the store.

Eliza drew a fish trap on the board to give us an idea of what one looks like.

The class session ended with a discussion of fish traps, and fishing in general. Before fish wheels were introduced the people used fish nets instead.